

Food for thought: Metaphor in communication and cognition

By

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## **Abstract**

Metaphors are undoubtedly contextual phenomena. We often creatively employ them to say one thing and mean another by exploiting the literal meaning of the words used. However, metaphors are not simply parasitic on literal meaning. Rather, they pull from ways interlocutors, readers, and audiences understand context, and they tap into our shared knowledge of the world and one another's mutual beliefs.

In this thesis, I propose a pragmatic account of metaphor that treats metaphorical meaning as the result of recovering the speaker's intended meaning. I defend a broadly Gricean account of metaphorical content from more recent accounts that take metaphorical meaning to be directly, explicitly, and automatically interpreted by an audience. A related concern with my view is whether metaphors are distinctively unique from other forms of linguistic communication. According to recent philosophers of language, metaphors and their literal counterparts exploit the same basic cognitive processes. I disagree with this conclusion.

I promote a position that treats metaphor on par with poetic imaginings that exploit characterizations (roughly, stereotypes) to novel ends. This makes my treatment of metaphor importantly different from contemporary treatments of it that reduce metaphor to 'literally loose' talk. I develop a framework of metaphoric communication that is based on Korta and Perry's (2011b) framework developed at length in "Critical Pragmatics". The theoretical utility offered by Korta and Perry's framework is made explicit throughout, but becomes especially important in Part II where I undertake to show how their framework allows me to subsume the nuances of communicating metaphorically within a broader theory of communication.

## Preface

My love for the topic of metaphor grew from a rather peculiar place. During the middle of my undergraduate degree I was experimenting with ‘continental philosophy’. In a seminar on personal identity and recognition, I was introduced to the writings of Paul Ricoeur. Intrigued by his work on narratology and narrative identity, I impulsively purchased *The Rule of Metaphor* because I was curious to know what prompted Ricoeur to devote eight long studies—and numerous other essays—to understanding what I thought was a rhetorical non-issue. Already a fan of Ricoeur, I was immediately captivated by the ferocity he poured into his scholarship. These powers are evidenced by his ability to read, assimilate, elucidate, and historicize central issues surrounding nearly any topic he touched.

Reading Ricoeur’s study on metaphor put into relief just what is at stake, philosophically speaking: It became increasingly clear to me that there was in fact a ‘question of metaphor’. We use metaphors every day in meaningful ways. But an interpretation can be meaningful, and yet be incorrect—or deemed ‘false’. On a beautiful summer day, someone may utter: “The sky is weeping”. You would understand their statement, but would probably consider it false. Then again, a literal-minded person might consider the sentence false even if the sky were grey and raining—but still maintain that she understands it! Consider: “Trump is a halo surrounding a vacuum”. An ardent supporter and an embittered critic of Trump could both understand what is meant, thought viciously disagree on the correctness of the utterance.

Moreover, both could reasonably argue that the correctness of the metaphor is itself a matter of some historical fact, which itself could be objectively verified. Such

examples raise to the fore versions of perennial questions that have motivated countless philosophers. What does it mean for something to be correct? What is the difference between understanding and correctness? What is the difference between correctness and truth? Even more specifically, what is the difference between literal and metaphorical correctness, and their relation to truth?

The issue of metaphor aside, Ricoeur had challenged me in a more personal way. Although enraptured with this study, I began to feel a sense of disappointment with myself: I knew that he had originally published in French—I was not a speaker of French. It was near the end of my Master's degree that I decided I would read Ricoeur in his mother tongue. So, a short while later, I began to pursue French language training.

I am not completely fluent; but I now use the language regularly to communicate with friends and colleagues, and have even spent months on end in Francophone communities exploring and learning my new language. All this to say that my interaction with Ricoeur's work has had an enormous impact on my academic and personal life. Although I have never gotten a chance to meet him, I feel indebted to him for all that his work has exposed me to.

Ricoeur has shown me that the study of metaphor need not be reduced to philosophical long-division, so to speak. Rather, it is something replete with magic, mystery, and creativity. Thinking about metaphor is a task equal parts philosophy, rhetoric, literature, and art. It is here that we encounter the knot of human communication: imagination, speculative thought, and emotion. Ironically enough, at the heart of it all, it was the pursuit of truth that led me to the figurative.

## Acknowledgements

It is not possible to list all of the people who have contributed substantially—both directly and indirectly—to the completion of this thesis. Yet, I want to express my gratitude to some of the individuals and institutions, without whose generosity and help this project wouldn't have been possible.

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Thank you to the Zoom group. Your collective efforts have helped me improve my thoughts about metaphor and beyond. Individually, I want to thank Kenneth Olsen, Maria de Ponte, Richard Vallée, Genoveva Marti, Ekain Garmendia, Armando Lavallo, and Hung Jenny. Last, but not least, I want to thank my external examiner, John Perry, and Kepa Korta for your support, and allowing me to ramble and pontificate about metaphor, meaning, and reference.

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I want to dedicate this work to my family and those friends who have been a part of it. My mother, father, stepfather, sister, brother, nonna, Krista, LBJ, Dan, Deni, Ian, Kaden and Kyle. I have cited all of you in the footnotes, and I have referenced you in the bibliography, between the lines. Without all of your constant distractions, this project could have been finished sooner—if at all.

Per Aubrey—La familia è la patria del cuore.

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## **PART I**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

#### **1.1 Some opening remarks**

*What, indeed, would be the good of the speaker, if things appeared in the required light even apart from anything he says?*

*Aristotle, Poetics, 1456b8*

Not all utterances are equal. Some are better at expressing an idea, at persuading an audience or describing some state of affairs. A metaphorical utterance—roughly, a non-literal comparison between two unlike things—is unparalleled in its ability to restructure the way we think about the world: Metaphors can and do have profound effects on the way we understand and appreciate people and the objects around us. This is evidenced by the fact that this figurative device has been universally employed in literature, poetry, and oratory for millennia.

Because of its ubiquity, it should come as no surprise that the study of metaphor particularly, and figurative language more generally, is not in any sense a new area of investigation. It may be surprising to learn that it has a long (albeit, quiet) history. And like so much of our intellectual heritage, we must go back to the ancient Greeks to view what was happening in the beginning.

As G.E.R. Lloyd (1987) reminds us, the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical has never been simply a descriptive one. The explicit category of metaphor, like myth, had to be invented “against a background of overt polemic” (1987, p. 172). Greek philosophers at this time engaged in the debate “left no doubt as to which side of the conceptual divide they were placing themselves on” (Moran, 1996, p. 385). During

this period, the category of the metaphorical was itself a ‘rhetorical weapon’. We can see traces of this divide in Pre-Socratic literature, and Plato’s dialogues. Both are rich in figuration and in the aversion to the errors of rhetorical tropes.

It is perhaps Aristotle whom we can credit as giving the first systematic treatment of figurative tropes such as metaphor and simile in his *Poetics* and his *Rhetoric*. He attests to its power, telling us that “the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor” (1997). Yet, Aristotle’s conception of ‘μεταφορά’ (‘metaphora’ or ‘transfer’) is not exactly co-extensive to our contemporary understanding of ‘metaphor’. For Aristotle, the definition of ‘metaphora’ is that of transfer (ἐπιφορά) of a word or name from its original use to another, unusual one. The definition he gives is general enough to apply to many things that we would not, today, consider as ‘metaphor’. For example, the “transfer from genus to species or from species to genus” (1997, p. 1405 a27) covers ‘Odysseus did a thousand noble deeds’ as metaphora because ‘a thousand’ is a species of ‘many’). To us, this is completely normal; at the very least it belongs to some other category (perhaps hyperbole).

Nevertheless, the conceptual relation is close enough to our contemporary understanding that the problems of the communicative use of metaphor are still with us. Indeed, Aristotle’s account of metaphor in the *Rhetoric* is enough to give metaphor a place within philosophy more generally.

Aristotle assigned three cardinal virtues to metaphor. These are ‘being pleasing’ (ἡδύς), ‘lucidity’ (σαφής), and ‘strangeness’ (ξενικός). At first this seems like a strange grouping of words to characterize metaphor, but Aristotle, in a beautiful metaphor of his own, explains the interconnection between them: “Men feel toward language as they feel

toward strangers and fellow citizens, and we must introduce an element of strangeness into our diction because people marvel at what is far away, and to marvel is pleasant” (2004, p. 1404 b9-12).

This is particularly historically apt, given that although metaphor has exotic and interesting features, at the same time, Greeks did not recognize strangers as enjoying the same rights as citizens. They were suspicious of them. Thus, we are left with a feeling of ambivalence in regards to the way Aristotle conceives of metaphor.

There has been a long intellectual history of treating figurative devices as suspicious. To make matters worse, the intimate connection of metaphor (and figurative tropes more generally) to rhetoric was enough to make philosophers reject the study of tropes altogether, viewing them as inferior to literal language. Literal language is generally understood as straight and unadorned expression, free of verbal images and figures of speech. It is the language of truth and scientific objectivity.

Max Black’s (1955) article “Metaphor” shifted perceptions in the philosophic community surrounding metaphor. The paper ushered in a new area of philosophical research. Such newfound attention to metaphor eventually paved the way for other tropes such as simile, irony and metonymy. And so the study of figurative devices was emancipated from the periphery of academic discourse. Since Black’s seminal paper, there have been numerous attempts by linguists, philosophers, and cognitive scientists to explain the interpretive mechanisms guiding figurative language comprehension.

But why did philosophical perceptions change? What makes it so compelling to philosophers, linguists, and cognitive scientists? The fascination stems from their resistance to traditional profiling. Metaphors straddle the boundaries of language and

thought; between ordinary prose and aesthetics; between semantics and pragmatics; and between rhetoric and philosophy. They engage our thoughts, and incite our passions. Figurative language complicates our standard view of communication—that is, if we understand this to mean a system of information transfer that operates on the principle of the maxim efficiency. Metaphors often enhance, decorate, or even obstruct discourse where direct, literal language would do just fine.

We can witness the creative power of metaphor by these enduring expression: from “Homo homini lupus est” to “The Big Bang”, from our “moral compass” to the “glass ceiling”, and the “invisible hand” to the “information superhighway”. Metaphors not only highlight and describe aspects of our reality, they can guide and shape the ways we think about it (Barnes, 2009; Black, 1955). Metaphors can add a sense of concreteness to abstract concepts, such as the ways we talk about and understand love, life, and many of our affectations. As Ricoeur (1977) notes, It is this ability (μίμησις φυσσεως) of metaphor—to transform the sensation merely felt into a thought, and the mere *thing-over-there* into a concrete reality—that makes metaphor so fascinating.

It is now widely acknowledged that metaphor is a pervasive and powerful communicative tool. Because it is so fundamental to the ways in which we express ourselves, one can be naturally led to think that one of the major tasks facing researchers in this area consists in studying the ways in which our communicative use of metaphor intersects with thought. In fact, this is precisely where we now find the current state of research.

Indeed, in accordance with influential scholarship (e.g., Black, 1955; Camp, 2003; Carston, 2010; Davidson, 1978; Grice, 1975; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the study of

metaphor can reveal important insights into communicative practices and crucial aspects of the nature and organization of mental faculties.

Often times, metaphor seems nearly indispensable in communicating abstract concepts. For example, say you ask a very literary friend 'how would you describe Life?' whereby she responds by reciting some Shakespeare for you: 'Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more.' Such an example may seem strange, but it's not unlikely. Your friend did in fact *answer* your question, but what exactly did she *say*? What she said may not be easy to translate, but we definitely have some candidate paraphrases that seem worthy. For instance, she is probably expressing that our lives are not great spectacles, but something less significant, something meaningless, even. Perhaps, too, your friend wishes to express the fact that each of us never really *lives* life; that because we are too caught up in putting on an act for other people we never truly become ourselves.

Here, the metaphor allows us to picture images in our minds eye, such as the shadow of a person and an actor on stage. These images prompted affective attitudes, no doubt, such as the feeling of pity, loneliness, and insignificance.

Consider another example of an evocative metaphor about love from John Donne's *The Sun Rising*. Donne describes his lover as being all of the world's countries, and himself as each of its rulers: "She is all states, and all princes, I / Nothing else is". The power of metaphor is its ability to isolate characteristics by means of its comparison. In bringing certain features to the fore, it conceals others. In the above example, what is revealed are just those ways in which relationships embody both hardship and happiness reflected by the delicate relationship between a ruler and his kingdom.

However, we know that states evolve and devolve, others are conquered. We also know that princes are wealthy, lavishly dressed, and speak in pompous register. We know, too, that they can rule over the land with benevolence or tyranny. None of these facts seem to surface in our initial appraisal of Donne's metaphor. In other words, we understand the meaning of the metaphor as something like the speaker's love as a total and complete love, one that encompasses and commands everything within the geopolitical sphere.

Many of the features that we notice in Donne's metaphor we are 'bullied' into witnessing (Davidson, 1978). We have no choice but to see love *as* those figure-heads of their nation states. Not only does it provide a new way to conceptualize and speak about things, metaphor produces emotional, imaginative, and pictorial responses.

There are a number of questions that metaphors pose to theorists of language. To name just a few, we may ask: are metaphors bound to the realm of speech and language, or can there be visual metaphors? Does metaphor differ from other tropes of language (e.g., idioms, simile, analogy, metonymy, etc.)? What are the complex patterns of thought that enable an auditor to recover its meaning? How much does metaphorical meaning rely on the conventional meaning of the words in the utterance? How much does metaphorical meaning rely on context?

A single book on metaphor can hardly supply a full treatment of all of the various issues that surround the topic. Therefore, I focus on metaphor and meaning within analytic philosophy, specifically favouring the philosophy of language and communication. I incorporate recent cognitive research on metaphor to support my philosophical claims.

The idea to focus on the cognitive dimension of metaphor came to prominence when philosopher H.P. Grice (1975) contributed to opening a new area of exploration—a mind-reading operation, or, Theory of Mind (defined as the ability to attribute mental states to others)—that is crucial for discourse participants to engage in while interpreting nonliteral utterances. Unlike literal utterances, Grice, and others following his legacy, assumed that a hearer interprets a metaphor by having enhanced awareness of the speaker’s communicative intentions and the larger context in which the metaphor is uttered. These insights led to the development of a new set of conceptual tools for researchers to deal with various aspects of communicative behaviours, and thus, ultimately, faculties of the mind. A theory of metaphor naturally opens us up to other areas of cognitive investigation. Thus, it is my hope to develop a theory that integrates both philosophical insight and empirical data from the cognitive sciences.

I’ve divided this chapter into three main sections. I began the first part of this chapter with some general comments on the nature of my project. In the following section I introduce my readership to the paper’s central topics, ‘metaphor’ and ‘communication’. This second section serves to highlight important assumptions and convictions I have regarding pragmatic theory in linguistics and communication. It is at this point I reveal the machinery that I will be working with in order to tackle the two themes found in this work. The final section will outline the general framework of the project by presenting a breakdown of the chapters, and what they undertake.

## 1.2 Some remarks on my view

On my view, a metaphor is a pragmatic phenomenon where speakers exploit the conventional meanings of their words in order to undertake speech acts (i.e., the act that a speaker performs in making an utterance) with distinct propositional contents. By extension, whether a given utterance is metaphoric largely depends on the speaker's intentions and their communicative plan. Merrie Bergmann (1982) captures the point nicely:

Asking of a sentence itself...whether it is a metaphor is like asking of the sentence itself whether it is a lie, or whether it is a warning or an insult. In each case, the question is illegitimate. What we can legitimately ask is whether the sentence is, on a particular occasion, being used as a metaphor. And an answer to this question relies on recognizing, or assuming, something about the *intentions* of the person who uses the sentence" (1982, p. 232).

Bergmann offers the example *Jones is a communist* to illustrate her point. Note that the utterance can be taken literally, as expressing some fact about Jones—namely, that he identifies politically as a communist—metaphorically, to insist that Jones is unpatriotic, or that he is against religious freedoms, etc. We can also take the utterance ironically. Consider a situation in which the utterance about Jones is used to mean that Jones *is* patriotic, and perhaps even that he is a god-fearing, gun-toting, civic Republican. Here, what the speaker says and what she intends to say are quite clearly divergent (or perhaps even contradictory).

Understanding the utterance, and, perhaps more fundamentally, deciding whether the utterance is intended metaphorically or otherwise, will depend on the facts surrounding the context of utterance (including time and place, the speaker's beliefs), shared beliefs and background knowledge. The standard way for recovering (figurative)

meaning comes to us from Grice (1975) who addresses how maxims of conversation, context, and the auditor's inferential abilities about the speaker's intentions allow an auditor to reconstruct speaker's meaning.

As an aside, I depart from Grice and some of his followers (Martinich, 1984; Searle, 1993) in viewing metaphorical meaning as being more intimately connected to the conventional meaning of the words used than conversational implicatures<sup>1</sup>. Roughly, an implicature is not part of the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered, but depends heavily on features of the conversational context.

Back to Grice: One of Grice's main contributions was to account for the way in which we commonly communicate something that we don't say. Grice did this by drawing a distinction between the conventional meanings of the words used, what a speaker says in uttering those words, and what she means in doing so. In order to capture this notion, he coined the term 'implicature'.<sup>2</sup> What a speaker communicates by an utterance is the sum of what she says and what she implicates. Perhaps the most widely discussed examples of implicature are the figurative tropes. They are treated as instances of conversational implicature, whereby something is said and something else is meant.

For Griceans, this "subsumes metaphor within a larger theory of communication, on which speakers intentionally exploit shared conversational presuppositions. And it accomplishes this while allowing us to retain an attractive view of the relation between

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, I will use the 'implicature' as shorthand for 'conversational implicature'. I shall make explicit distinctions between various other types of implicature.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, this distinction is much more fine-tuned than my cursory remarks above. There will be a more thorough discussion later.

speaker and sentence meaning” (Camp, 2006b, p. 280). What this buys us is a clear way to logically distinguish semantic input from pragmatic input.

Until recently, Grice’s model of communication was the template used to understand figurative communication. However, a growing number of linguists, philosophers, and cognitive scientists reject this picture of communication. What concerns us in the present study is the dissatisfaction this group has with the way the Gricean picture draws the boundary between various figures of speech and literal/loose uses. In recent debates, relevance-theorists (henceforth: RT) (e.g., Carston, 2002; Wilson & Sperber, 1986) and their contextualist allies (e.g., Bezuidenhout, 2001; Recanati, 2004), argue that what a speaker intends to communicate is just what they said, opposing the traditional Gricean orthodoxy. They do so by arguing that conventional meanings are, almost always, underdetermined. This gap is bridged by processes involving pragmatic modulation (which are primarily enrichment and loosening). The outcome of this process is an occasion-specific (ad hoc) concept, typically referred to as ‘expliciture’ because it’s explicitly and directly conveyed (contrast this with the traditional Gricean notion of conversational implicature, whose calculation requires an inferential process). On this understanding, the once unique characteristics of metaphor are ‘deflated’. Metaphor is reduced to being understood as literal loose speech.

In so doing, not only do these theorists reject the classic Gricean programme, but they also complicate the neat and intuitive distinction between the conventional meaning of words and utterances and the speaker’s intended meaning. Although I agree with contextualists that there are some significant problems with Grice’s original picture, the notion of pragmatic modulation they evoke to deal with the problems in his framework is

too indeterminate. It seems that one could explain any change of meaning by invoking one or more of these processes. In my humble opinion, we are in want of a more nuanced model of communication. Therefore, it will be necessary to consider which theory, among the current theories of communication, are best fit to deal with the challenges posed by metaphor.

My view of communication, one that underscores the model of metaphor that I develop over the course of this study, is inspired by recent work in pragmatics. Particularly, it is taken from the book *Critical pragmatics: An inquiry into reference and communication*, and related works (Korta & Perry, 2011b).

I provide an abridged version of the main ideas presented in the book: 1. Language is a mode of action<sup>3</sup>; 2. Meaning and content are ultimately derived from speaker's communicative intentions; 3. Utterances have variegated truth-conditions.

1. Essentially, this idea finds its source in philosopher of language John L. Austin, who famously claimed that language ought to be viewed as a way of doing things with words. Korta and Perry follow suit in viewing acts of language, which they call *utterances*, as having a basic structure that is one instance of the more general structure of purposeful communication. Just as a speaker uses their body in various ways to accomplish certain goals, she make certain sounds and gestures to fulfill certain goals.

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<sup>3</sup> This is not to deny the Chomskian distinction between competence and performance. I am simply choosing to focus on the performative aspects of language. The distinction, however, does come into play in Chapter 9.

2. Our patterns of communicative behaviour are built on intentions to communicate something. In using language, a speaker utters something, typically motivated by some communicative intention meant to be recognized by an auditor.

Understanding an utterance is, roughly, the process of recognizing the speaker's communicative intentions, "whether by guesswork or reasoned inference" (Korta & Perry, 2012).

3. That utterances have different levels of truth-conditions comes from John Perry's distinction between reflexive and referential truth-conditions (Perry, 2012a). The distinction replaces the traditional Gricean notion of what is said. This position is now commonly referred to as 'pluri-propositionalism'<sup>4</sup>. Considerations of this view emerge from taking seriously the claim that utterances are actions. Roughly, pluri-propositionalism is the idea that "in assigning contents we consider what the rest of the world has to be like for the utterance to occur and be true" (Korta & Perry, 2012). Briefly, the reflexive or "utterance-bound content" are the truth-conditions, as constituted by the conventional meanings of the words used and their compositionality. Accordingly, it corresponds to semantically determined content. This content, however, is not the proposition expressed by a speaker, but rather acts as a set of conditions on the utterance and the proposition it expresses.

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<sup>4</sup> This is a term that has been decided upon by members of the Zoom group.

Further facts about the utterance, such as the speaker, time, place, addressee, or the speaker's communicative intentions will give you further levels of content.<sup>5</sup>

I take 1-3, at the very least, as providing necessary conditions for a pragmatic model of communication. Although the first two conditions seem pretty straightforward, it is the third condition that will strike my contemporary readership as the most controversial. If we accept the assumption that one and only one proposition corresponds to the utterance of a sentence, then discussion turns on how much pragmatic "intrusion" is allowed into semantics. The debate leads to an impasse as a result of the fact that it rests on what is referred to as the 'dogma of mono-propositionalism'.<sup>6</sup> Giving up this assumption tasks us with finding other means to reconcile the debate.

It may put the reader's mind to ease to point out that the rejection of mono-propositional has been proposed by several people, at least when dealing with some types of utterances. As Carston has remarked:

Until fairly recently, most semanticists and pragmatists have assumed that every utterance expresses a single proposition and so has a single set of truth-conditions. However, some philosopher and linguists (e.g., Wilson & Sperber, 1986) suggest that certain sorts of utterances "might express more than a single proposition, and thus have more than single set of truth-conditions... From different perspectives, and for a different

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<sup>5</sup> A critical pragmatics maintains that implicatures can be triggered anywhere from the purely reflexive content, through the intermediate content, to the official content.

<sup>6</sup> This turn of phrase was offered to me by my supervisor, Eros Corazza, although it is also referred to as 'contentualism' and 'multi-propositionalism'. I use them interchangeably.

range of cases, Bach (1999b) and Neale (1999) have made similar suggestions” (Carston, 2002, pp. 125–126).

Despite the fact that a growing number of pragmatists and semanticists seem to agree with the spirit of these basic points (1-3), many have not sufficiently and explicitly endorsed them. In current pragmatic theory, (1) the idea of language as action demands an account of the constituent components that play a role in speakers achieving their communicative goals; (2) in certain pragmatic theories, there has been an overestimation of the role that speaker’s intentions play, obscuring any role that may be played by the circumstances of the utterance or conventions; and (3) even if some authors grant their being more than one utterance content, most theories have not completely shed their mono-propositional assumption (once we subtract presupposition, implicature, and non-literal contents).

I follow Korta and Perry (Korta & Perry, 2011b) and company in endorsing and defending a ‘critical pragmatic’ model (henceforth: CP).<sup>7</sup> ‘Critical’ is taken here to mean both critical *of* current pragmatic theories (for the reasons cited above) as well as critical *to* linguistic inquiry (in that pragmatics is understood as being the root of linguistic theory).<sup>8</sup>

In what follows, my task is to convince the reader that CP offers sound reasons for dealing with metaphor this way in the present study. I ask the reader to approach this

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<sup>7</sup> I use CP to mean ‘critical pragmatics’ except where it is obvious I am referring to Grice’s Cooperative Principle (CP).

<sup>8</sup> Although I agree with the claim, I do not attempt to justify it.

text with an open mind; two of our greatest allies over the next several chapters will be thoughtfulness and patience.

### **1.3 The plan**

The general aim of the dissertation is to develop a broadly Gricean model of metaphorical communication. Metaphor is treated as a pragmatic phenomenon that evokes a certain pattern of thought in an auditor in order to retrieve the speaker's intended meaning.

Roughly, the study views metaphor as a matter of context dependency whereby pragmatic processes are called on to adjust the conventional meaning of an utterance in order to derive propositional contents and implicatures in addition to any content that may be literally expressed. Metaphorical meaning is part of the speaker's communicative intentions. In order for an auditor to get the right meaning will depend on knowledge of the conventional content of the utterance, shared knowledge about the world, and knowledge of the speaker's beliefs. The semantics of an utterances are complemented by the pragmatic information available to the auditor within the context of utterance in order to yield the appropriate figurative meaning.

The investigation is driven by a three important issues, and it's reasonable to expect a theory of metaphor to accomplish the following tasks: (1) A theory of metaphor should explain what metaphor is. That is to say, it should provide a definition and situate metaphor within the broader context of linguistic phenomena. (2) A central task of a

theory of metaphor is to explain how metaphors work, and what their effects are.

Theorists usually, though not always, postulate the notion of ‘metaphorical meaning’.<sup>9</sup>

(3) A theory of metaphor should be able to deal with metaphor in a variety of distinct linguistic environments. Examining the ways metaphors behave in other linguistic contexts can be instructive in outlining further constraints that a theory of metaphor interpretation must respect.<sup>10</sup>

To approach these questions, it will be necessary to consider influential theories of communication and how they deal with the three tasks laid out above. I explain the rationale for dividing the work into two parts. I then provide a synopsis of the individual chapters. The first part (chapters 1-4) provide the reader with the necessary background information that will be required to move onto part 2 (chapter 4-10). In the first part, I provide the reader with scholarship pertaining to both metaphor specifically, and philosophical theories of communication more generally. In part 2, I analyse the theories of communication with metaphor in mind. I offer the reader both the important takeaways and shortcomings of these theories vis-à-vis metaphor.

In the following chapter, I provide the reader with a primer on metaphor scholarship. I do this for three reasons. First, I strive to situate the position of metaphor in

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<sup>9</sup> Tied to this task are several auxiliary questions, problems, and philosophical issues. What is the nature of metaphorical truth? Do metaphors have cognitive content? Can metaphors be paraphrased in literal language? How can the distinction between the literal and metaphorical be drawn? Are metaphors natural kinds? That is to say, is there something that unifies all metaphors or are there several diverse phenomena?

<sup>10</sup> Although I do not consider metaphor in other linguistic environments in the present study, I refer the reader to Corazza and Genovesi (2018, and 2019 [forthcoming]) where the authors explore the use of proper names (including fictional proper names) used metaphorically, and the relation between metaphor and anaphora.

philosophy and cognitive science. Here, I examine the treatment of metaphor and its rise to philosophical significance beginning with Aristotle. Secondly, I establish a paradigmatic list of metaphors in order to give the reader a sense of the linguistic complexity and variability that we are dealing with—although I will limit my case study to nominal, predicative metaphorical assertions. Finally, I draw some important terminological distinctions to familiarize my reader with the vocabulary necessary to discuss metaphor.

Chapter 3 shifts gears by turning to three theories of communication in philosophy of language. I begin with a summary of the central tenets of Grice's inferential-intentional theory of communication. I look to his distinction between linguistic meaning, speaker meaning and his analysis of conversational implicatures. For Grice, speaker meaning is part of a category he calls 'non-natural meaning' (or  $\text{meaning}_{\text{NN}}$ ). I examine Grice's ideas of speaker meaning as distinct from other types of  $\text{meaning}_{\text{NN}}$  such as word and sentence meaning. The second part will examine Grice's division of speaker meaning into what a speaker says, and what he implicates. I then turn to a discussion of how auditors calculate a specific subset of implicatures; what Grice refers to as conversational implicatures.

Finally, I take up some issues with the Grice's theory of implicature. Classical Gricean pragmatics is usually thought of as dealing with implicature calculation or figuring out why a speaker said what she said. This is sometimes referred to as 'far-side' pragmatics (Korta & Perry, 2015). However, to get to the notion of what is said, we seem to need Gricean reasoning (the discovery of the speaker's intentions) to resolve ambiguities, (arguably) indexicals, proper names, and demonstratives. This suggests that

we require a ‘near-side’ pragmatics of Gricean reasoning about speaker intentions in service of determining, together with the semantics of the words used, what is said. But this raises the issue of circularity: Pragmatic reasoning is a result of determining what is said. But, what is said seems to require pragmatics to get started (Korta & Perry, 2008).

In chapter 4, I take up recent theories offered in response to Grice’s ‘circle’. A number of theorists have taken up the challenge in what is referred to as ‘the context wars’. Here, we consider the shortcomings of each approach. I offer the preferred approach (CP) as a means of mitigating the shortcomings of other theories that consider the role of context in the retrieval of meaning. I explain the central tenets of CP. It is an inferential approach to communication which is committed to providing an account of the things auditors must consider in the retrieval of the speaker’s meaning. Importantly, this account abandons the ‘dogma of mono-propositionalism’ in favour of a ‘pluri-propositional’ or ‘contentualist’ approach to semantics and pragmatics.

Chapter 5 examines two issues regarding metaphorical meaning. First, it asks whether there *is* metaphorical content, above and behind what the words mean literally. It looks at various positions concerning the nature of metaphorical meaning. The second issue is related to the first, and focuses on *how* metaphors work. In regard to the first issue, I compare cognitive and non-cognitivist accounts of metaphor. I develop a modest metaphysics of metaphorical content by contending with Davidson’s non-cognitivism. He claims that “metaphors mean what the words, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more” (Davidson, 1978, p. 32).

Although I believe that metaphors have a non-literal content in opposition to Davidson’s position, I argue that the content of a metaphor is not always precise, heeding

Davidson's remarks (but with qualification) that there is possibly "no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character. When we try to say what a metaphor 'means,' we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention" (Davidson, 1978, p. 46).

I believe it is reasonable to view metaphorical content as largely indeterminate.<sup>11</sup> Yet, I believe commitment to its content is cancelable, via considerations of other contextual factors (e.g., speaker's motivating beliefs, local contextual facts and clues).

Armed with a theory of metaphorical meaning, chapter 6 undertakes to identify how metaphors work. We turn back to some of the contenders grappling with Grice's 'circle' (chapter 4) but this time, with metaphor in mind. I offer two recent competing theories: Stern's indexicalist theory attempts to capture the meaning and mechanism of metaphor within a semantic framework that is largely inspired by Kaplan's work on indexicals and demonstratives. Next, I examine RT's deflationary strategy that treats metaphor as a form of loose use and ultimately a matter of 'what is said'.

In chapter 7 and 8, I turn a critical eye to two theories studied in the previous chapter. In chapter 7 I criticize Stern's indexicalist account on two fronts. First, I challenge his 'ellipsis argument'. Next, I challenge his argument that metaphorical content is 'lodged in the words'—he argues that metaphorical content is semantic because reporters can report the speaker's metaphorical content. In chapter 8, I criticize the deflationary account of metaphor endorsed by RTs and their contextualist allies. I do

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<sup>11</sup> Or at least they are highly evocative of many things that we could mention. This is especially true of novel and highly poetic metaphors.

so by evaluating a number of complex arguments these theorists have offered in favour of their preferred position.

Chapter 9 considers some outstanding issues regarding the implications of RTs ‘deflationary’ approach and recent psycholinguistic research. Here, I discuss the issue of imaginative and evocative features associated with metaphor as well as the role of the literal in metaphor comprehension. I provide a list of features that a theory of metaphor ought to consider.

Chapter 10 develops my approach to metaphor which is driven by CP. Here, I show that metaphorical content can be classified as a unique category of content by expanding upon Black’s notion of ‘associated commonplaces’.

## Chapter 2: Metaphoricity

Metaphor pervades speech. We employ metaphor in a number of ways: some ways of speaking metaphorically are familiar to us—and have become so familiar that we fail to recognize their *metaphoricity*—here, I mean something like the perception of their figurative character. A quick glance through a newspaper is quite telling. We may notice that the financial section mentions ‘soaring stocks’, or ‘plummeting prices’. These metaphors seem to hide in plain sight among their literal counterparts.

Yet, other forms of metaphor are so novel and outlandish that they may preoccupy us for a long time. For example, T. S. Eliot’s *Heart of light* is indicative of metaphor’s meditative and challenging conceptual qualities. We use familiar and novel metaphors in a wide range of contexts; from every day conversation (the professor did not *give* the students any *idea* of what to expect), to literature (*Juliet is the Sun*), and even science (*genes are selfish* or *electricity flows*). The numerous ways in which we employ metaphor in discourse provides at least one very important, albeit challenging, motivation to explore this expressive and pervasive communicative tool.

So what is metaphor? A brief, intuitive answer goes something like this: in metaphor, one thing is taken to as something else. But what is it to take something as something else? As we move through the text, we should keep this question in mind.

### 2.1 An anecdote

I was studying in my office, late one night, for several hours when I decided to watch something on Netflix©. I put on a stand-up special comedian Bill Burr. Anyone

familiar with him knows that he regularly directs criticism onto his audience. He finishes his set and the audience explodes into applause. I began to wonder how he consistently receives the large number of laughs from his audience. It's worth mentioning that most of his humour is generated by anecdotal stories dealing with social issues that a lot of North Americans identify with (such as our activity on mobile phones, obsession with celebrities, and propensity for fast-food). Sometimes I try and emulate his 'rants', but it only ever seems to offend those I'm speaking with. But, rather than getting upset with him for criticizing things like our mobile phone activity, obsession with celebrities, and the like, the audience celebrates the criticism.

Suddenly, a thought came into my mind. Roughly, it was something like: *good humour is brutal honesty with a handshake*. This turn of phrase allowed me to make sense of what I lacked in retelling his jokes with peers. That's not to say that I adopted the nonsensical belief that *humour has four fingers and an opposable thumb*. Humour, I know, isn't literally calloused like the palm, or smooth like the dorsal hand. Despite that, there seemed to be something fitting about the thought. Interestingly, regardless of whether you agree with my thought, it's obvious that you had no trouble interpreting the meaning. Perhaps, what you understood was something like *good humour makes people reflect on, and accept their flaws or vices*, or that in order for something offensive to be received positively *humour requires intimacy and concession*.

Now, the point I wish to draw your attention to is what I did when I had tried to conceptualize the way in which we so willingly accept—and even applaud—audience-directed criticism from comedians. What I produced in thought was a mapping between two domains of experience. We come to the metaphorical meaning via some interaction

that takes place in this mapping. By reflecting on the reasons why we shake hands—to establish a bond between people by signalling comradery and intimacy—and applying the appropriate set of features to my concept of comedy.

## 2.2 What is metaphor?

Metaphor is an example of what we typically refer to as figure of speech.<sup>12</sup> There are various ways one can speak figuratively, among them are metonym, synecdoche, hyperbole, simile, meiosis, and irony.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> A figure of speech or a literary trope is a type of non-literal use of language, produced and understood by speakers of natural language.

<sup>13</sup> People generally consider metaphor to be the most interesting form of nonliteral speech. But there are many other tropes distinguished by traditional rhetoric that are also of interest to our study of language. These distinctions will serve as points of contrast with metaphor, and so it is an important task.

- (1) Analogy is understood as a kind of mapping between entities and the relationships in their respective semantic network. An analogy explicitly demarcates similarities between its referents usually in the form: A is to B as C is to D, where A and B are of one system, and C and D are of another. We use analogies in ordinary language in order to explain or point out these relations. For example, trunks are to trees what straws are to water glasses.
- (2) Simile is an explicit comparison between two entities using the terms “like” or “as”.
- (3) Idioms are expressions whose figurative meaning has become ‘fixed’ in the lexicon, usually supplanting the literal meaning. For instance keep an eye out for her. We would not say my eye has been kept for her. This immutability in structure suggests that the meaning relies heavily on the entire unit of expression. Some other examples include: kicking the bucket, or the devil is in the details.
- (4) Indirect speech relies on implicature. This means that we rely on one form of speech to perform the function of another. For example, a particularly bad philosophy student—we’ll call him Chris—asks his philosophy professor for a letter of recommendation to apply to grad school. The professor reluctantly agrees and writes a letter. The content is as follows: Chris is well-dressed and has good hand writing. The point of the professor’s letter is to indicate that Chris is not a good philosopher; that the professor does not intend to endorse him as a candidate in a graduate program.
- (5) Metonymy uses one attribute or entity as an expression of a related one. For instance, Hollywood is used to refer to the U.S. film industry. Some other sources define metonym as a part that stands for the whole: for example, a piece of ‘cut hair’ may stand for virginity.

According to Reimer & Camp (2006, p. 846), what distinguishes metaphor from these other uses of non-literal language is that fact that I am drawing a comparison *in which one thing is represented as something else*. We may notice that metaphor exhibits a pattern of regularity that can be captured by the formula *A is (a) B*. Here, we understand *A* in terms of *B*, where the subject, *A*, is taken literally, and *B*, the predicate, is taken metaphorically. Take for instance, the following putatively uncontroversial examples:

- (1) John is a mouse.
- (2) All the world's a stage (Shakespeare).
- (3) Bill is a bird (E. Dickenson), or
- (4) A geometrical proof is a mousetrap (Schopenhauer).
- (5) She was a raging fire.

In the first example, John is compared to a mouse; in the second example, the world is being compared to a theatre stage; in the second, the subject is compared to a bird; in the fourth example, proofs are compared to mousetraps; the fifth example compares the subject's affective state to a wild fire.<sup>14</sup> Next, we shall consider a list of metaphors. A

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Synecdoche uses the part to stand for the whole, or the whole to stand for the part. We can also say that a genus term is used for the species or a species term for the genus. Unlike metonymy, synecdoche uses a more comprehensive term to describe the part. For example, the grey beard represents the older man.

<sup>14</sup> It turns out, however, that these examples do in fact stir up controversy. For some, examples (1) and (5) are conventional (or dead) metaphors that ought to be excluded from study. Instead, they would primarily focus on novel and poetic metaphors, such as (2)-(4). Others may focus on conventional metaphors (and may often times run into difficulties when trying to explain poetic metaphors). The discrepancy between the two indicates that 'metaphor' is not a unified phenomenon, and that we may be dealing with distinct phenomena.

fine example of a linguistic problem concerning metaphor is the role that literal meaning plays in the construction of metaphorical meaning.

### 2.3 A paradigmatic list of metaphors

Definitions of metaphor are typically accompanied by some uncontroversial examples—although this may prove to be more difficult than expected. Nevertheless, theorists usually identify certain features of metaphor as being more representative than others. For example, most authors will chose to look at noun-noun, predicative metaphors. These are usually captured by the formula *A is B*. However, this proves to be a difficult task once we recognize that metaphors do not exhibit uniformity across all instances. In fact, they differ along four dimensions: there are manifest differences in (i) syntactic structure (ii) their alleged literal falsity, (iii) the type of speech act it is embedded in, as well as (iv) the degree to which the meaning of the metaphor is conventionalized. I will briefly highlight these differences. Camp (2006, p. 161) provides a list of metaphors in order to highlight their various linguistic instantiations: We have the basic noun-noun pairing where the subject is taken literally, and the predicate metaphorically:

(6) Juliet is the sun.

Yet, the noun phrase can be metaphorical, as in

(7) The fox is fomenting discord among us once more.

Where we take the fox to be referring to a friend of ours.

The predicate can be a verb:

(8) The earth pirouettes around the sun.

Or the entire sentence can be used metaphorically to describe some unmentioned event or situation. Consider the Homeric lines from the Iliad:

(9) The sun blazes bright today; the clouds flee from his mighty beams. (Homer)

Where Homer describes Achilles in the battlefield. Adding to the confusion, we notice that metaphors also appear in any tense or mood. As Camp has shown, the following metaphor can be rephrased as a statement, a question, or an exclamation:

(10) The moonlight sleeps sweetly upon the bank.

(11) Does the moonlight sleep sweetly upon the bank?

(12) How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon the bank!

Like presuppositions, metaphors also pass the negation test. “The moonlight doesn’t sleep sweetly upon the bank”.

Moreover, the word or words that are used metaphorically can also manifest in any part of speech. Consider three more examples where the metaphor is first a verb, then a noun, and finally a participle:

(13) The smoke danced from the chimney.

(14) The trees bowed in the dance of the seasons.

(15) Dancing waters surrounded the canoe.

Furthermore, we intuitively assume that the hallmark of metaphor is its literal falsity, yet this is not always the case. Consider:

(16) No man is an island. (Donne)

Notice that on a literal reading the statement is trivially true.

Finally, we must also consider the conventionality of metaphor. Many theorists have pointed out that there exist many metaphors whose meaning is *open-ended, poetic, evocative, and affectively laden* (Camp, 2003, 2006a; Carston, 2010; Cohen, 1976). This means that the content produced in interpretation can be indefinite. Typically, such metaphors are freshly-minted, poetic, and quite novel. For example, poetic metaphors, like (2) or (3), are deliberately open-ended and flaunt their metaphoricity, so to speak. By contrast, there are metaphors that have a clear, and delineated content, such as example (1). The meaning of (1) is said to be conventional because it is clearly delineated and we typically use the predicate to mean the same thing across contexts of use.<sup>15</sup> A significant difficulty for a theory of metaphor is reconciling the fact that some metaphors invite many readings, or suggest many diverse things, while others are clearly delineated in content.

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<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that we cannot use the same conventional metaphor to mean something different across different contexts, or even within the same conversational context. Take for example, the metaphorical use of the word “snake”. When we call someone a “snake”, we typically (read: conventionally) use it to convey that one is untrustworthy, deceitful, etc. However, this does not mean that the metaphor is no longer active. For instance, if I tell you that “your friend John is a snake,” you may say “No he isn’t, he’s actually a really good guy”. To which I may respond: “No, that’s what I’m trying to say. I used to not like him, but like a snake, John has shed his old skin and is a new man, now.” Such uses of metaphor are permissible and often occur in regular discourse. This is because metaphors preserve a bit of deniability to the content that is expressed, even when the metaphor is conventional.

Finally, there is the phenomenon of *dead metaphor*. This is a former metaphor that has become inactive. The meaning has become so conventionalized so as to be idiomatic, and thus taken as the literal meaning (Heredia & Cieslicka, 2015). Once a metaphor dies, the word or phrase that was used metaphorically acquires a second literal meaning in our conceptual system. Some theorists investigate the career of metaphor, that is, they study it from a diachronic perspective in order to explain how metaphors die (i.e., become idiomatic).

Among the examples provided above, metaphor seems to exhibit a pattern. In each case, we have a mapping between two (or more) things and something is taken as something else. And so, it seems we are back to our original understanding. Keeping in mind that metaphors may manifest differently in language, we can use the notion of a comparative mapping to guide our investigation. To this end, I shall stick with the customary practice and primarily focus on assertive subject-predicate metaphors such as (1).

## **2.4 Terminological distinctions**

It will serve us well to touch upon the anatomy of a metaphor. But before delving into that, I would like to provide a bit of the history surrounding the use of the terms used to discuss metaphor theoretically. I.A Richards (1936) tells us that: “One of the oddest of the many odd things about the whole topic [of metaphor] is that we have no agreed distinguishing terms for these two halves of a metaphor—in spite of the immense convenience, almost the necessity, of such terms if we are to make any analyses without

confusion” (Richards, 1936, p. 96) He is quite right: Before his lectures, there is almost no consensus as to how we ought to approach and partition metaphor. In his book *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (1936), I.A. Richards develops two terms to aid analysis. The two principal terms are: *tenor* and *vehicle*.<sup>16</sup> And they identify the two halves of metaphor.

For Richards, the tenor is “the underlying idea or principal subject” and the vehicle typically provides the metaphorical attributes for the tenor (Richards, 1936, p. 97). For example, in the utterance

(17) My job is a jail.

“job” is the tenor, and “jail” is the vehicle. The job of the vehicle is crucial. For it provides the lens through which we understand our tenor—the topic of discourse. Despite some alternative wording, Richards’ method for partitioning metaphor is more or less the standard. Beardsley (M. C. Beardsley, 1962), for instance, provides a set of alternative terms, *subject* and *modifier*, which loosely correspond to Richards’ tenor and vehicle, respectively. In this case, the *connotations* of the modifier are what get attributed to the subject.

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<sup>16</sup> However, Richards tells us that not all metaphors consist of just one tenor and one vehicle. He provides an example of a more complicated metaphor which involves a secondary vehicle: *A stubborn and unconquerable flame/ Creeps in his veins and drinks the streams of life*. Here, the tenor is ‘fever’ and the vehicle is ‘flame’. Both fever and flame involve the rise of temperature, and people suffering with a fever often feel as if they are ‘on fire’. Yet, the concept of flame also carries the notion of *consuming* that which feeds it. Now we can see there is a secondary vehicle, that of some consuming thing that feeds on the person. Moreover, there is also the metaphor of blood as flowing water. It is worth pointing out that neither ‘fever’ nor ‘blood’ is explicitly mentioned (Way, 1991, p. 28).

Still, some other views expand upon Richards' distinction by adding a third ingredient. The metaphorical *ground* is meant to capture those common features shared by both tenor and vehicle, and delineate, so to speak, an area of interaction between them. To offer an example, we may say that in (16) features common to both tenor and vehicle include confinement, un-willful constraint, necessity, etc.

The term 'ground' is a bit troublesome because it implies that there are attributes that are shared by both terms. If metaphorical meaning is a result of shared features, it is difficult to see what features are shared by metaphors such as *jovial wine*, or *daring wound*. This is the reason Richards points out that it is often the disparities between tenor and vehicle which make a metaphor precisely that, and not always the ways in which they resemble one another.

Max Black offers his own terminology which parses a metaphor into that which is used metaphorically, and that which is not. He calls the metaphorical word or words in the sentence the *focus*, while at least one of the remaining literal terms is considered the *frame*. Another set of terms that Black introduces are principal and secondary subject, which loosely correspond to Richards' tenor and vehicle. Black provides an example to illustrate his terminology. Consider the following:

(18) The chairman ploughed through the discussion.

Here, "ploughed" is used metaphorically, and is the focus, while the remainder of the sentence is the frame (1955, p. 276). Whereas the primary subject is the chairman, the secondary subject is the metaphorical way in which the chairman went about his business during the discussion. Black's analysis, however, is problematic in that it concentrates

too much on the terms within the utterance, and reduces metaphor to the level of words. Some metaphors lack a literal word, and they are instead composed entirely of a metaphorical focus which renders the task of partitioning metaphor in this way a bit useless. On top of this, Black's analysis requires that metaphor always have two distinct subjects (the primary and secondary). This is something that Richards' formulation does not entail. For example, the metaphor *jovial wine* does not possess two distinct subjects. Rather, the tenor, "wine", and the vehicle, "jovial" along with our associations with joviality, depict only one subject—a glass of wine.

More recent accounts will substitute the term 'topic' for 'tenor', and 'source' for 'vehicle'. I will employ these terms whenever I consider my own theory on metaphor. However, many other authors we will discuss may couch their theory of metaphor in some different combination of terms. So, I will try my best to use them as intended. Putting this information together with what we discussed in the previous section, it is important that the reader proceed with the knowledge that when I am discussing metaphor, I am focusing on assertive metaphors in conversational contexts, of the paradigmatic subject-predicate "A is B" form. Here, "B" is the *source*, and "A" is the *topic*. So far, I have not committed myself to any theory of how the source informs our understanding of the topic. This will be the topic of discussion in chapter 5.

## **2.5 Four traditions of metaphor**

Interest in metaphor increased over the course of the twentieth century. This period was punctuated by sincere and close collaborations between artists, rhetoricians, linguists,

literary critics, and analytic and continental philosophers (Hills, 2016). These theories of metaphor developed during this period fall into four broad categories. The Comparativist account; the Semantic account; the Pragmatic account; and the Causal account.

Comparativist accounts cashes out metaphorical meaning in terms of an elliptical simile. The semantic account treats metaphorical meaning as the result of an interaction between the source and target, resulting in a semantic twist of the subject term. The pragmatic account treats metaphorical meaning as what the speaker intends to communicate, but did not say. Finally, the causal account maintains that metaphorical meaning is the result of psychological factors more akin to dream-interpretation. The latter position is also referred to as non-cognitivism, or the ‘brute-force theory’. Below I provide a brief introduction to these four now-classical approaches.

### **2.5.1 Comparativist accounts**

Comparativist accounts are perhaps the oldest and, until very recently, the most widely-accepted accounts. Aristotle suggested that metaphor were simply abridged similes. At the same time, a simile is simply a lengthened metaphor. On the comparativist account, the meaning of a metaphor is identified with its corresponding simile. Thus, metaphor interpretation relies on the interpretation of the corresponding simile. The simile theory seems intuitive because it is easy to see metaphor as a device that compares two things, and draws out their similarities. Another virtue is that such accounts for most of our intuitions about the truth-value of a metaphor. On a literal reading, the metaphor “Juliet is the sun” is false—Juliet is not a gaseous ball, at the centre of our solar system. However, the corresponding simile “Juliet is *like* the sun” is arguably true—since one thing can be

like something else in a number of ways. Robert Fogelin (2011) develops a particularly detailed account of this view. For Fogelin, a simple comparison A is like B is understood as saying that A has enough of the features of B that are salient in the present context. What counts as ‘enough’ in the way of the shared salient B-features depends on just those contextually salient interests or concerns that are taken to prompt the comparison in the first place.

Fogelin, following Tversky, supposes that when we compare A to B, it is the contextually salient features or aspects of the second individual or kind that is the source of similarity-fixing. One important factor in regards to Fogelin’s use of similarity represents a departure from the philosophical sense of likeness and resemblance or similarity typically construed as a symmetric relation, which holds that A is like B to the extent that B is like A. On Fogelin’s understanding, this won’t hold true for metaphorical comparisons. For example, one surely doesn’t draw the same similarities between “My surgeon is (like) a butcher” as they do when they say “My butcher is like a surgeon”. As with comparisons more generally, our interest in figurative similes isn’t an interest in “the bare fact of likeness; it’s an interest in the specific features of (an) *A* in virtue of which it’s figuratively like (a) *B*” (D. Hills, 2016).

Hills aptly refers to Fogelin’s account of ‘metaphor-as-simile’ as *Picasso likenings*. This is based on the following anecdote: Allegedly, Picasso was told by Gertrude Stein that his portrait of her didn’t look much like her, to which he said to have responded, “Don’t worry, it will.” Hills says that if we refer to such portraits “that vindicate themselves in the fullness of time by imposing their own novel standards of

vindication” a *Picasso likeness*, then we may characterize Fogelin’s account of simile as such.

### **2.5.2 Semantic accounts**

On the semantic account, metaphorical meaning is thought to emerge from the interaction of words and their meanings on an occasion-specific context of utterance. In other words, when we utter a metaphor, we give new meaning to one or more of our words or phrases. Semantic interaction theorists maintain that metaphors have an irreducible cognitive content (or metaphorical meaning). They also claim that the content of a metaphor can be true despite its being irreducible to literal paraphrase.

According to Black (1955), metaphors in the A is B structure interact via a ‘system of associated commonplaces’ where the ‘system’ in B filters our thoughts about the ‘system’ associated with A, generating a metaphorical meaning for the entire phrase or sentence. Black’s most famous example (and one that I turn to regularly throughout this work) is “Man is a wolf”. Here, the properties of being predatory, travelling in packs, and being ruthless are all commonplaces associated with “wolf”. These properties play an instrumental role (perhaps) in our understanding of the subject term “Man”. By filtering the system of “Man” through our ‘system’ of “wolf” we emphasize those commonplaces that fit with “Man”. Commonplaces, understood by Black, need not be true, and would even remain relevant to the metaphor even if we learned facts about wolves that contradicted our beliefs about wolves. Rather, the important point is what the denoting expression brings to mind.

A version of this theory is developed by literary scholar Harold Skulsky (1986). Skulsky maintains that when one speaks figuratively, they draw a particular dialect that departs from the vernacular of one's language to a *metaphorese*. This dialect is supposedly richer in the potential speech acts it affords certain sentences or phrases, as well as the meanings associated with particular words and phrases. This dialect must be picked up by the auditor in real-time. So, the speaker challenges the auditor to deploy their imaginative resources in order to keep up. On this account, a figurative device produces new word and phrase meanings when nothing in the standard vernacular will suffice.

### **2.5.3 Pragmatic accounts**

Following Paul Grice, theorists working within the American Pragmatic tradition have made some significant contributions to metaphor research. Perhaps the most notable contribution was extending meaning to include speaker *intentions*. Working in this tradition, theorists typically view metaphor as a matter of what the speaker *intends* to communicate. The fact that the speaker's words are literal poses less of an issue. On this account, metaphor is part of a genre of devices that is in the business of overt suggestion, to which speakers *commit themselves* by uttering them.

Within the realm of discourse, successful communication results when the auditor recognizes the speaker's intentions to get her to recognize what the speaker is trying to communicate to her. Thus, the meaning of the metaphor rests on what the auditor believes the speaker intends to communicate to them.

A broadly Gricean model involves three stages of interpretation. First, a speaker decides whether the utterance is literal or metaphorical. After they decide this, the auditor employs a series of communicative principles to generate possible meanings that the speaker may intend to communicate. Searle (1993) extends the Gricean approach to metaphor by focusing on the subject-is-predicate metaphor (S is P) whereby the speaker means something else (e.g., that S is R). Searle goes on to analyze three sets of elements within this structure: the subject expression “S” and the object or objects it refers to; the predicate expression “P” that is uttered along with its literal meaning, truth conditions, and denotation(s) (if any); and there is the speaker’s utterance meaning “S is R” and its truth conditions (Searle, 1993, p. 89).

Searle considers eight principles in total for metaphorical utterances. Briefly, the principles include “*Rs* being a salient feature of *P*-things, either by definition or contingency. Things which are *P* are often said or believed to be *R*; alternatively, it may be “a fact about our sensibility, whether culturally or naturally determined, that we...perceive connection, so that *P* is associated in our minds with *R* properties” (Searle, 1993, p. 103). Alternatively, if *P* things are not like *R*, and are not believed to be *R*-like, the condition of *P* may be like the condition of being *R* (Searle, 1993, pp. 103–107).

Finally, after generating a set of possible meanings by these principles, the hearer must decide which she believes is most likely to be the speaker’s intended meaning.

Camp and Reimer outline three virtues motivating a Gricean pragmatic approach as follows:

First, it captures the fact that metaphors are meaningful, that they have a “cognitive content” other than literal content. Second, it does this without violating what Grice called ‘modified Occam’s Razor.’ This methodological principle is simply Occam’s

Razor applied to linguistic meanings: *Don't multiply senses beyond necessity*. (Reimer & Camp, 2006, p. 856)

It does so because it incorporates literal sentence meaning with interpretive principles. Lastly, it accommodates a variety of linguistic tropes that are used in communication where there is a clear separation of speaker and sentence meaning.

#### **2.5.4 Causal accounts**

The staple of the theory is its traditional view of language, and draws a distinction between *how* words are *used* and *semantics* proper. For these theorists, a metaphor is a special use of literal language (such as jokes, lies, sarcasm) that must be explained by a theory of language use; for metaphor, there is no special meaning associated with its use (unlike the three previous models considered above). I begin with a quote from Donald Davidson in one of the most influential papers on metaphor:

When we try to say what a metaphor “means,” we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention...How many facts are conveyed by a photograph? None, and infinity, or one great unstable fact? Bad question. A picture is not worth a thousand words, or any other number. Words are the wrong currency to exchange for a picture. (Davidson, 1978, p. 31)

It must be qualified that Davidson, the main proponent of the brute-force theory, has no problem admitting that there are things we can call *metaphorical meaning*. We do, however, misappropriate meaning if we assume that such a meaning can apply to words or phrases—those we take metaphorically. Moreover, we misappropriate metaphorical truth if we assume it arises out of the sentences that we take to be metaphors. For Davidson, metaphorical meaning is akin to the meaning we assign to our dreams. Indeed, we are free to ascribe meaning to our dreams, but whether that meaning is tied to the particular dream depends as much on the

interpreter as much as the dream *per se*. Metaphor, Davidson tells us, “is the dreamwork of language, and, like all dreamwork, its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator” (Davidson, 1978, p. 31). It is determinate propositional content that metaphors are said to lack.

By rejecting the notion of metaphorical meaning in favour of a causal psychological theory, it makes no sense to explain metaphorical meaning in terms of any secondary, or special metaphorical meaning beyond what the words in the metaphor literally express. At the same time, *pace* pragmatism, brute-force accounts also deny that there is any other kind of propositional content that the speaker, or anyone else for that matter, intends to convey. Davidson argues that “all communication by speech assumes the interplay of inventive construction and inventive construal. What metaphor adds to the ordinary is an achievement that uses no semantic resources beyond the resources on which the ordinary depends” (1978, p. 31).

Rather, metaphor achieves its ‘wonder’ not by standing for, or expressing a fact, but more like a “bump on the head.” (1978, p. 46). In this way, Davidson proposes what we can call a causal view of metaphorical meaning: metaphor makes us “see one thing *as* another by making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight” (1978, p. 47).

Although the account may seem somewhat counterintuitive to the general programme, it does have its virtues. For one, consider its simplicity: metaphors achieve their effects without resorting to special types of meaning (e.g. speaker meaning and metaphorical meaning). A metaphor, like a bump on the head or a bird song, may *cause*

us to notice certain things, but we would be mistaken if we took the bump on the head, the bird song or the metaphor to *mean* its effects.

Secondly, the theory also envelopes theories of analogy and simile, arguing that they too lack cognitive import. Similes make their literal meaning explicit, and need not appeal to special forms of meaning. In so far as everything is like everything else in some trivial sense, similes can be said to preserve truth conditions, whereas metaphors (especially, and perhaps most explicitly, predicative metaphors) are patent falsehoods.

On Davidson's account, something like metaphorical meaning and truth (like mythic truth) is something closer to revelatory power conferred upon a metaphorical phrase or sentence. Similarly, as jokes require a sense of wit to craft, and a sense of humour to grasp, so do metaphors require a certain genius to invent, and a certain taste to understand them. Both jokes and metaphors make certain points; these points will be understood by some and lost on others. Their points are made possible by the appropriate assignment of literal meanings to the words and phrases that constitute the utterance (Hills, 2016). Thus, the ability to understand a metaphor is not built out of assimilating and applying certain rules; but capacities that are creative and inventive.

We have surveyed these four approaches in order to dispel traditional notions that metaphor is merely added verbal wrapping paper. Rather, it is a pervasive phenomenon and a powerful communicative tool. It is worth mentioning that although there is disagreement on answers given to the questions we examined in the previous section, all theories generally agree that a metaphor is about some topic, even if only implicitly identified; and this topic is supposed to be thought of in terms of something else.

Metaphors are ubiquitous in discourse and literature. This fact makes them a natural and (often) unreflective aspect of ordinary language use.

More recently, Lepore and Stone (2010) offer a Davidsonian account of how speakers and audiences collaborate in bringing out metaphor's accomplishments. They draw from David Lewis' work on convention, signalling, conversational scorekeeping, and speaker/auditor coordination to do so.

Lepore and Stone argue that analyzing metaphor in terms of speaker meaning (e.g., pragmatism), or special word meaning (e.g., comparativism and semantic interaction) is not possible given two constraints on collaborative communication. In order for something to count as coordination, a goal, G, must either

- (1) Consist in the addition of particular propositions to some public, jointly maintained conversational score or record; or at least,
- (2) All it would take to achieve G under the circumstances is some such addition to some such conversational score or record.

The goals built into jokes and metaphor don't seem to meet these conditions. It is not required of a joke that a community appreciate its humour together, nor do we need to explore figurative comparisons together. Metaphors, just like jokes, are instances of non-verbal communicative coordination. Basically, speakers may collaborate with audiences to bring about perlocutionary effects, without collaborating with them in bringing about any illocutionary effects. Thus, in telling a joke, or offering a metaphor, we do something *by* speaking the way we do without doing anything *in* speaking the way we do (Hills, 2016).

### Chapter 3: Communication

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the study of human communication within the field of pragmatics. The chapter begins with some preliminary remarks regarding some of the influential ideas about linguistic communication inaugurated by J.L. Austin, H.P. Grice and John Searle. I then turn to a discussion of influential models of communication. The first model we look at is the classical code model. We then consider the common criticisms with it.<sup>17</sup> The second model I explore is the inferential model that comes to us from Grice's work on meaning and implicatures. I then consider some of the common criticisms with Grice's model. The final model highlights some central tenants of CP, a communicative model that is an outgrowth of Austin's and Grice's work in pragmatics. I believe it rises to the challenges imposed by our criticisms from the previous section.

There is perhaps nothing people do more often than communicate with one another. And for the majority of us, nothing is easier, or seems more natural, to do. Of course we often fumble over our words, confuse one another's intentions, and pause to decipher what someone has said. But, for the most part, we communicate effortlessly and effectively. At the same time, communicating—and using language specifically—is an extremely complex ability.

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<sup>17</sup> Although I begin with pioneering work in pragmatic communication, I revert back to an older model of communication—the code model—the following section because when it comes to the study of linguistic meaning, the code model still has us in its grip. So, it is important to know what it is, and why it's so attractive.

What is unique about human communication is the presence of natural language. Standard textbook accounts of language will tell you that languages, like Italian and English, have three components in common<sup>18</sup>: Languages are comprised of a phonological system that determines how utterances are pronounced, a syntactical system that determines permissible strings of words, and a semantic component that assigns meaning to words and utterances.<sup>19</sup> More sophisticated accounts of language will add a fourth component that is not language-specific: pragmatics. The domain of pragmatics is not language specific because it is in a sense not internal to any specific language—at least not in the way the syntax of French is internal to French, and not, say, English.<sup>20</sup> We

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<sup>18</sup> Whether or not these components specify uniqueness conditions for human language in comparative analysis with non-human animal communication is up for debate. This issue runs orthogonal to our present purpose.

<sup>19</sup> Similarly, I understand the meaning of dead metaphors such as “gave” in “I gave you an idea” and many idiomatic expressions such as “to kick the bucket” as conveying their conventional meaning. Idioms, for example, have as their conventional meaning, the dead figurative meaning. In this case, the idiom above doesn’t function like other verb phrases, such as “kick the ball”. Rather, they function as a single lexical unit, largely independent of the literal reading, that contradicts the principle of compositionality. The principle states that the meaning of the whole phrase should be built up from the meaning of the individual parts that make up the whole. In other words, in order to understand a whole utterance, one must understand the individual component words. The above idiom, understood compositionally means that someone is physically kicking a bucket. But the meaning of the phrase is non-compositional. Arriving at the idiomatic reading is unlikely from the compositional reading. The phrase above is best captured by the infinitive “to die”. Thus, non-native learners of English often find idioms like the above quite difficult to acquire because the meaning is culturally specific, and transmitted intra-culturally from one generation to another.

<sup>20</sup> A superficial account of the ingredients specific to human language was first offered by linguist Charles Hockett in the 1960s. But, a checklist of features is not perfect. Despite Hockett’s attempts over the years to provide a list of universal features of human language, there a number of identifiable issues. First, the number of ‘design features’—as he called them—included in the list underwent significant changes over a decade: He added and subtracted from his list—the longest list containing sixteen design features.

A second issue, related to the first is that the list represents a random set of observations that do not seem to cohere in any obvious way. To use it as means for a definition of would be like defining a human being as having two arms, two legs, a head, and belly button (Aitchison, 2008, p. 27). Would such a description make us content? A major problem is that Hockett’s list does not specify which features are most important, or how they are kindred. Some of the features are fairly general and occur widely in the animal kingdom. Others are more particular. I do not hazard to give an account of the uniqueness conditions of

will turn to a detailed discussion of pragmatics after I define the first three components. Pragmatics is crucial to linguistic theory. It is perhaps better to understand pragmatics, not as a branch of linguistics, but as its root.

I would like to set aside an issue before we address the current task: For the purposes of this thesis, we will not look at phonology, because it is not crucial that a language be spoken. Although a lot of what I discuss favours spoken language, it can be applied to sign language without issue (or so I hope). Whether or not we speak or sign, it seems clear that we exploit our linguistic system to produce and comprehend meaningful linguistic strings.

Syntax is related to semantics in three important ways. Each of which we discuss in turn. These are *discreteness*, *generativity*, and *compositionality*. Discreteness refers to an organizing principle in which linguistic elements can be broken down into distinct and independent parts that combine with one another in a rule-governed way. For example, English uses the sound /s/ to mark the plural.

Another important feature of linguistic communication is *generativity*—sometimes referred to as *creativity* or *productivity*. Following Chomsky (2006), ‘generativity’ is a technical term used to mean the ability to produce an infinite amount of meaningful sentences. For example, I can assume with a bit of certainty that the reader will be reading the following sentence for the first time: “The goat jumped over twelve bottles of bourbon and then he tried to hem his pants”. We produce novel strings all of the time without causing problems for auditors to interpret. On top of this, we have a

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language. Rather, I focus on the domains of study as they are understood by linguists and philosophers of language.

remarkable ability to reject as impermissible utterances that we have not heard before, such as: “They will our have been cactus”.

The term generativity is also used in a subsidiary sense to mean that our utterances are not causally determined by external events—we can and often do speak about and respond to things in our environment however we want. When we look at a painting of a rose, for instance, there is nothing that compels us to respond to it by saying “rose”. For example, we can respond in myriad ways: such as “I’m reminded of my grandmother”, or “It makes me think of hotdogs.”

Searle (2009, p. 182) understands this as the *internal* and *controllable* structures in our thought processes. We can put the point as follows. Let’s grant that a dog may perceive, and think that, as we would put it, “someone is approaching the door”. However, unlike its human owner, the dog is not in a position to differentiate the thought above from its passive counterpart, “the door is being approached by someone”. Furthermore, the dog cannot take the true thought “Someone is approaching the door” to form the false thought, “The door is approaching someone”. Even though a dog can appreciate the component features of the thought, such as “door”, “approaching”, and “someone”, they cannot freely manipulate the syntactic structure along with its semantic content. This leads us to the second element.

We can think about compositionality as being both a syntactic and semantic property. Syntactically, we know that a sentence is built out of smaller, discrete elements, following rules of combination. Semantically, the meaning of an utterance is determined by the meanings of smaller units, such as words and morphemes that, together with their syntactic structure, combine to produce meaningful utterances. The sentences “Peter

kisses Mary” and “Mary kisses Peter” are built out of the same elements. Yet, they mean different things. This is due to the fact that the component parts are not arranged in the same way. These three elements reveal the mark of human linguistic creativity.

The picture we have of language so far is good but it’s not complete. More accurately, what we’re missing is more like a network of phenomena we can properly collect under the domain of pragmatics. We can identify the elements of pragmatics by asking ourselves what the primary function of language is. On a first pass, language is a means to communicate with other conspecifics. What we are communicating is information. For the most part, this information is an intentional state transmitted via conventional linguistic devices—speech acts. For example, when I tell you that it is sunny outside, the point is not that I want to tell you about my beliefs; rather the point is to communicate to you something about the world.<sup>21</sup> But there is no way to do this except by using my weather-oriented intentional states—my beliefs. In the next section I clarify the relationship between the various ways a speaker can *mean* something. The sentence “It’s sunny outside” has a conventional meaning. In uttering that sentence to you, I perform a specific type of speech act—an assertion—and I convey my belief that it is sunny.

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<sup>21</sup> Some philosophers and linguists may take issue with this point. For a fruitful discussion on the purpose of language see the exchange between Hauser, Chomsky, & Fitch (2002), the rebuttal by Jackendoff & Pinker (2005), and the rejoinder by Fitch, Hauser, & Chomsky (2005).

### 3.1 Language: Conventions and intentions

So much for these preliminaries. In this section, we examine the relation of the domain of pragmatics to the components of language discussed in the previous section. In order to characterize this, I begin by way of example: “When a diplomat says *yes*, he means ‘perhaps’; / When he says *perhaps*, he means ‘no’; / When he says *no*, he is not a diplomat”. These humorous lines remind us of the fact that there is more to meaning than semantics which consists of (as I mentioned above) the conventional meanings of words and their patterned modes of combination.

We can invoke the type-token distinction to capture the different programmes pursued by semantics and syntax on the one hand, and pragmatics on the other. When we study the conventional meanings of words and the modes of their combination, we are examining expression *types*. Pragmatics on the other hand examines *utterances*, which I take to mean something like an occasion-specific linguistic event that includes the speaker’s intentions, and the time and place of the utterance. Unlike examining the properties of expression *types*, pragmatics deals with those properties that differ from token to token, use to use, utterance to utterance.

As the above example shows, speakers mean more than just the standard, literal meaning of our everyday words. In fact we regularly employ our words to mean different things in different contexts. Pragmatics is interested in understanding how we are capable of doing this. Thus, it investigates the relationship between the meanings of words, and what speakers mean when uttering those words, the context of their utterance, their intentions, and they ultimately manage to communicate.

Pragmatics is typically thought of as involving a different sort of reasoning strategy than semantic processing requires. For instance, Locke held that communication was basically a matter of encoding thoughts into words and then decoding words back into thoughts. This seems to accord well with the picture that emerged from logicians and philosophers of language in the tradition of logical empiricism. The view of language from this system of thought understands it as essentially a system of phonological, syntactic and semantic rules, of which speakers and hearers have implicit competence.

Paradigmatically, the sincere speaker plans to produce an utterance with the truth-conditions of a belief she wishes to express; she chooses her words so that her utterance has those truth-conditions; the credulous interpreter needs to perceive the utterance, and recognize which phonemes, morphemes, words and phrases are involved, and then using knowledge of the meanings, deduce the truth-conditions of the utterance and of the belief it expresses. (Korta & Perry, 2015)

In contrast, pragmatics involves perception plus some form of ‘ampliative’ inference.<sup>22</sup> Just what is intended by ‘ampliative’ reasoning is a present concern for pragmatists. Answers to this issue notwithstanding, it is sufficient here to understand that I mean just any sort of reasoning that goes beyond combinatorics and the application of rules, and makes inferences beyond what is established by the basic facts about what expressions are used and their meanings.

### **3.1.1 Speech acts**

John Austin was interested in the ways that we can put our words to different uses.

Whether I intend to admonish, promise, suggest to you, or merely indicate is not only a

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<sup>22</sup> Certain ‘high-level’ theories, such as Grice’s (see next section), apply general principles to communication. The challenge for ‘lower-level’ theories is to determine what which strategies—induction, inference to the best explanation, Bayesian reasoning—are behind these general principles.

matter of choosing the right words with the appropriate meanings; but what I intend to accomplish with them, and the social and institutional setting in which they occur. I may, for example, intend (and succeed) to warn you by yelling: “LOOK OUT!” Arguably, my intention and the ability to warn you depends on the social conventions governing the act and intention of warning. Austin refers to our ability to conform to these conventions of language use as *illocutionary acts*. According to Austin, this turn of phrase represents one level of action in a trichotomy that is performed by a speaker in an act of uttering.

According to this three-fold distinction, a speech act is first a *locutionary act*. This means an act *of* saying something. Now, in performing a locutionary act, we typically perform an illocutionary act. That is to say, *in* an act of uttering, we also perform an act with certain *force*. That is to say, we can make command, request, order, promise, etc. Finally, *by* doing that, we typically cause certain effects upon our audience’s thoughts, feelings, and actions. Austin referred to this as the *perlocutionary act*.

Searle (1969) develops Austin’s speech act theory, treating it as a theory of the conventional conditions that constitute the (successful) performance of illocutionary acts. These rules are classified as (i) propositional content rules. Basically, these rules place constraints on certain illocutionary acts; (ii) preparatory rules tell what the speaker undertakes in the performance of an illocutionary act; (iii) sincerity rules which indicate the psychological state the speaker expresses; and (iv) essential rules, which gives what the action consists in (e.g., promising is *essentially* an act of obligation). Speech act theory takes a social or institutional view of linguistic communication. That is to say, an illocutionary act is a conventional act that is done by way of conforming to a social

convention: for very many kinds of human transaction involving speech are governed and in part constituted by what we easily recognize as established convention of procedure additional to the conventions governing the meanings of our utterances.

### 3.1.2 Grice and intentionality

Sometimes, speech act theory is contrasted with intentionalist accounts of communication, such as the kind inaugurated by Grice and developed by Strawson (1964) and others. However, this contrast is somewhat misleading. In fact, it may be more promising to view the two sets of theories as emphasizing one aspect over the other. A recent article by Haugh (2008) provides a number of accounts that address the issue of the primacy of intention in pragmatics, while providing one of his own.

Grice's theory of meaning, like speech act theory (outline above), is an account of meaning that goes beyond what words and sentences mean in their standard, conventional sense. Thus, Grice attempts to isolate a particular kind of meaning, one which he refers to as 'communicative meaning', 'speaker's meaning' or 'non-natural meaning' (i.e., meaning<sub>NN</sub>). In short, this is what the speaker means by a sentence on a particular occasion of use.

Thus, Grice's theory of communication ultimately rests on intention recognition. For Grice and his followers, the study of pragmatics is premised on the view that communication involves speakers expressing their intentions, and hearers attributing those intentions back to those speakers. The crucial idea here is that cases where *S* means that *p* be analyzed roughly as *S* intends for her audience *A* to believe that *p* by means of *A*'s recognition of that intention. In a subsequent paper, Grice (1969) offers a more

complex idea along the same lines. The root idea remains that same.  $\text{Meaning}_{\text{NN}}$  (speaker's meaning/what a speaker intends to communicate) is analyzed in terms of reflexive intentions—intensions to induce a psychological state in the audience by means of a recognition of that very intention. The result of this account of meaning so far does not provide a distinction between what a speaker conventionally *says* from whatever else she may succeed in communicating by means of the same token. Making this distinction is the challenge for Grice's theory of implicature.

### **3.2 Three models of communication**

In this section, I discuss three influential models of communication beginning with the classical code model and its implications for an analyses of linguistic meaning and communication. I then examine two inferential approaches to communication. I look at Grice's intentional-inferential model, and then turn to CP. We consider both inferential models because CP can be understood as a natural outgrowth of the Gricean programme, equipped with dealing with its noted pitfalls (we explore this in § 3.2.2). According to CP, communication is a *forensic* matter, dealing with the production and interpretation of communicative evidence in service of determining what a speaker means. We then consider some of the implications that CP might have for the study of linguistic meaning.

#### **3.2.1 Code theories of communication**

One of the earliest models of the code theory can be found in John Locke. Locke supposed that communication was essentially a matter of a speaker encoding their thoughts into words, and the listener decoding those words back into thoughts. We find a

version of this picture of communication in the work of Saussure and later a version of it developed by Shannon and Weaver in the middle of the twentieth century.

Specifics aside, a code theory is specified by three elements: (i) a set of observable signals, (ii) a set of unobservable ones, and (iii) a set of rules pairing messages with signals, a code. The process moves as such: a speaker intends to communicate something to someone. So, they create a signal in wave form, represented phonetically (based on a system of shared sound conventions). The message itself is represented by the conceptual system, and the code is the grammar of a language, which links grammar with thought (Fodor, 1975, p. 106). One important implication of this picture is that a successful act of communication is the duplication of the message. The message encoded by the signaller is identical to the one received by the auditor.

In pragmatics, the message expressed by an utterance decomposes into two parts: the content, or proposition P, which represents a possible or actual state of affairs, and the illocutionary force or propositional attitude F, which represents speech acts (promising, asserting, etc.) or cognitive states (believing, intending, etc.) (Wilson, 1998).

According to code theories, the only way to communicate a concept is to encode it. This means that all meaningful expressions in a language, including attitudinal expressions, must encode concepts. If expressions in language fall into these two categories, a code theory ought to encode two types of information—that is, propositional and attitudinal states. The code model handles content words quite nicely. It also accords well with our intuitions that they are conceptual representations. Here, I have in mind concepts such as ‘red’, ‘dog’, and ‘apple’. In the second case, we have illocutionary and attitudinal expressions such as mood indicators that differentiate sentences (19)-(21):

- (19) Sally will jump.
- (20) Will Sally jump?
- (21) Jump, Sally!

In this category, we include discourse adverbials (22), discourse particles (23), connectives (24), and perhaps interjections (25):

- (22) *Really*, how much was that?
- (23) *Please*, you're hurting me.
- (24) Susan left her laundry, *because*, I saw her hamper.
- (25) *Wow!* That looks great!

What exactly do attitudinal expressions encode? The case is not clear; there were many attempts to treat attitudinal expressions under the code model in the late sixties.

Eventually, it became evident that the code model was unable to handle a number of new observations of language brought to light by linguistic pragmatics.

The code model was criticized from two fronts—what Kortt and Perry often refer to as ‘near-side’ and ‘far-side’ pragmatics. First, on the far-side, Grice pointed out that not all communication needs to be encoded. Grice can explain the implicated content in the following:

- (26) A: Will Sally be at the meeting today?  
B: Her car broke down.  
+> A implicates that Sally won't be at the meeting today.
- (27) A: Will Sally come to the movies tonight?

B: Her car broke down.

+> B implicates that Sally won't be coming to the movies that evening.

(28) [It's pouring rain, you're two hours late, and your car gets a flat tire] This is a fine state of affairs!

+> This is a terrible state of affairs.

Notice that speaker B says the exact same thing in each case, yet speaker B is able to communicate something different by offering the same response.. A pure code model has significant difficulty in dealing with typical cases of banal conversation. Thus, the implicated content in examples (26)-(28) provide evidence in favour of an inferential model over a pure code model. The second attack on the code model came from near-side observations by linguists and philosophers studying context-dependent expressions, such as reference assignment, indexicals, demonstratives, quantifiers, etc. Although, we must be careful as to what we are referring to here.

Can referential expressions be handled with code-like rules? It seems that there are a subset set of indexical expressions that, following Kaplan (1989), we call 'pure indexicals'. These are indexical expressions whose "referent is dependent on the context of use...[whose] meaning provides a rule which determines the referent in terms of certain aspects of the context" (Kaplan, 1989, p. 490). Examples from this list include expression such as 'I,' 'now,' 'tomorrow,' and 'here,' can be dealt with via a semantic rule. For example, the encoded content of 'I' is the *character* that selects the speaker of the utterance. This, however is not the case for other demonstratives, such as 'she,' and 'he'—and similarly for 'this' and 'that' which requires an understanding of what the speaker has in mind.

### 3.2.2 Grice's inferential-intention model

One of Grice's contribution to pragmatics was to provide an update to the code model based on inferential intention-recognition. Perhaps some of the clearest cases of inferential communication are non-verbal; involving pointing, gesturing, mimicry, and various other ostensive displays. Because of his focus on intentions, Grice's model of communication places it within the broader picture of human agency. Utterances are actions that are the result of intentions—reasons for doing something. Within this picture, interpreters are confronted with similar tasks when engaged in understanding actions. The ability to do this requires at least a modicum of coordination. In a general sense, linguistic communication is akin to other goal-directed abilities in that participants seeks coordination to have certain outcomes met.

Intention-recognition is a form of mind-reading—a guesswork designed to apprehend an interlocutor's motivating state, driven by contextual clues—that allows interlocutors to make sense of their communicative intentions. Let's consider a non-linguistic example. When does a cough come to mean more than a cough? Imagine that you are walking into a classroom, but there are a few people blocking your way, with their backs to you. In order to make them aware of you, and to request that they move, you can produce a small cough in order to get their attention and request that they move out of your way. The group were able to recognize that you didn't cough due to illness; rather that you intended to mean something—i.e., get their attention and discretely request them to move out of the way.

The above also illustrates another important and related aspect of communication: that inferential behaviour is largely a cooperative endeavour. Indeed, human behaviour is

normally cooperative. But competitive mind-reading and manipulation are also part and parcel of our behavioural practices. Competitive examples of mind-reading can be noted in deceptive displays and dummy actions. Competitive sports is a prime example.

Consider a basketball player driving his way to the basket. He may act as if preparing to execute a certain move—perhaps he signals a move to the right side of the court by shifting his body just so, and drawing his gaze to that side; his opponent reads this apparent intention and sets to act in response—by shifting his momentum to his opponent’s right side. At the last moment, the dummy signaller performs a different action—crossing the ball from the right side of his body and through his opponent’s legs, and violently shifting momentum to the left side, which is now wide open—deceiving his opponent and scoring the basket.

At base, for Grice, linguistic communication requires that speaker and an auditor fulfill certain tasks that will determine the success of the communicative intention as made manifest by the speaker’s communicative act. In order to grasp the speaker’s communicative intention—that is, entertaining *why* a speaker chose to say what they did—the hearer must also understand what sort of communicative act is performed by the speaker in the context of utterance (an imperative, a question, an assertion, etc.).

It also requires that the auditor subsequently perform the relevant action toward the utterance (whether she obeys the command, answers the question, or adopts the belief *that p*, etc.). Let’s look to an example. Say that we are both inside my house, but you leave my door wide open, letting in some flies. I yell to you “Shut the door!” causing you to promptly turn around and close it. This requires that you recognize the meaning of my utterance, that the utterance I produced was a command, and that I intended you not only

to understand the command, but also perform the relevant action—in the example, shutting the door closed would satisfy the command. Ultimately, linguistic communication rests on the recognition of the speaker’s communicative act and their communicative intention.

Figurative devices are often used as paradigmatic examples of employing mind-reading in service of recovering the speaker’s intentions. Consider Bezuidenhout’s (2008) example of a remark made by a bartender to an attractive female client, referring to an aging hipster sitting in the corner: “Mick Jagger over there wants to buy you a drink.” The auditor will take some working out that the statement is intended to refer to a particular customer, sitting off in the corner, and not to the frontman of celebrated R&B group, The Rolling Stones. The attractive customer may further infer that the bartender meant to be derisive, by calling into question the lifestyle choices of the man he is intending to refer to: such as his clothing, haircut, and the incongruence between these stylistic choices and his apparent old age.

### ***3.2.2.1 Communicative intentions***

Grice conceived of communicative intentions as the ultimate basis for a meaningful utterance. Communicative intentions are the causes of communicative acts, which are made manifest by an act of uttering. So conceived, communicative intentions have the following properties:

- (A) They are always oriented towards some other agent — the addressee.
- (B) They are overt, that is, they are intended to be recognized by the addressee.
- (C) Their satisfaction consists precisely in being recognized by the addressee.

Grice later refines his definition, giving way to debate about the characterization of communicative intentions:

- i. Communicative intentions are intentions to produce some response on the part of the addressee.

But what sort of response? Korta and Perry (2015) offer the following:

Suppose I tell you, "It's raining." This act may have many results: perhaps you will hear the words, understand their meaning, come to believe that it is raining, search for your umbrella, fail to find it and grow angry, and finally become so angry you chew the rug. I may have planned all of this, but more typically I will have had in mind that you be prepared for the weather. But my communicative intention seems to be directed at a crucial subgoal. If I get you to believe it is raining, your own rationality will take over and you will get prepared. What I seem to aim at is changing your beliefs. It was this sort of response that Grice took to be typical in his early work on meaning. But it is really more in line with the spirit of his proposal that the crucial subgoal be to get the audience to believe that the speaker believes that it is raining. That's really the change that language can bring about; having gotten the audience that far, the speaker needs to hope that the audience trusts her weather-knowledge, will take the steps to themselves believing in rain, and then prepare adequately for the weather.

But even this rather modest subgoal may be too much to require for the success of the communicative action qua communicative action. Suppose I say that it is raining, and you hear me and understand the meaning of my words. But you don't think I am being sincere; you don't believe that I believe what I said. But still, I have said it. My overall plan to help insure that you don't get wet and catch cold may fail, but I do seem to have succeeded in saying what I set out to say. It seems that the only new mental state needed is the audience's recognition of the speaker's communicative intention; his understanding of the speaker's utterance. This is what has been called 'illocutionary uptake'.

Our illocutionary acts are satisfied if we get our audience to recognize what we want them to do. Notice, however, that 'effect' on the audience is not itself a belief or a response. Rather, the auditor must only understand the utterance of the speaker. So, we can refine the above by saying that:

- ii. Communicative intentions must be wholly overt:

An auditor understands the force of an utterance if the auditor recognizes that the speaker intended her to recognize it *as such*.

### 3.2.2.2 *Conversational implicature*

Grice's theory of conversation begins with a distinction between what words mean, what the speaker literally says when she uses them, and what the speaker means or intends to communicate by using those words, which often goes beyond what is said. For example, in uttering (1) I conveyed to you that Sally will not be at the meeting, even though I haven't literally *said* so. I intend for you to figure that out by providing a reason for her not going to the movies. That is to say, I intend to convey that she is not coming for that reason. This is what Grice referred to as a *conversational implicature* (CI). CIs are at the core of his theory of communication.

Grice's theory of conversation commences with a sharp distinction between what someone says when uttering something, and what someone implicates in an act of uttering. What someone says is determined by the conventional meanings of the words used, together with some contextual processes such as disambiguation and reference-fixing. What a speaker implicates is done in connection with some cooperative maxims governing conversation. What is said, for Grice, is characterized as the literal content of an utterance. What is implicated, with the non-literal. Thus, CIs are intended meanings communicated, but not said, by a speaker.

According to Grice, a CI can be calculated is grounded in rational behaviour. This includes the shared knowledge of what is said, and the context (together with relevant

background and worldly knowledge) and consideration of what Grice refers to as the ‘Cooperative Principle’ (CP):

“Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice, 1989, p. 20).

According to Grice, the CP can be divided into submaxims that speakers and hearers make apply in discourse. Ultimately the maxims derive from general principles that govern rational human cooperative behaviour. There are four in number:

*Quantity:*

- Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

*Quality*

- (Supermaxim): Try to make your contribution one that is true.
- (Submaxims):
  - Do not say what you believe to be false.
  - Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

*Relation*

- Be relevant.

*Manner*

- (Supermaxim): Be perspicuous.
- (Submaxims):
  - Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - Avoid ambiguity.
  - Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
  - Be orderly.
  - Frame whatever you say in the form most suitable for any reply that would be regarded as appropriate; or, facilitate in your form of expression the appropriate reply

In order to calculate an implicature, Grice provides this formula for understanding implicatures:

He has said that  $p$ ; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; he could not be doing this unless he thought that  $q$ ; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that  $q$  is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking that  $q$ ; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that  $q$ ; and so he has implicated that  $q$ . (Grice, 1989, p. 31)

Conversational implicatures have the following characteristics:

*They are cancelable:*

...a putative conversational implicature that  $p$  is explicitly cancelable if, to the form of words the utterance of which putatively implicates that  $p$ , it is admissible to add but not  $p$ , or *I do not mean to imply that  $p$* , and it is contextually cancelable if one can find situations in which the utterance of the form of words would simply not carry the implicature. (Grice, 1989, p. 44)

*They are non-detachable:*

... it will not be possible to find another way of saying the same thing, which simply lacks the implicature in question, except where some special feature of the substituted version is itself relevant to the determination of an implicature (in virtue of one of the maxims of Manner). (Grice, 1989, p. 39)

*They are calculable:*

The presence of a conversational implicature must be capable of being worked out; for even if it can in fact be intuitively grasped, unless the intuition is replaceable by an argument, the implicature (if present at all) will not count as a conversational implicature. (Grice, 1989, p. 31)<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Grice considered this last point a crucial condition for distinguishing between conventional and conversational implicatures. Conventional implicatures are generated by the meaning of certain discourse particles such as 'and,' 'but,' 'nevertheless,' 'therefore' etc. Consider the difference between

- (1) They got married and had children.
- (2) They had children and got married.

According to Grice, a speaker has *said* the same thing with (1) as with (2). The difference between them is the implied temporal ordering of events by the use of 'and':

Within his theory of conversational implicature, Grice distinguished between “generalized” and “particularized”. A generalized conversational implicature (GCI) is one which does not depend on particular features of the context, but is instead typically associated with the proposition expressed. Consider the following example:

(29) Mary has 3 children<sup>24</sup>

+> Mary has no more than 3 children.

On the other hand, a particularized conversational implicature (PCI) is one which depends on particular features of the context, as in the first example above.

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(1) “...”

+> That they got married and *then* had children.

(2’) “...”

+> That they had children and *then* got married.

This is conventional because it is the conventional use of ‘and’ and not the maxims of conversation that take us beyond what is said.

Grice’s theory of conventional implicature is, perhaps, one of the most controversial aspects of his theory. However, I do not focus on conventional implicature; I am only concerned with Grice’s theory of conversational implicature.

<sup>24</sup> Such examples are more accurately referred to as ‘scalar’ implicatures in contemporary discourse. A scalar implicature is based on the use of an informationally impoverished term in an implicational scale. For a wonderful treatment of the scalar phenomenon, see Horn’s (1972) ground-breaking dissertation and Gazdar (1979).

### 3.2.3 Critical Pragmatics and Grice's circle

The final model of communication we consider is broadly Gricean in flavour, but overcomes the challenges facing Grice's model, as we shall see in what follows.

According to Grice's formula for understanding implicatures, it seems that a speaker must grasp what is said. Then one calculates the implicature by considering the further communicative intentions that the speaker would have for saying *that*.

This picture seems desirable in a few respects. First, it accords well with a certain view of the semantics/pragmatics interface. On this view it is the job of semantics to determine what is said. Then, pragmatic reasoning takes over to give the auditor what is further implicated by the speaker. This picture also accords well with the view of semantics as concerned with the computation of truth-conditions built out of compositionally robust components of types of expressions and the combinations in which they are used.

This means that beyond the intentions to speak a given language, semantics is concerned with the rules that are connected with semantic types. Pragmatics, on the other hand, is concerned not so much with semantic combinatorics, but with the facts surrounding a particular utterance. The concern with the facts of an utterance, and the context in which it is couched, belongs to the domain of pragmatics.

Unfortunately, on further examination, the picture of the bifurcated approach to the semantics/pragmatics interface does not provide us with enough detail for carving up the role of semantics and pragmatics. Semantics, conceived as computation in the way described, doesn't take us all the way to 'what is said'—that is to say, Gricean reasoning is required to help determine it!

In the remainder of this chapter I highlight a flaw in the Gricean approach. In so doing, I emphasize the need for a more critical approach to pragmatics that has a clear role for the division of labour between semantics and pragmatics.

(30) The setup: A, a motorist has run out of petrol, and is standing outside of his car,

when B approaches him. They have the following exchange:

A: I am out of petrol

B: There is a garage around the corner. (Grice, 1989, p. 32)

What do the rules associated with English sentence ‘I am out of petrol’ buy us? Korta & Perry (2006) tell us that this buys us a truth-condition *on* the utterance itself:

[S]uch an utterance will be true if the speaker is out of petrol at the time of the utterance. But this is not what is said. *A* hasn’t said anything *about* his utterance. The proposition that he expresses, what he says, is that *he* is out of petrol at *t*, where *t* is the time of the utterance. What he said could be true, after all, even if he didn’t bother to say it. To get from the output of semantics so conceived, to what is said, we need two facts about this particular utterance, who said it, and when. (Korta & Perry, 2006, p. 167)

To add to this point, let’s consider what Grice said about the following utterance: ‘He was in the grip of a vice’:

Given a knowledge of the English language, but no knowledge of the circumstances of the utterance, one would know something about what the speaker had said, on the assumption that he was speaking standard English, and speaking literally. One would know that he had said, about some particular male person or animal *x*, that at the time of utterance (whatever that was), either (1) *x* was unable to rid himself of a certain kind of bad character trait or (2) some part of *x*’s person was caught in a certain kind of tool or instrument (approximate account, of course). (Grice, 1989, p. 25)

It seems that we require additional information to get to what is said. For instance, in Grice’s example we need to figure out who is the referent of ‘he’ and what is the meaning of ‘vice’. Answers to these questions largely concerns speaker’s intentions.

Semantics, as conceived above, only gets us part way to ‘what is said’—what is supposed to be the input into pragmatics. If we stick with the narrow conception of semantics, then pragmatics must intrude to get to ‘what is said’. If we stick to the notion that semantics gets us to ‘what is said’, then we must abandon the idea of semantics as understood on Grice’s picture sketched above. What we are left with presents a challenge to the Gricean picture of the semantics/pragmatics interface that has shaped the face of the terrain since at least the 1960’s.

It doesn’t seem so bad when we consider the fact that the computation of who the speaker is, and what time it is can usually be done automatically. When I speak, I refer to myself by using the first person, and the time is simply that moment when I produce the utterance. Perhaps our notion of semantics defined above is too narrow? Maybe we can expand our notion of semantics to include the automatic assignment of values to ‘I’ and ‘now’ from facts regarding an utterance in which they are present.

Grice seemed to think this was about right, but included more in this conception. For him, ‘what is said’ is determined in part by the conventional rules as well as facts that determine the referents of indexicals and demonstratives. Semantics, understood in the narrow sense described above can in no way resolve these issues without at least some help from pragmatics. Korta and Perry humorously write that: “If we consider semantics to be the science that tells us what is said, Grice let the nose of the pragmatic camel intrude under the tent of semantics” (Korta & Perry, 2006, p. 168). This dilemma is usually referred to as ‘Grice’s circle’ (sometimes: the ‘pragmatic circle’).

In essence, this debate concerns the role pragmatics plays in the recovery of semantic information. In recent years, there has been a number of theorists who claim

that pragmatics does a lot more work than even Grice was willing to accept.

*Contextualists*—those who basically adopt the central tenants of Relevance Theory—are prepared to let pragmatics do most of the work, leaving little for semantics to do. Yet, there are some purists who are unwilling to go beyond Grice’s conception. Here, we have in mind *literalist* accounts, such as Cappelen & Lepore (2005, 2007) and Bach (1994). On the preferred account, CP (Critical Pragmatics), we understand the dilemma to be false. CP maintains that we can stick with the narrow conception of semantics, and accept that what it delivers need not determine ‘what is said’. Yet, we may still think of the output of semantics as the input to pragmatics. To see how, it will be beneficial to draw a few distinctions. First, we distinguish between a *description* of ‘what is said’, and *determination* and knowledge of ‘what is said’. Semantics, understood as computing according to rules, provides a description of ‘what is said’ by an utterance, even though semantics does not by itself fully determine what is said.

The CP approach to linguistic communication comes from Perry (Perry, 2012b). The general framework can be summarized in the following way: Every utterance is systematically associated with a family of contents that derive from the combination of the speaker’s plan (his intentions and beliefs), the conventions exploited, and the circumstances of the utterance. To capture this idea, CP replaces the notion of what is said with an incremental notion of content. The ‘reflexive’ or ‘utterance-bound content’ and the ‘referential’, ‘official’, or ‘locutionary content’ of an utterance. The ‘utterance-bound content’ is the truth-conditions of an utterance, as determined by the semantic and syntactic profile of the sentence uttered, and thus corresponds to the ‘semantically determined content’. The content expressed at this level is not what a speaker conveys.

The content expressed by ‘utterance-bound’ content is the set of conditions on the utterance and the proposition that it expresses. This means that the utterance itself is a constituent. The referential content is that content expressed by an utterance, and corresponds to the intuitive (referentialist) concept of what is said.

To illustrate this, suppose that John utters:

(31) I like pasta.

From the referentialist point of view, the proposition expressed by (31) is the following:

(31) a. That **John** likes pasta.

(31a) is basically what John, the speaker of (31), intended to say given facts about the speaker, time, and place. That locutionary content is fixed by these contextual facts. I will have more to say about this in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4: Critical Pragmatics

On my view, utterances are the subject matter of pragmatics. Utterances, as we have seen, are intentional acts of speaking, writing or signing, with the purpose of communication, and are usually performed in the service of other goals. The utterance is an action performed by a speaker, and is interpreted by an auditor trying to figure out the intentions that motivated it. This is done in part by using resources for interpreting actions more generally (see chapter 3), and some that are language-specific. Pragmatics, taken as the study of utterances as actions, is a critical component to the study of language more generally.

In this chapter, we will examine the central ideas and debates that have shaped the present landscape in pragmatic research. One of the most hotly debated issues at the centre of those interested in the semantics/pragmatics interface is the minimalism/contextualism debate. It is important that we examine this debate in some detail because our understanding of it shapes the way we understand pragmatic phenomenon. It will be useful for us to see what certain general approaches to language offer us while considering their disadvantages. Such a task will prove itself useful in establishing the relevance of the preferred framework for thinking about metaphorical communication (chapter 9).

Within the semantics/pragmatics debate, many positions have emerged. For example, there is Indexicalism (Stanley, King, Stern), Radicalism (Bach, Atlas), Contextualism (Recanati, Bezuidenhout), Minimalism (Cappelen and Lepore), etc. In what follows, I provide a synopsis of each position and then provide commentary on how

they deal with the semantics/pragmatics interface by understanding each of these proposals as a call to accept the challenge posed by Grice's circle.

#### **4.1 The context wars**

In the previous chapter, I mentioned pragmatics on the 'near side' and pragmatics on the 'far side' of 'what is said'. Here, I go into more detail about how this distinction can help us categorize general and systematic approaches to the philosophy of language. In the classical conception of pragmatics, due mainly to Austin, Grice and Searle, 'what is said' marks the boundary that marks the difference between semantics and pragmatics. Grice's picture of 'what is said' is determined by rules of compositionality and the semantics of the sentence the speaker utters. Pragmatic processes take over to figure out why a speaker said what they said, in light of the conversational principles (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.2) and reasoning about the speaker's intentions. This part of pragmatics is called the 'far-side'—or pragmatics on the far side of 'what is said'.

Within Speech Act Theory, Austin and Searle provide their own terms for what is said. Austin refers uses the term *locutionary content*; Searle refers to it as the *propositional content*. Both of these concepts strip what is said of its illocutionary force, so that we have a picture of meaning and reference akin to Grice's 'what is said'. Speech act theory takes over to tell us what is done in various contexts in using this stripped notion of saying.

However, this picture is oversimplified. As mentioned above, we cannot get to what is said without resolving things such as the referents of proper names, ambiguities, and determining the values of demonstratives and indexicals. This may not be the end of

it, either. Cappelen and Lepore, for example, add resolution of standards of precision to the list of things that fall on the near-side of ‘what is said’. In so far as we require pragmatics to resolve these issues, we can think of them as issues on the near-side of pragmatics.

Authors who are sympathetic to the classical conception of pragmatics, which holds that what is literally referred to and literally said depends almost entirely on semantics, are called ‘Literalists’. For the literalist, the bearers of truth-values are disambiguated sentence-types. So, the primary bearers of contents are disambiguated word-types. But it seems that this view applies only to a very small part of language. For example, tense and indexicality are irrelevant to mathematics and artificial languages. Since only a small portion of natural language seems to depend on semantics alone, it seems literalists may need to open themselves to the possibility to facts about utterances, such as the speaker, time, and place of utterance as necessary constituents of truth and reference.

Arguably, it is the case that some indexicals, such as ‘I’ and ‘you’ do not require Gricean reasoning about speaker’s intentions. For some indexicals, the meaning of the expression and the objective facts about the utterance are enough to give you values and reference. At the same time, it seems that reasoning about speaker intentions do factor in on the near-side to determine what is said. Korta and Perry (Korta & Perry, 2008, p. 348) offer the following as an example: Your philosophy professor is discussing ‘Aristotle’ in his course on ancient Greek philosophy. You undoubtedly take him to be referring to Aristotle, the philosopher, and not Aristotle Onassis. Figuring this out is not a straightforward fact about his utterance, together, with facts about the time, place, and

speaker. Rather, it seems to intimately involve Gricean reasoning about his intentions—such as his referring to one individual and not another.

One pressing question is whether it makes sense to use Gricean pragmatics on the near-side. As we discussed in the last chapter, the classical picture of Gricean pragmatics, aimed at implicature calculation, is conceived of as pragmatics on the far-side. Its goal is to determine why a speaker said what they said. Near-side pragmatics on the other hand is pragmatics in the service of determining, together with the semantic properties of the words and sentences, what was said. But, if Gricean reasoning requires what is said as input, then we cannot have Gricean reasoning as partly constituting what is said. In what follows, I will discuss and analyse several strategies proposed in recent years aimed at dealing with this issue before I present the preferred view.

#### **4.2 Solutions to the pragmatic circle**

Solutions to the pragmatic circle are varied. And in recent times, it has caused quite an interesting debate, dividing theorists into a number of different philosophical camps. The debate is as follows: If we assume, following the tradition, that an utterance  $u$  expresses a locutionary content  $p$ , and that  $p$  is what is said by a speaker uttering  $u$ , the debate turns on the nature of  $p$ .

Perhaps the best way to frame this debate is to begin with Recanati's influential scheme for sorting out the positions involved in the debate, from *Literal Meaning*. He sees the range of positions as involving two poles, literalism and contextualism:

[The literalist holds that] we may legitimately ascribe truth-conditional content to natural language sentences, quite independently of what the speaker who utters this

sentence means.... [Contextualism] holds that speech are the primary bearers of content. Only in the context of a speech act does a sentence express a determinate content. (Recanati, 2004, p. 3).

He then identifies a number of intermediate positions: Minimalism, for example—pretty much the position we described above—is the view that semantics (plus a very short list of other factors) give us the ‘semantic content’. This is the position that Cappelen and Lepore (2005) defend in their book *Insensitive Semantics*. Recanati and relevance theorists are over on the contextualist side. All involved seem to call on Grice. Korta and Perry sum this up in the following way:

Literalists use Grice’s ideas to create a sort of shock-absorber between our intuitions about what someone says and what their theories deliver as semantic content; their intuitions are supposed to confuse semantic content with conversational implicatures. The contextualists see (broadly) Gricean reasoning about speakers intentions involved throughout the process of interpretation. (Korta & Perry, 2015)

In other words, literalists hold the view that an utterance of a non-indexical sentence always expresses the same proposition,  $p$ —that is, regardless of the discourse context in which an utterance takes place, it carries with it the same locutionary content,  $p$ . The discussion up to this point is thus a matter of how much pragmatic ‘intrusion’ is allowed into semantics, and allowed to determine what is said. Contextualists maintain that each utterance is contextually bound, and what is said,  $p$ , depends on the context of use.

The debate turns on an assumption that is referred to as the “dogma of mono-propositionalism”. The term was first proposed by Corazza and Korta (2010). Though the first explicit proposal of a systematic variety of propositions, or what we may call ‘pluri-

propositionalism’ (or ‘contentualism’)<sup>25</sup> seems to be Perry’s *critical referentialism* (2012a). Pluri-propositionalism is a theory developed in an attempt “to resolve the pragmatic circle, and promises to do justice to both literalist and contextualists insights and theoretical ambitions” (Korta & Perry, 2008, p. 350). Recently, the rejection of mono-propositionalism is proposed by several people (e.g., Corazza & Dokic, 2012; Corazza & Korta, 2010; Wilson & Sperber, 1986).

To avoid confusion, I will use Perry’s preferred term ‘content’ instead of proposition.<sup>26</sup> We may think of pluri-propositionalism as the view according to which utterances have more than one content. Although many philosophers do not seem keen to endorse the idea of multiple content, many positions do seem to make use of multiple contents. The debate seems to be over which of the various contents count as semantic content vs. pragmatic content; what is truth-conditionally complete vs. what is incomplete; what is said explicitly; what is asserted by the speaker, etc.

In what follows, I will examine this debate in more detail beginning with Cappelen and Lepore’s minimalist position. I will then turn to Bach’s Radical Minimalism and his criticisms of Cappelen and Lepore. Then, I examine Recanati’s contextualist views. We then look at Relevant Theory and Indexicalism. I borrow ideas liberally from a wonderful paper written on this debate by Corazza and Korta (2010).

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<sup>25</sup> I will use these terms interchangeably.

<sup>26</sup> Talking about propositions takes us into a discussion that I will not be addressing. In a recent paper Sullivan (2009) argues that minimalists, radicalists and contextualists often talk past each other insofar as they subscribe to different views of propositions. While some take propositions to be essentially the bearers of truth value, others take propositions to be essentially the content expressed by sentences.

## 4.2.1 Literalism

### 4.2.1.1 Cappelen and Lepore's Minimalism

Cappelen and Lepore defend the view that what is semantically expressed by an utterance is a single content. They provide the following theses that encapsulate their view nicely:

**M1.** That there is a proposition semantically expressed is presupposed by any coherent account of linguistic communication.

**M2.** All semantic context sensitivity is grammatically (either syntactically or morphemically) triggered, i.e. articulated by a sentential component.

**M3.** There are only a few context-sensitive expressions in natural language and they all pass the Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Report test (ICD for short). (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005, p. 144)

Their conception of the minimal semantic content rests on the distinction between what counts as semantic and what counts as pragmatic. Under this rubric, they argue that the minimal semantic content falls on the semantic side of this boundary, and is free of contextual features. Their view is driven by mono-propositionalism. That is, they argue that the content of an utterance is a unique proposition (which is understood as being true or false). They come to determine the semantic content of an utterance by appealing to the notion of "saying" in the ICD.

However, if we are to take seriously the view that semantics deals with information conveyed by linguistic expressions, and pragmatics deals with information pertaining to utterances and their context, then appealing to the notion of saying is not what gets us to the semantic content of an utterance as Cappelen and Lepore hope. Rather, in trying to do justice to truth-conditional semantics while attempting to avoid

pragmatic intrusion into ‘what is said’, Cappelen and Lepore end up confusing the boundary between ‘what is said’ and implicatures. Specifically, their notion of semantic content (M1 above) is problematic because it cannot be characterized independently of the context in which it is uttered. Let’s see how this is the case.

They describe their notion of semantic content as the content that each utterance of that sentence shares (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005, p. 143). However, they realize that certain sentences have context-sensitive expression, such as indexicals. And as such, may require input from pragmatics. So, in order to figure out which of our expressions are indexical they appeal to M3. The appeal to the ICD is problematic. And in fact, it seems difficult to provide a minima semantic content in purely semantic terms.

Let’s take a closer look at this issue: The ICD test helps to determine whether an expression is context sensitive or not. Therefore, its employed in order to figure out what ends up as the content semantically expressed (what Cappelen and Lepore characterize as the minimal proposition. The ICD test is described as follows:

**ICD.** Take an utterance  $u$  of a sentence  $S$  by a speaker  $A$  in context  $C$ . An Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Report of  $u$  is an utterance  $u^*$  in a context  $C^*$  (where  $C^* \neq C$ ) of “ $A$  said that  $S$ ”. (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005, p. 88)

They claim that only indexicals do not pass the test. If John utters “I am tall” we cannot report “John says that I’m tall”, while if John says “Chris is cold” we can report John’s utterance “John said Chris is cold”. This is because “I” is a context sensitive expression, while “cold” is not.

A problem arises when we consider that speakers often say more than their words. A locution of the form “ $A$  said that  $S$ ” intuitively gives us what  $A$  said in uttering  $S$ . But  $A$  may communicate more than his words convey in the context of utterance. For

instance, If A uttered an indexical-free sentence: “John is too old” meaning that he is too old to join the army. A second person, B, can use the same sentence to mean that John is too old to play rugby. Is it possible to say, as Cappelen and Lepore claim, that “A and B said the same thing?” What A says may be true, while what B says is false. How can it be that A and B said the same thing when A says something true, and B says something false? Finally, we may consider *Superman* sentences.

On Cappelen and Lepore’s account, the pair of sentences below have the same semantic content (i.e., they express the same proposition):

(32) Superman is a nice guy.

(33) Clark Kent is a nice guy.

If Lois says “Superman can fly”, then it is possible to report her as saying “Lois said that Clark Kent can fly”? It doesn’t seem obvious that we can report Lois as saying that “Clark Kent can fly” *salva veritate*.

#### ***4.2.1.2 Bach’s radicalism***

Bach understands his view as breaking with what he calls Propositionalism. He describes the latter as the view that every sentence (plus narrow context)<sup>27</sup> always expresses a proposition. Bach argues that there are sentences that are incomplete. As such, they do not express a full proposition, but a propositional radical. The propositional radical is

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<sup>27</sup> Here, I believe he means something that corresponds roughly to Kaplan’s contextual parameters that are required to fix the reference of indexical expressions. This is what we’ve been calling pragmatics on the near side of what is said.

thus the view that the semantic content of a non-indexical utterance does not necessarily correspond to a truth-value.

In developing his idea, Bach distinguishes what is said from what is asserted which is a completion or expansion of the propositional radical. This would preserve the Gricean distinction between ‘what is said’, what a speaker asserts (which is subject to narrow pragmatic adjustment in order to be a content bearing truth-value) and what a speaker implicates. In so far as Bach distinguishes between the semantic content (what is said) and the expanded content (what is asserted), it seems that Bach endorses a form of pluri-propositionalism. Yet, he is mono-propositional in regards to semantic content. There would be no reason to mark this distinction if one utters a complete sentence. In that case, you would have one content—what Bach refers to as a proposition—which is just the semantic, radical content that wouldn’t require any expansion.

With the idea that a semantic radical needn’t express a proposition (or have a content), Bach also rejects Cappelen and Lepore’s thesis in M1 above. One important question remains: How do we decide whether a sentence is semantically incomplete or not? That is, do we have any way to reliably and systematically determine whether a given sentence expresses a content radical or some truth-evaluable content?

For Bach, providing an answer to this question is not of importance. Rather, he wants to provide a largely Gricean picture of linguistic communication while avoiding contextualism. A defense of radicalism only needs to show that we endorse some well-formed sentences as semantically incomplete. When a view of language endorses M1, or something similar, it opens the door to contextualism, and the view that “context must

complete the job that linguistic meaning does not finish” (Corazza & Korta, 2010, p. 17).  
Such a view allows pragmatics to intrude on semantics.

## 4.2.2 Contextualism

### 4.2.2.1 Recanati’s contextualism

Recanati opposes both views discussed above. He argues that radical propositions—what I am calling radical contents—lack psychological reality. As such, he denies them any role in the constitution of linguistic meaning. Recanati formulates his criticism of Bach in what he calls the “Availability Principle”.<sup>28</sup> He presents it as follows:

[W]hat is said must be available – it must be open to public view. Hence my ‘Availability Principle’, according to which ‘what is said’ must be analyzed in conformity to the intuitions shared by those who fully understand the utterance—typically the speaker and hearer, in a normal conversational setting. (Recanati, 2001b, p. 88)

We cannot consider that something has been said, if the speech participants themselves, though they understand the utterance, are not aware that that has been said. This means that we must accept the Availability Principle [...]. (Recanati, 2001b, p. 88)

This view comes very close to other contextualist theorists, such as those working within relevance theory. On both of these views, it seems as though we are encouraged to accept the idea that pragmatics intrudes into what is said, and that only after pragmatic processes that we may get to what is said. Compare with the following:

The linguistically determined logical form is, some might argue, essentially pre-semantic; it is not communicated, but is merely a vehicle for what is communicated, it is not ‘knowingly’ grasped by the addressees, it is not phenomenologically salient. What we are really interested in is the propositional thought expressed, perhaps communicated, by an utterance sentence, and this is what the CP [Compositionality Principle] has been generally supposed to apply to. [...] There just is no escaping the

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<sup>28</sup> I discuss this again in chapter 8.

fact that the propositions that may be expressed by sentences in use are a function, not only of linguistic meaning, but also of pragmatic inferences. (Carston, 2002, p. 73)

Basically, the idea here is that a proposition (what I'm calling content) must be consciously available to the speaker, and the proposition he intends to express, and all planned implicatures should be accessible. His view, which he calls "Moderate Relativism" laid out in his 2007 work *Perspectival Thought*, acknowledges three types of utterance content. There is context-invariant content, and two other kinds. The first is the *lekton*: that content that is explicitly articulated, possibly incomplete, and an Austinian proposition which is representative of the complete truth-conditional content.

In the mono-propositional debate, the issue surrounding literalism and contextualism revolves around the degree of context-dependence that aids in the recovery of the semantic content. In order to characterize this debate I will look at weather reports. Suppose that I utter about the weather, today July 2, 2019 at 20:42h the following:

(34) It's sunny.

The debate is about, besides the time of the utterance—which is arguably articulated by the event—whether the place of the event, Ottawa, Ontario is an element of the content expressed by the speaker. If it is, then how does it make its way into the content?

Minimalists would argue that the place, Ottawa, does not make its way into the content of (34). All that is admitted is the truth-conditional content *that it's sunny*, on July 2, 2019, at 20:42h. Among those who would admit the place, Ottawa, into the content, indexicalists (the subsequent section) would count it as a contextual supplementation triggered by the conventional meaning of the weather-predicate. The

general strategy for the contextualist would treat the place, Ottawa, as an unarticulated constituent which is triggered by a process of pragmatic enrichment.

Recanati deals with this issue by evoking two principles concerning the distinction between content and circumstance of evaluation. The first principle is *Duality*, which states that “to get a truth-value, we need a circumstance of evaluation as well as a content to evaluate” (Recanati, 2007, p. 33). The second principle, *Distribution*, states that

...the determinants of truth-value distribute over the two basic components truth-evaluation involves: content and circumstance. That is, a determinant of truth-value, e.g. a time, is either given as an ingredient of content or as an aspect of the circumstance of evaluation. (Recanati, 2007, p. 34)

Non-relativists (e.g., indexicalists) can accept the first principle, but not the second. The reason is that all the constituent elements of the truth-value of an utterance are included in the content—a content that would be true or false when evaluated in the actual world. Relativists, on the other hand, can accept the second principle. Let’s see what this amounts to. If I utter the sentence

(35) Saddam Hussein is alive

a relativist maintains that the truth-evaluable content is something that is relative to the time of utterance; true before 30<sup>th</sup> December 2006; false afterwards. Recanati calls his view *moderate*, because a moderate relativist can accept that the content be truth-conditionally incomplete, and that the full-truth conditions involve the circumstance of evaluation; whereas a *radical* relativist would not treat the content as complete. Recanati, aiming to defend his position within the former camp, allows for incomplete relativized contents, and full complete eternal contents.

So, on this view, an utterance of (34) would include the place-relative *lekton* that it's sunny on July 2, 2019, at 20:42h, and the full complete content that it's sunny *in Ottawa* on that date. If instead, I utter:

(36) It's sunny *here*.

and thereby make explicit the place of utterance, the full truth conditions would be the same as (34), but it would have a different *lekton*. Ottawa would be a constituent in the case of (36), but not (34). Curiously, it seems that in cases like (36), where all the relevant determinants of truth-conditions are explicit, the distinction between *lekton* and the full propositional content would not hold. This is what Recanati calls *weak* moderate relativism. Recanati, however, maintains that *strong* moderate relativists will keep the distinction even when the *lekton* happens to be the full proposition. For, the full truth-conditional content is classified as an Austinian proposition that includes the situation in which it occurs. The strong moderate relativist is Recanati's preferred position.<sup>29</sup>

Recanati's approach is a three-level theory that attempt to take into account our linguistic utterances together with a basic psychological story. We may capture it in the following way:

- (i) On the linguistic side: The context-independent meaning of the sentence type uttered. On the psychological side: a basic mental representation—what Kaplan refers to as 'character'.

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<sup>29</sup> For a similar view of the relativist position, see Corazza (2007, 2011, 2012); Corazza & Dokic (2007, 2012).

- (ii) The context-dependent *lekton*—what Kaplan refers to as ‘content’, and
- (iii) The Austinian proposition that includes both the situation in which the utterance occurs, and (ii).

With his tiered approach, Recanati attempts to liberate himself from the dogma of mono-propositionalism. On our preferred view, following Perry (see Korta & Perry, 2007, 2011; Perry, 2012b), we will introduce a plethora of contents, many of which are reflexive—that is to say, contents about the utterance or thought itself.

We can identify a few points of contact between Recanati’s position and Bach’s. Both seem to work within a pluri-propositionalist framework. Bach’s radical content plays a similar role to Recanati’s *lekton*. Furthermore, Bach’s notion of what is asserted can be equated with Recanati’s Austinian proposition. The major difference between these views can be captured by turning back to the notion of propositionality. For Bach, an incomplete sentence fails to determine a proposition, while Recanati specifies that it does determine a proposition, relative to the situation of utterance. We now turn our focus to two other positions.

#### ***4.2.2.2 Indexicalism and Relevance Theory***

Indexicalism is the view that holds that each term in an utterance has a content determined by both the context-independent meaning (i.e., the semantic meaning) together with contextual factors which ends up in what is said. On this approach, many terms operate under a framework of indexicality. An indexicalists would not consider the unarticulated content (i.e., *Ottawa*) in (34) as ‘unarticulated’. Rather, they hold that semantically constant, but context-sensitive terms exploit contextual features to give us

what is said. Thus, they would admit the under-specified content of (34) into the proposition literally expressed by the utterance. They explain this by arguing that below the surface grammar, at some deeper level—say, the logical form—the sentence provides an argument place to be resolved pragmatically. In other words, “the context-independent meaning of each term is fairly rich and directs us to some aspect of the context of the utterance to determine its content” (Corazza & Korta, 2010, pp. 23–24).

There is little controversy surrounding the semantics of the first person pronoun, “I”. Indexicalists maintain that just as the linguistic meaning of “I” guides us to the utterer as its referent, the linguistic meaning of “to be sunny” guides us to the situation of utterance where it is sunny.

A strategy that is used to determine whether or not there are hidden indexicals is proposed by Stanley. He believes that native speakers’ intuitions can show us whether or not we are dealing with a phenomenon of this sort. He states:

The linguistically determined content expressed by “Jack is tall”, even relative to a context, does not seem susceptible of truth and falsity at all. It is only when we add the additionally provided information – tall relative to what, that we are capable of asserting it for truth and falsity. ... If my proposal is correct, there is no gap between the linguistically determined content of a sentence, relative to a context, and the proposition it intuitively seems to express. (Stanley, 2007, p. 5)

Native speakers possess intuitions about truth and falsity of what is said by utterances of sentences of their native language, relative to various possible situations. (Stanley, 2007, p. 6)

The same motivation is found in Recanati account when he argues in support of the availability principle. What matters for what is said, should be what competent speakers claim has been said. The main difference between these two theorists is that

Recanati posits a process of enrichment, while Stanley tell us a story about hidden indexicals.

Now, while most speakers' intuitions can be useful for testing our semantic theories, we must be careful how we understand the data. As Bach rightly points out, [p]eople's spontaneous judgements or 'intuitions' provide data for semantics, but it is an open question to what extent they reveal semantic facts and should therefore be explained rather than explained away" (2002, p. 23). Paraphrasing Bach, the central aim of semantics is to account for semantic facts, not intuitions. He goes on further to argue that:

In the course of speaking and listening to one another, we generally don't consciously reflect on the semantic contents of the sentences we hear or on what is said in their utterance. We are focused on what we are communicating or on what is being communicated to us, not on what is said. Moreover, we don't have to be able to make accurate judgments about what information is semantic and what is not in order to be sensitive to semantic information. To "preserve intuitions" in our theorizing about what is said would be like relying on the intuitions of unsophisticated moviegoers about the effects of editing on a film. Although people's cinematic experience is dramatically affected by such factors as cuts and camera angles, there is no reason to suppose that their intuitions are reliable about what produces what effects. Intuitions about what is said may be similarly insensitive to the difference between the contribution that is made by the semantic content of a sentence and that made by extralinguistic factors to what an utterance communicates. (Bach, 2002, p. 24)

Although Bach is not rejecting, wholesale, the value of speakers' intuitions, he is reminding us that we cannot be too careless in using them to support our semantic theories. We ought to consider at least two possibilities in regards to speakers' intuitions as a means for supporting our theories: First, speakers' intuitions may concern truth/falsity over what a speaker asserts without concerning what is actually said. To give an example, it is not altogether obvious whether speakers are sensitive to the fact that the utterance "Chris is tall" is the content that Chris is tall, or that it is the truth-evaluable

content that Chris is tall relative to a comparison class that is supplied by the context of utterance. In this case, speakers' intuitions may be pragmatically biased.

The second consideration, coming from Corazza (2007), is that a speaker's intuitions can concern the truth/falsity of what is said without concerning the content of what is *de facto* said. For instance, a speaker's intuitions may be sensitive to the truth-evaluable content. For example, competent speakers can appreciate that one may say something true by uttering "Jane is ready" in one situation (e.g., in getting ready for work), but false in another (e.g., in preparation of her defense). Thus, speakers can be sensitive to the truth-value of what is said without consideration of the semantic content of what is said. As it stands, simply appealing to speakers' intuitions do not seem to lend the kind of support to indexicalism nor free enrichment, that Stanley and Recanati have hoped. Consequently, such intuitions do not by themselves undermine the projects pursued by defenders of minimalism and radicalism.

We now shift gears and consider relevance theory. The defenders of RT do not appeal to the sort of formal algorithmic processes of indexicalism, such as saturation. Rather, they appeal to a process of pragmatic 'free enrichment'. Free enrichment is a pragmatic process that intrudes on the logical form to produce a truth-evaluable content. This content is referred to as the 'explicature' (in contrast with Gricean *im*-plicature).<sup>30</sup> On this account, the semantic content is viewed as a skeleton—it is the bear logical form,

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<sup>30</sup> It seems at times algorithmic in nature, and other instances, hermeneutic. In one sense, its function is like that of a designer drug. It is a term deployed to deal with numerous semantic and pragmatic anomalies. See Genovesi (2019) for a discussion and criticism of the many roles explicature is designed to play.

perhaps—and it requires enrichment to supply it with pragmatic truth-evaluable tissue. Pragmatic processes are brought to bear immediately and automatically.

On this account ‘what is said’ is included in what a speaker communicates, and corresponds to the enriched proposition (or more precisely, the enriched logical form). For this to obtain, pragmatic intrusion begins immediately in the process of determining the semantic content. In other words, free enrichment enters into semantic composition from the outset. For this reason, there is no clear-cut distinction between semantics and pragmatics. Rather, we have Truth Conditional Pragmatics. Both the information carried and triggered by the literal meaning and the information pragmatically supplied are processed by the same mechanism.

In dealing with utterances such as (34), relevance theorists and allies treat facts about the place of utterance (i.e., *Ottawa*) as an unarticulated constituent, rather than a formal element hidden in the utterance itself (vis-à-vis indexicalism). However, not every case of free enrichment brings about some unarticulated constituent. Consider the utterance

(37) John took out his key and opened the door.

Here, we do not get the unarticulated constituent “with the key” but rather the constituent “open-with-key” which is made salient by the verb “to open”. On this view, the verb

“open” does not express the semantic concept *open*, but an ad hoc concept, which can be captured by OPEN-WITH-KEY\*.<sup>31</sup>

The pluri-propositional/contentualist aspect of their account comes through when considering higher-level explicatures. This kind of explicature is the result of embedding the ‘base’ implicature into different speech or propositional attitude reports. To illustrate this, I use an example from Carston (2002, p. 119):

(38) A. Bill: did your son visit you at the weekend?

B. Mary (visibly happy): He did.

(38) a. Mary’s son visited her at the weekend.

b. Mary says that her son visited her at the weekend.

c. Mary believes that her son visited her at the weekend.

d. Mary is happy that her son visited her at the weekend.

It seems that the speaker could intend to communicate explicatures (a)-(d). Because they are willing to attribute numerous explicatures to any overt act of saying, it seems as though they do address some brand of pluri-propositionalism.

Following Corazza and Dokic (2012), whether one is on the minimalist or contextualism (including RT) side of the debate, each side attempts to capture various sets of intuitions that are mostly correct; but independently, impoverished. Corazza and

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<sup>31</sup> Consistent with the practice of Wilson, Sperber, Glucksberg, Keysar, and others, I designate categories in small caps. For example, APPLES. Ad hoc categories will be designated by small caps followed by an asterisk (WOLVES\*).

Dokic propose that we must find a way to accommodate them in a consistent account. For example, minimalism claims that the proposition expressed is stable across situations. To illustrate, imagine, both John and Jane utter the sentence “There’s some beer in the fridge”. Both speakers say the same thing, but are doing it for two very different reasons. Let’s suppose that John wants to tell Jane that there is a few bottles of beer in the fridge. Jane wants to inform John, who was responsible for clearing the fridge, that there are some beer stains that he missed while cleaning. Regardless, minimalists argue that John and Jane said the same thing—that there’s beer in the fridge. That is to say, they express the very same proposition. At the very least, minimalism seems to capture the intuition shared by at least some speakers, which can be captured in the description: “John and Jane said (expressed the thought) that there’s some beer in the fridge.

Minimalism comes apart when they claim that the truth-conditions of “There’s some beer in the fridge” should be given an absolute T-sentence of the form: An utterance of *u* of “There’s some beer in the fridge” is true iff there’s some beer in the fridge. Therefore, all tokens of the sentence that occur in the same possible world at a given time will have the same truth-value. If one is true, they will all be true, and vice-versa. But this clashes with other common-sense intuitions that John may be wrong (perhaps that Jane drank the last two beers), while Jane might be right in saying the exact same thing. I reject the idea that the content expressed by John and Jane have a stable truth-value.

On the other hand, RT and their contextualist allies do seem to take into account more general intuitions concerning the variable truth-values in different contexts. For example, they can explain the intuition that Jane expressed a true proposition, while John

expressed a false one. What they fail to capture are the minimalist intuitions that the content semantically expressed is stable across contexts. Of course they can acknowledge that *something* is stable across contexts—what I take to be the relevant phenomenon that occupies this role will become clear in the next section—but simply acknowledging that is not enough to ensure that there is some component that is context-independent (Corazza & Dokic, 2012, p. 184).

#### **4.2.3 Perry and pluri-propositionalism**

The preferred contentualist perspective is one that comes from Perry (Perry, 2012b). It can be described in the following way: Every utterance of a single sentence is systematically connected with a variety of contents. Such contents emerge out of combination with the speaker's communicative plane (which we identified as intentions, beliefs, etc.), the context of utterance, and communicative conventions. The utterance of a single sentence comes with numerous semantic contents, even if one utters a sentence conveying a singular proposition. The numerous contents have various truth-conditions ranging from the reflexive or utterance-bound contents (with the utterance itself as a constituent) incrementally to the referential content. The referential content (sometimes referred to the official content) is part of this vast network of content, and it captures the intuitive concept of 'what is said'.

We can flesh this out a bit more by way of an example. Suppose that Jack utters (39) and Jill utters (40):

(39) I love dogs.

(40) Jack loves dogs.

The referential content in both examples is

(R) That **Jack** loves dogs.<sup>32</sup>

We can notice that the both (39) and (40) express the singular content that has Jack as a constituent. In our preferred nomenclature, the speakers of (39) and (40) express the same official content (recall that this is also designated as the referential content). Nevertheless, we still don't have enough information to explain why it would seem quite strange for Jack to utter (40), nor does it explain a case where Jack utters (39) in order to get Jill to allow Jack to pet her puppy. Let's consider a case in which Jack utters (39) in order to get Jill to recognize that he wants to pet her puppy.

As I mentioned above, Perry's account begins with reflexive contents on the utterance itself. We begin, below, with what Korta and Perry (Korta & Perry, 2007b) refer to as the 'semantic minimal content'. This content corresponds to what the hearer, Jill, would get, given her knowledge of the English language, without any other contextual information besides the fact that (39) has been uttered.

(39) b. That *the speaker of (21)* loves dogs.

Following Perry's notation (see footnote 32) what (39b) characterizes is something corresponding to (39) itself. This is not the official content—it is not what Jack said. Nevertheless, it plays an important, cognitive role in Jack's communicative plan. Given

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<sup>32</sup> I have adopted Perry's notation where I use **boldface** for content constituents; roman when the constituent is the object designated; *italics* when the constituent is not an object but an identifying condition.

that Jill understands (39b) and notices that the speaker of (39) is in front of her, she can climb incrementally up the ladder of content, and get to the following:

(39) c. That *the person in front of me* loves dogs.

As you may have noticed, this still is not what Jack has said. Nevertheless, it is important that Jill *gets* this content in order for Jack's communicative plan to go through successfully—to get Jill to invite him to pet her puppy. It is precisely the motivation to get Jill to represent (39c), and not the official content, that accounts for Jack's utterance, and the utterance's impact in (39). (39c) is the content that takes into account the speaker's knowledge of English, i.e., (39b), plus the perceptual awareness of the context of utterance (including things like being able to identify who the speaker is and their location (more or less)).<sup>33</sup>

We may also notice that the situation is a little different with proper names. Suppose that Jane uttered (40). The minimal reflexive content of (40) uttered by Jane to Jill about Jack would be:

(40) b. That *the person the convention exploited by (40) permits one to designate with 'Jack'* loves dogs.

Jill's knowledge of English does not permit more than (40b). Now, in order for Jill to invite Jack to pet her puppy, she must grasp the content in (39c). That is, she must grasp that Jack is the person in front of her. Otherwise, she is cognitively blind to any further

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<sup>33</sup> It may perhaps be better to think about location as the 'location-of-utterance'. For if a speaker is on the phone, and the auditor is unaware of their exact location, the auditor is at least able to identify that the speaker is on the phone with them.

incremental content reasoning and therefore not in a position to get the official content of (40)R.

#### *4.2.3.1 Demonstrating the input to implicatures*

What content plays the role of triggering an implicature? Setting aside the way the content for an implicature is determined (e.g., hidden indexicals, expansion, enrichment, and the like), there seems to be an overwhelming consensus among the authors surveyed above. Most of them seem to claim that ‘what is said’, ‘what is asserted’, ‘explicature’, or the ‘intuitive truth conditions’, are the triggers of these pragmatic phenomena. But what did Grice tell us? Grice says that “the implicature is not carried by what is said, but only by the saying of what is said, or ‘by putting it that way’” (Grice, 1989, p. 39).

What does this tell us? To my ears, it seems to suggest that we needn’t worry so much about what is said as the catalyst behind implicatures; rather, the focus seems to be on intentional, overt acts of communication. Notice that Grice contrasts his technical phrase ‘what is said’ with the use of the gerund “saying”. If ‘saying’ is meant to be contrasted with ‘what is said’, then we are given a big hint as to what Grice had in mind by using it. Corazza & Korta (2010, p. 31) suggest we may interpret this in the following way: “it is utterances (not only linguistic utterances, but also gestures, movements, or unarticulated noises) that trigger the ‘calculation’ of implicatures”. I am keen on this interpretation because it nicely coincides with the standard way we employ the term.

Now, Grice’s stronger formula for implicature calculation runs as follows:

He has said that p; there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP (cognitive principle); he could not be doing this unless he thought that q; he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that q is required; he has done nothing to stop me thinking

that  $q$ ; he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that  $q$ ; and so he has implicated that  $q$ . (Grice, 1989, p. 31)

The majority of theorists surveyed thus far seem to agree that what  $p$  corresponds to is something like the enriched truth-conditional content (plug in your preferred mechanism for determining it). Following Korta and Perry (2006), and Corazza and Korta (2010), we have good reason to view this as a fundamental misconception. One important reason is that it rests on the assumption that Grice purported to give a psychological account of the processes involved in recognizing implicatures—and not just a rational reconstruction.

This is a patent falsehood. Grice was doing nothing of the sort. Grice was not concerned with real-time processes. Nor was he speculating about the temporal unfolding of such processes. His concerns were with the ingredients such real-time processes must be sensitive to. It seems pretty clear to me that implicatures can be computed before determining what is said. Imagine, for instance, that you have a friend who seems to be troubled by something, and you're trying to figure out what exactly is the matter. You ask them, outright. Yet, they respond by saying, "You know, I think I have some food sitting out, some clothing to fold, and I really need to clean my kitchen". It is likely that before they finished saying all of this that you could determine they were implicating that they don't want to discuss what's on their mind.

Korta and Perry (2006) offer several other more convincing examples wherein a speaker uses a demonstrative, although he is not trying to convey a singular proposition. Yet, it seems obvious that he is able to trigger an implicature. I offer their first

‘demonstration’ (2006, p. 180), slightly restructured. Consider CG and EC driving down the street of Ottawa, where EC utters:

(41) He is going to drive his car into yours.

The famous philosopher P is wildly driving his car in the opposite direction. There seems to be a pretty clear implicature that CG should engage in evasive manoeuvres to avoid a head-on collision. But how does CG figure this out? Taking the proper evasive action does not seem to require that CG know the referent of EC’s utterance as the famous philosopher P. Rather, all CG requires is the content with a ‘mode of presentation’ such as the following:

(41) a. The person EC is looking at as he yells at me is going to drive his car into mine.

The content of (41a) is not what is said either by the pure referentialist or the descriptivist account. It is not a singular proposition about P, nor is it a proposition about a property provided by the linguistic meaning of the demonstrative. Rather, all that we have is an ‘intermediate’ content resulting from the linguistic meaning of the sentence uttered plus contextual information about the identity of the speaker and his erratic behaviour.

The important take away is not that intermediate content *always* triggers implicatures, but that implicatures can be triggered by various levels of content. Sometimes, the referential content is required to trigger an implicature—as Korta and

Perry show in their second ‘demonstration’.<sup>34</sup> And sometimes it is the purely reflexive content that provides the input to implicatures—as they show in their third ‘demonstration’.<sup>35</sup>

### 4.3 Conclusion

In this last part I reconsider the views we’ve discussed so far in relation to communication. Minimalists argue that communication demands that there be some stable, fixed meaning shared among discourse participants. So far, so good. For Cappelen and Lepore, this is the minimal proposition. For Bach, the propositional radical plays this role. As far as this picture of semantics is concerned, speakers’ intentions would play no role.

However, there is a worry with Cappelen and Lepore’s account. They claim that minimalism can account for “how the same content can be expressed, claimed, asserted, questioned, investigated, etc. in radically different contexts” (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005, p. 152). But this makes it unclear how their minimal proposition can capture all of this since the minimal proposition does not generally conform to any proposition conveyed by

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<sup>34</sup> In this situation, KK is hosting a conference talk. The famous philosopher RC is invited to give a talk. KK is worried that RC will be late. Suddenly, JP says “She is driving toward the Aula Magna now”. In this case, to infer that RC will be on time, KK needs to get the referential content, or that RC is the referent of JP’s use of “she” (2006, p. 181).

<sup>35</sup> In this situation, KK asks JP for suggestions for guest speakers at the next ILCLI conference. JP utters “He’s rather unreliable, does not have much to say, and always takes time to say it”. KK responds with “Next”. Korta and Perry argue that KK only needs the reflexive content—that the person JP refers to with “he” possesses features unbecoming of a guest speaker. From this, he can infer that such a person is an undesirable invitee (2006, p. 182).

the speaker. Often this is because it is not a full proposition. Even if it is a full proposition, it requires pragmatic processes to get to what the speaker conveys.

More worrisome for their view is the fact that they seem to acknowledge that in order to generate implicatures, we would need “a contextually shaped what-is-said” (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005, p. 180). If their view does so require this, then it is hard to square it with the idea that the minimal content is “also the content that can be grasped and reported by someone who is ignorant about the relevant characteristics of the context in which an utterance of S took place” (Cappelen & Lepore, 2005, p. 143). Once again, we look back to Grice for guidance. We reconsider “*he was in the grip of a vice*”:

Given a knowledge of the English language, but no knowledge of the circumstances of the utterance, one would know something about what the speaker had said, on the assumption that he was speaking standard English, and speaking literally. One would know that he had said, about some particular male person or animal x, that at the time of utterance (whatever that was), either (1) x was unable to rid himself of a certain kind of bad character trait or (2) some part of x’s person was caught in a certain kind of tool or instrument (approximate account, of course).

The additional knowledge seems to be content that calls for at least reference fixing, the assignment of values to indexical terms and expressions (who is the speaker referring to with “he”), and the resolution of ambiguous terms (what did the speaker intend by “vice”). The sort of thing that Grice is describing above seems the better candidate for the ‘minimal candidate’. This is because we are given a sort of condition on the utterance itself—a kind of content that, as Cappelen and Lepore say, a speaker can ‘grasp and report’ in the absence of all other relevant contextual information.

Because of Cappelen and Lepore’s insistence on context-sensitive processes to play a role in the determination of what is said, it is not at all obvious why we should champion their preferred notion of content over any of the other candidate contents under

discussion. If we adopt Perry's position, then we don't have to give up the minimal content, the purely reflexive content or the enriched what is said.

In my view, successful communication does not rest upon a simple decoding of encoded information, especially if what is encoded is taken to be something like a proposition. For when one tries to explain communication along these lines, it obscures the fact that utterances come equipped with a family of contents. All of these contents can serve as input to pragmatic reasoning depending on the speaker's goals, and the auditors up take of those goals in the communicative exchange. So, in rejecting a code model of communication, we must also abandon Cappelen and Lepore's first minimalist thesis (M1), i.e., that there is a proposition semantically expressed is presupposed by any coherent account of linguistic communication. For, on the preferred account, the pure reflexive content that can be the input to pragmatic implicature is not the content that is semantically expressed.

We have looked at quite a few models of communication in this chapter. All of them have dealt with identifying the mechanism for triggering those aspects of communication that go beyond the content available to the auditor within a communicative exchange (e.g., implicature, indexicals, etc.). The preferred way to understand the input into pragmatic reasoning is via Perry's contentualist model. So far, our view of communication has focused on how literal communication proceeds. In so doing, we have seen a general distinction between literal meaning and meaning that is communicated indirectly. In Part II, we switch gears and consider figurative communication in light of the pluri-propositional framework we have endorsed in this chapter.

## PART II

### Chapter 5: Metaphor, meaning, and characterization

In this investigation, we will not be so concerned with theories of communication in general, but specifically with how the theories and issues we brought to light in the last section come to bear on nonliteral (i.e., figurative) communication. Specifically, we whittle our focus on metaphor, where I merely suggest only possible generalizations to other figures. In referring to these phenomena as figures of speech, we emphasize their linguistic features. In particular, we bring attention to the fact that their meaning departs in various ways from the conventional meaning of words and sentences (recall that this fits squarely with the Aristotelian treatment).

Although we discuss metaphorical meaning as a special kind of meaning that emerges from the roots of its literal meaning, it is nonetheless a deviation from conventional language ('semantic meaning'). This fact places a necessary constraint on discourse whose focus is non-literal speech. We must be reminded that we should not associate too closely the figurative meaning, whose utterance occurs in a certain context of use, with the specific words used in that context. For, we may employ the same word or turn of phrase in different contexts with quite different (figurative) meanings.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, the fact that we refer to these devices as figures of *speech* should not overshadow the importance of addressing their conceptual role. As I mentioned in

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<sup>36</sup> This is not to admit that figurative meaning is unconstrained by the literal meaning of the words used. The figurative meaning of an utterance relies on matching features from the term used metaphorically to the subject under discussion. Which of the features will be matched is in part guided by conversational relevance.

chapter 1, figurative language is interesting precisely because it straddles the boundary between language and *thought*. Thus, an account of figurative language must necessarily have something to say about the role of the speaker's intentions, the role their figurative utterance plays in their overall communicative plan, and the auditor's uptake and recovery of the speaker's intention. For it is the speaker who puts their words to use with a specific intention in an attempt to mean something nonliterally or otherwise.

Successful communication involves speakers expressing their intentions,<sup>37</sup> and auditors attributing intentions to those speakers. If the intentions attributed by an auditor are roughly the same as those expressed by the speaker, then communication is considered to be successful. Thus, one of our major tasks is to explicate more or less exactly how auditors make these inferences, and how interlocutors know that the correct inference has been drawn—thereby determining what counts as the speaker's meaning. In acknowledging this, we clearly recognize an important role for an intentional-inferential model of *figurative* communication. Of course, as I noted above, there are plenty of examples of metaphorical speech that do not call attention to their *metaphoricity*; but that's not to say that a great deal of metaphorical speech is not overt. Given the fact that a speaker can mean a battery of things with one metaphorical utterance makes it important that auditors coordinate with speakers to determine the speaker's intentions.

There is a particular issue regarding figurative speech that will concern the first part of this investigation. The issue concerns the nature of metaphorical meaning as a

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<sup>37</sup> This is not to say that I *a priori* reject views of communication from socio-cultural pragmatics that displace the Gricean-inspired centrality of speaker's intentions.

natural kind.<sup>38</sup> One way to put the question is whether there is a pattern of thought specific to metaphor, or does metaphor involve the same/similar patterns of thought involved in literal communication? The issue of the uniqueness of metaphor conflates two important concerns that we must tackle separately. The first of these concerns is (i) the nature of metaphorical meaning; the second concerns (ii) how metaphors achieve their effects.

The first concern is philosophical in nature, and answers depend on our assumptions about what counts as ‘meaning’, more generally. The question regarding the uniqueness of metaphorical meaning has inspired lively debate for over a century. It seems that the majority of theorists invested in answering this question affirm that there is something special about metaphorical meaning. For example, Beardsley (1962), Black (1955), and Ricoeur (1977) understand metaphorical meaning to be something that emerges out of a conceptual ‘tension’ between the source concept and the target concept. The tension renders most metaphorical utterances logically absurd if taken literally.

Despite logical absurdity, there seems to be something profound and clearly intelligible. For example, Macbeth’s metaphor (i.e., Life is but a walking shadow...) serves to communicate his thoughts about the futility and absurdity of life, as well as evoke similar attitudes in his audience. For Beardsley, metaphor can do this because the conceptual tension produces a ‘metaphorical twist’ on the target (i.e., ‘Life’) and forces it

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<sup>38</sup> Another interesting question, one that we will not be discussing explicitly, is deciding what distinguishes metaphor from other tropes. One standard definition of metaphor is that it is a ‘figure of speech which one thing is represented as something else.’

to “refer to features which it is normally merely associated” (Reimer & Camp, 2006, p. 846).

One author, whose work we will be evaluating first in the next section, Donald Davidson, inveighs against the idea of ‘metaphorical meaning’ taken as distinct from ‘literal meaning’. He passionately argues that “metaphors mean what the words, in their most literal interpretation to mean, and nothing more” (1978, p. 32). This stance on metaphorical meaning has come to be known as ‘non-cognitivism’ because, according to this view, metaphors don’t have any cognitive (i.e., propositional) content.

I reject the conclusion of his argument. Metaphors do in fact have a non-literal meaning. However, there is much fruit to reap along Davidson’s path of reasoning. Indeed, Davidson provides some of the most important insights into a theory of metaphorical meaning—probably more than he was aware of. I argue that these insights ought to be preserved in an adequate theory of metaphorical meaning.

First, I give Davidson’s position on metaphorical meaning and evaluate it. I then turn to positive accounts of metaphorical meaning. Many philosophers hold that metaphorical meaning participates in the same kind of business as literal language (i.e., cognitive content). For these theorists, differences between literal and metaphorical language lie in how that content is expressed. Next, I turn to cognitivist strategies that construe metaphor differently. I identify two general strategies for determining metaphorical content. These are simile theories and interaction theories. Simile theories treat metaphorical content to be an elliptical simile. I reject this model. The second treats metaphorical content as a transformation of properties that are relevant to the discourse,

and salient to the interlocutors' background. I agree with the general conclusions of this model, but qualify my agreement.

The second issue is communicative, and concerns the interpretive process behind metaphor comprehension. Specifically, we are concerned with (a) the necessary ingredients an auditor must have to interpret a metaphor, and (b) the cognitive resources they deploy in order to put these ingredients together to yield a metaphorical meaning. These two conditions together demand that discussions of the interpretive process must be alive to both semantic and psychological facts. Recent evidence suggests that metaphors are not distinctive in kind from literal language, but that they are in some sense unique. Just exactly how will be explained later.

To make good on this, I focus on how metaphorical meaning is recovered by an auditor. I make my way through a variety of positions concerning the nature of metaphorical meaning beginning with the earliest semantic treatments developed by Black and Beardsley. I then examine pragmatic accounts beginning with Grice and developed by Searle. Finally, we look at RT and its 'deflationary' account of metaphor.

Now armed with an intuitive definition of metaphor, as well as some of the things we can expect during our investigation, we turn our attention to the first issue: the treatment of the nature of metaphorical meaning in contemporary philosophy of language.

## 5.1 Metaphorical meaning and non-cognitivism

We have seen that linguistic theories of metaphor can be divided into cognitivist and non-cognitivist theories. Cognitivism views metaphorical utterances as expressing a metaphorical content on top of (or, more accurately, distinct from) its literal content. Non-cognitivism denies that there is such a thing as metaphorical content. Davidson (1978) is perhaps the most prominent non-cognitivist. He evokes the meaning/use distinction, and places literal language in the first category, and metaphor in the latter. The central claim of his thesis is clear: a metaphor is a special use of literal language (such as jokes, lies, sarcasm) that must be explained by a theory of language use; for metaphor, there is no special meaning associated with its use. To make his point, he argues:

When we try to say what a metaphor “means,” we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention...How many facts are conveyed by a photograph? None, and infinity, or one great unstable fact? Bad question. A picture is not worth a thousand words, or any other number. Words are the wrong currency to exchange for a picture. (1978, pp. 46–47)

There are two ways to interpret Davidson’s central argument: a weak reading and a radical reading of the denial of metaphorical meaning. I want to work my way through both interpretations. However, the more radical reading offers the most accurate picture of Davidson’s account.

The weak reading is captured by the idea that metaphor belongs to the domain of pragmatics, rather than semantics. The move to place metaphor in the domain of language use is rather uncontroversial. He writes:

The point of the concept of linguistic meaning is to explain what can be done with words. But the supposed figurative meaning of a simile (or a metaphor) explains nothing; it is not a feature of the word that the word has prior to and independent of

the context of use, and it rests upon no linguistic custom expects those that govern ordinary meaning. (Davidson, 1978, p. 40)

These passages above are useful in determining his understanding of linguistic meaning as ‘linguistic custom’ and is therefore something that a word has ‘prior to and independent of’ the specific context of utterance. Note that this conception of linguistic meaning is compatible with allowing that metaphor be intimately bound with the context-sensitive notion of speaker’s meaning. For “[w]hat distinguishes metaphor is not meaning but use—in this it is like assertion, hinting, lying, promising, criticizing” (Davidson, 1978, p. 43). Thus, on the weak reading of his proposal, metaphor exploits the standard meaning of a word or sentence in order to assert something else. This is a view that is endorsed by many theorists, including myself.

However, despite the similarity he draws between assertion and other speech acts, this is not Davidson’s view. He commits himself to a more radical thesis. He says: “the special use to which we put language in metaphor is not—cannot be—to ‘say something’ special, no matter how indirectly. For a metaphor says only what it shows on its face” (Davidson, 1978, p. 43). He continues by adding: “[a] metpahor doesn’t say anything beyond its literal meaning (nor does its maker say anything, in using the metaphor, beyond the literal)” (Davidson, 1978, p. 33).

To understand the stronger argument, and the force behind Davidson’s non-cognitivism we must distinguish between two interrelated arguments: (a) his arguments concerning linguistic meaning, and (b) his arguments about the ordinary use of communication. In regard to the first argument, recall that Davidson argues that metaphor carries a specific content (besides, of course, its literal meaning). In regard to the second,

he says that metaphor is not “a form of communication alongside ordinary communication [which] conveys truths or falsehoods about the world much as plainer language does” and is thus, “not a vehicle for conveying ideas” (Davidson, 1978, p. 32).

In the first argument, Davidson suggest that metaphor is not in the business of telling us *that* things are a certain way. Rather, he offers to us that metaphor makes us *see* things a certain way. Following up on this line of argument, Davison writes:

If what the metaphor makes us notice were finite in scope and propositional in nature, this would not in itself make trouble; we would simply project the content the metaphor brought to mind onto the metaphor. But in fact there is no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention, and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character. (Davidson, 1978, p. 46)

Even if we try and paraphrase what a speaker means by their metaphor, the problem is that “we can’t provide an exhaustive catalogue of what has been attended to when we are led to see something in a new light; the difficulty is more fundamental...seeing as is not seeing that” (Davidson, 1978, p. 47).

Davidson’s notion of seeing-as is typically treated as a sort of conceptual reconfiguration or perspectival-shift. Camp describes the view as follows:

[S]omething happens in thought that’s a lot like what happens in perception when we shift from seeing the famous Gestalt figure as a duck to seeing it as a rabbit. In the perceptual case, when we shift between perspectives, different elements in the figure are highlighted, and take on a different significance: for instance, the duck’s bill becomes the rabbit’s ears. We are under no illusion that the figure itself—the arraignment of dots and lines—has changed, but its constituent elements now hang together in a different structure for us. Further, the difference in our perception is not just a matter of apprehending a new position: we already knew that the figure could be seen as a rabbit, and that those were supposed to be the ears, for instance. Rather, the difference is experiential, intuitive, and holistic. (Camp, 2008, p. 2)

So, when we understand a metaphors’ effects, we see something *as* something else, which is markedly different from seeing *that* something can be seen in such-and-such a way. We can cash this out in the following way: An auditor does not entertain propositions communicated by the speaker. Rather, a metaphor refigures the properties

under discussion. The perspectival shift consists roughly in highlighting certain properties (and downplaying others) with the result that they take on a new significance for the auditor.

The argument that metaphor is the wrong kind of thing to count among meaningful content rests on the assumption that meaning is exclusively a propositional matter. One may well question this assumption (as I do in chapter 8). Camp (Camp, 2013, p. 363) reminds us that Grice was of the mind that the only thing required for an utterance to have meaning<sub>NN</sub> was that ‘some effect’ be produced in the hearer in virtue of recognizing the speaker’s intentions to produce the effects. She goes on to argue that Grice does not “specify what form that effect must take, and even explicitly allows that ‘of course, it may not always be possible to get a straight answer involving a ‘that’ clause, for example, ‘a belief that...’” (Grice, 1957, p. 385 quoted in Camp, 2013, p. 363). What is important for us here to note that Davidson’s positive point that metaphors produce a ‘seeing-as’, coupled with Grice’s views on meaning, hints at the possibility that metaphors may in some sense qualify as meaningful.

The second argument he makes denies the possibility presented above. He claims that the effects produced by a metaphor are not connected in the right way to the uttered sentence:

The various theories we have been considering mistake their goal. Where they think they provide a method for deciphering an encoded content, they actually tell us (or try to tell us) something about the effects metaphors have on us. The common error is to fasten on the contents of the thoughts a metaphor provokes and to read these contents into the metaphor itself. No doubt metaphors often make us notice aspects of things we did not notice before. . . . The issue does not lie here but in the question of how the metaphor is related to what it makes us see. (Davidson, 1978, p. 45)

Grice (1969) would have it that for something to count as meaning<sub>NN</sub> the effects produced by an utterance must be connected in some rational way to the utterance. Davidson seems to deny this feature to metaphor. For Davidson, metaphorical meaning is akin to the meaning we assign to our dreams. He tells us that metaphor “is the dreamwork of language, and, like all dreamwork, its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator” (Davidson, 1978, p. 31). Indeed, we are free to ascribe meaning to our dreams, but whether that meaning is tied to the particular dream depends as much on the interpreter as on the dream per se.

What Davidson seems to be suggesting is a causal psychological theory of production as opposed to a rational one: “all communication by speech assumes the interplay of inventive construction and inventive construal. What metaphor adds to the ordinary is an achievement that uses no semantic resources beyond the resources on which the ordinary depends” (Davidson, 1978, p. 31).

Rather, metaphor achieves its ‘wonder’ not by standing for, or expressing a fact, but more like a “bump on the head” (Davidson, 1978, p. 46). In this way, Davidson proposes what we can call a causal view of metaphorical meaning: metaphor makes us “see one thing as another by making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight” (Davidson, 1978, p. 47). The problem with this sort of ‘prompting’ is that it amounts to a sort of ‘showing’. In Gricean terms, the speaker’s intention fails to play an essential role in producing the effect—that is to say, the effects are not constrained by the speaker’s intention.

Connected to this point is the argument from non-paraphrasability. From his perspective a literal paraphrase for metaphor is useless because the effects of metaphor

are rich, poetic non-propositional, and thereby open-ended. He tell us that the content they call to mind is indeterminate:

[T]here is no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention, and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character... Since in most cases what the metaphor prompts or inspires is not entirely, or even at all, recognition of some truth or fact, the attempt to give literal expression to the content of the metaphor is simply misguided. (Davidson, 1978, p. 46)

To offer a literal paraphrase to metaphor is misguided. Why? Davidson holds that we are not capturing a hidden message, but rather ‘what a metaphor calls to our attention’. The strengthened reading of Davidson amounts to the fact that metaphorical utterances fail to express propositional content (beyond the literal meaning) and thus cannot be cashed out in literal paraphrase. The strengthened reading is that metaphor lacks cognitive content because it cannot be adequately cashed out in literal paraphrase. If it had some special meaning, this would be a relatively easy task. Rather, metaphors are in the business of showing us that something can be seen *as* something else; not *that* it can be seen in such-and-such a way. For the reasons cited above, Davidson is radically non-cognitivist about metaphorical meaning.

### **5.1.1 Evaluating the causal account**

The weakness of Davidson’s non-cognitivism is revealed by Black’s cognitivist explanation that the problem with literal paraphrase is that:

[T]he same set of literal statements so obtained will not have the same power to inform and enlighten as the original; ... the loss in such cases is a loss in cognitive content; the relevant weakness of the literal paraphrase is not that it may be tiresomely prolix or boringly explicit; it fails to be a translation because it fails to give the *insight* that the metaphor did. (Black, 1955, p. 62)

What Black has in mind by ‘insight’ is similar to Davidson’s notion of seeing-as. As such, we may be able to dismiss Davidson’s reliance on non-paraphrasability. I present a line of argument from Camp (2006a). Suppose I ask you to restate just what I meant by issuing the following sentences:

(42) Jane is a real woman now.

(43) War is war.

(44) He’s a man’s man.

Just like a metaphor, a paraphraser may insist upon several candidate clauses to highlight certain aspects of my words, and downplay others. But I can also insist upon the fact that a restatement of my intended meaning “left out part of what I was originally after, while forcing me to make more explicit and definite commitments than I originally had in mind” Whereas the issuing of my initial utterances (e.g., 42-44) “nicely reflected my thought’s own roughness and openendedness, the paraphrase does not” (Camp, 2006a, p. 8). In fact, a lot of what we say is open-ended and evocative, despite being literal!

There are (at least) three other ways in which Davidson’s objections to cognitivism fails. These are (i) the attribution of a metaphorical meaning in anaphora; (ii) the constraint on metaphorical interpretation; and (iii) that metaphors can be used to assert and deny things. In regard to the first claim, consider the utterance made about your friend Bill who has returned from a long journey abroad. He comes into the local pub, and you issue the following utterance:

(45) Odysseus returned home, he is hungry.

Or

(46) Odysseus returned home, the brave soldier is hungry.

In (45), the pronoun “he” in the second clause picks out the referent the speaker has in mind by the metaphoric use of the proper name “Odysseus”. In (46), the definite descriptive clause “the brave soldier” also selects the speaker’s intended referent. The assertions made by both examples serve to highlight the fact that the metaphorical content is necessary to determine the correct interpretation of the anaphoric clauses which is driven by the speaker’s expectations of relevance to the discourse situation and recognized by an auditor that the speaker has in mind Bill—not the mythical Odysseus.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, if a metaphor only prompted us to search for similarities between the mythical Odysseus, brave soldiers, and our friend, Bill, and his recent journey without deriving the metaphorical content, we could not give a satisfactory explanation of how the information conveyed in the second clause builds on that of the first. It follows that metaphors must communicate more or less specific content; otherwise more complex metaphoric discourse would be nearly unintelligible.

Secondly, a causal-psychological—or associative—account of metaphorical ‘meaning’ is unable to deal with the fact that metaphorical meanings are highly constrained by their relationship to the literal meaning of the words uttered. The difficulty with associative account is that it leaves auditors with myriad interpretations, even ones

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<sup>39</sup> For a detailed discussion of anaphora linked to proper names used metaphorically, see Corazza and Genovesi (forthcoming).

very remote to the intended meaning. By contrast, cognitivist-inferential accounts can adequately explain how auditors can pick up on the speaker's intended meaning quickly and continue in discourse

Finally, metaphorical content can be used to deny or assert things about the world. In reference to the heatwave we are experiencing in a city, we may tell someone the following:

(47) Ottawa has been a pressure cooker recently.

Similarly, auditors can deny the specific metaphorical content intended by the speaker relatively automatically. This is because it seems that metaphorical content is something that is normatively constrained by the speaker's intentions in a manner characteristic of speaker's meaning. Consider the imagined scenario between two friends who align themselves to different ends of the political spectrum:

(48) A: Trump is a snake.

B: I don't think so! He's not deceitful, he's a chameleon (changing his rhetoric to suit his audience).

To reject Davidson's non-cognitivism and maintain that there are metaphorical meanings, is not to deny his insights. Despite the fact that Davidson argues against one of the central assumptions guiding this work, there are virtues to his account. I want to highlight these virtues. To do this, I first make explicit the lessons we have learned from Davidson's non-cognitivism.

First, Davidson does seem to emphasize that importance of literal meaning in the production of metaphor's effects: "Whether or not metaphor depends on new or extended meanings, it certainly depends in some way on the original meanings; an adequate account of metaphor must allow that the primary or original meanings of words remain active in their metaphorical setting" (Davidson, 1978, p. 34). This is important because the literal meaning constrains the interpretation of the metaphor in a way that Davidson did not see. This point also serves as an instructive to contextualist positions (including RT) that argue that the words take on *ad hoc* meanings, which are the only relevant ones in the context of utterance.

Secondly, Davidson's insights about meaning being the result of 'linguistic custom' suggests that literal meaning may not itself be the standard dictionary definition.<sup>40</sup> Camp (2013) takes this to mean that "the literal meaning which serves as input for generating metaphorical effects need not itself be conventional" (2013, p. 372). To highlight what she means by 'conventional', Camp offers the example of calling ex-president George Bush a "primate" intending to suggest that he is territorial, violent, and not intelligent. The point is that the relevant meaning of "primate" is one that is already understood to exclude human beings as relevant instances.

Finally, Davidson highlights the non-propositional features of metaphor. Specifically, Davidson takes metaphor to involve seeing-as, which is something imagistic, rich, and open-ended. Seeing-as is an aspect of metaphorical thought that

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<sup>40</sup> This point is made more explicit in his work "A nice derangement of epitaphs" (see Davidson, 1985 in Grandy & Warner, 2004)

cannot be reduced to seeing-that (Camp, 2013, p. 372). Acknowledging that metaphors make use of this psychological process serves as a corrective to cognitivist theories that attempt to cash out metaphorical effects in terms of propositions.

Unlike Davidson—and somewhat controversially—I do not think that indeterminacy or open-endedness ought to disqualify propositions as being meant. So long as the speaker intends for the auditor to take her to be committed to a rough body of propositions, and other related ones, and for this commitment to be achieved by the auditor’s recognition of that very intention. As Grice has noted, indeterminacy is typical of pragmatic communication. And, Camp notes (Camp, 2006a), the fact that we can preserve this indeterminacy in communication of our corresponding mental states is rhetorically useful.

## **5.2 Metaphorical meaning and cognitivism**

In this section, we explore cognitivist theories of metaphor. These theories deal with metaphorical content alone, and do not explicate a processing strategy for metaphor interpretation. According to these models, and pace Davidson, metaphors have cognitive content that a speaker can communicate to her audience. First, I turn to the central claims of the simile theory. On this view, metaphorical content is understood as being provided by the corresponding simile. I reject this view in favour of a model of metaphorical content that takes that content as determined by the properties associated with the source term that is transferred to the target. It is worth mentioning that cognitivist theories differ among themselves as to where metaphorical content belongs. Some theorists argue that

metaphorical content is part of the utterance content (e.g., is semantic/truth-conditional) while others maintain that metaphorical content is part of the speaker's meaning. I defer evaluation of these two stances until chapter 7 and 8.

### 5.2.1 Evaluating the comparativist theory

I begin this section with the simile theory of metaphor because it is first in the chronology of the study of metaphor. Indeed, many commentators attribute this simile theory (or the 'comparativist model' as it is sometimes called) to Aristotle, who treated metaphor as a truncated simile. On this account, the meaning of a metaphor in the *A is B* form is interpreted from a simile which takes the form *A is like a B*. Consequently, the content of a metaphor is identical to that of the corresponding simile. For example, the meaning of the utterance "Trump is an infant" corresponds to the simile "Trump is *like* an infant".

There are several attractive features to simile theories. For one thing, they are reductive. We can explain a metaphor by figuring out how similes work. Secondly, they preserve the intuition that metaphors, on their literal interpretation, are trivially false, but seek to argue that the simile is arguably true. Since similes are analyzed in terms of their literal meaning and literal truth, metaphors are analyzed in this way. For example, the utterance *Bill is a bulldozer* is false if we take it literally— obviously Bill cannot really be a piece of construction machinery with a large substantial plate equipped to push large quantities of soil. However, if we correct for this by re-interpreting the phrase as something like *Bill is like a bulldozer* we can better understand the similitude between source and target.

Davidson rejects the simile theory by arguing that everything is like everything else in some respect or another. From his perspective, assimilating metaphors to similes renders metaphor trivial and uninformative—which of course, metaphors are not! Simile theorists can respond to this objection by claiming that a metaphor only highlights certain salient features among many. We may grant proponents of the simile theory this much.

However, they must still deal with the fact that relevant and salient similarities that obtain within the comparison may often be metaphorical themselves. Perhaps “Jane is [like] a block of ice”. If so, in what ways? Perhaps she is “hard” and “cold”. Of course, she is not “hard” and “cold” literally speaking. Thus, “hard” and “cold” are being used metaphorically. Sally, it seems, is only like something that is hard and cold. Perhaps she is unemotional, unyielding, and unresponsive. But there is no literal sense in which blocks of ice are like this. We may say that fires are unemotional, unyielding, and the like. But “Sally is [like] a fire” does not seem to capture the same meaning of the original sentence. So we are left with asking the simile theorists, ‘what is the nature of metaphorical meaning?’ (Lycan, 2008, p. 180).

Camp and Reimer (2006) illustrates the issue using the opening lines from Sylvia Plath’s (1961) poem “Mirror”: “I am silver and exact/I have no preconceptions.” The authors point out that

Presumably the protagonist is here describing herself metaphorically as a mirror; on the simile theory she thus means that she is *like* a mirror. One natural elaboration of what this simile means is that she *reflects* the world around her, but the key word ‘reflects’ is itself obviously metaphorical. We seem to have fallen into a vicious explanatory circle. (Reimer & Camp, 2006, p. 852)

Another, powerful objection to the simile theory makes use of an observation I pointed to in chapter 1: Not all metaphors follow the same syntactic structure. The problem facing proponents of a simile theory is that not all metaphors are translatable into similes—indeed it may be a stretch to argue this point in the face of other sorts of metaphors. Consider Shakespeare’s metaphor from Hamlet (I.iii. 116-17) “When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul/ Lends the tongue vows.” Lycan writes:

A first pass might be: When x, which is like a person’s blood, does something that resembles burning, how prodigally y, which is like a person’s soul, does something similar to lending somethings that are vowlike [sic] to z, which resembles a person’s tongue.(Lycan, 2008, p. 183)

But we don’t get much from this. Something needs to be added, or so it seems. It doesn’t come as a surprise simile theorists stick to analyzing predicative examples of metaphor such as (1)-(3) (see chapter 2).

There have been attempts to revise the simile theory. These comparison-based models preserve figurative similarity without drawing on literal similarities. For instance, Gentner’s (1983) structure mapping theory and Fogelin’s (1988/2011) simile theory have proposed that similarity is preserved by notions of salience, where the appropriate features are highlighted via context of utterance, and structural alignment of higher-order (abstract/metaphorical?) relations between the objects being compared. Although we have preserved the notion of figurativeness, such amendments still do not account for the fact that not all metaphors are readily translatable into similes.

Furthermore, the arguments in favour of a sharper account of comparison seems circular. The original motivation was that the simile theory was reductive (i.e., that metaphorical content could be reduced to the literal content of a simile). In effect, these

theories attempt to explain metaphorical content by a simile that requires figurative/metaphorical interpretation. In turn, this pushes explanation back a step.

Although the simile models fail as an account of metaphorical meaning, similarities undoubtedly play some role in the overall process of interpretation—if similitude is only a by-product of the metaphorical interpretation.

### **5.2.2 Evaluating the semantic theory**

One major source of complaint with the simile theory is its inability to explain the creativity and non-triviality of a meaningful metaphor. First, the notion of similarity is vague and uninformative: something can be like something else in myriad ways. Thus, similarities are not simply given to us via the metaphor; and often similarity admits of degrees. Thus, the comparison view does not tell us how the pertinent similarities are recognized.

Secondly, the comparison view trivializes the intuitive notion that metaphors do more than simply put into relief some implicit similarity. Many of us have experienced the ‘power’ of a good metaphor, and it works its magic not by getting us to see similarities, but through its provocative, affective, and poetic qualities that seem to be conjured imagistically. Black concludes that “it would be more illuminating in some of the cases to say that the metaphor *creates* the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing” This has been the driving factor behind the development of what is now generally called ‘interaction theory’. The roots of this view can be traced back to literary theorist I.A. Richards (1936) in *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Though most identify interaction theory with Max Black, who sketched the position in

two thoughtful articles written over twenty years apart (1955, 1977), interactionism is picked up and subsequently developed by Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1974, 1977, 1978), Hausman (1987, 2006), Indurkha (1993), and Cazeaux (2007, 2011). I focus on Black's view<sup>41</sup> and take him as representative of the interactionism developed by the latter authors.

In Black's idiom, metaphors of the "A is B" form, typically evoke a 'system of associated commonplaces'. This means that a metaphor a set of associated ideas and beliefs—common to the language community and constituting the cognitive domain of the object, B—that interacts with or 'filters' our thoughts about the 'system' associated with A. The interaction between B and A produces a metaphorical meaning for the whole sentence, F, where F 'frames'<sup>42</sup> our overall way of thinking about A and the world more generally (Moran, 1989, p. 102). This is what we get when metaphor makes us 'see' one thing *as* something else. To illustrate this point, Black uses the metaphor "man is a wolf":

Imagine some layman required to say, without taking special thought, those things he held to be true about wolves; the set of statements resulting would approximate to what I am here calling the system of commonplaces associated with the word "wolf". I am assuming that in any given culture the responses made by different persons to the test suggested would agree rather closely, and that even the occasional expert, who might have unusual knowledge of the subject, would still know "what the man in the street thinks about the matter". From the expert's standpoint, the system of commonplaces may include half-truths or downright mistakes (as when a whale is classified as a fish); but the important thing for the metaphor's effectiveness is not that the commonplaces shall be true, but that they should be readily and freely evoked. (Because this is so, a metaphor that works in one society may seem preposterous in another. Men who take wolves to be reincarnations of dead humans will give the statement "Man is a wolf" an interpretation different from the one I have been assuming.) (Black, 1955, p. 287)

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<sup>41</sup> For a more detailed discussion on interactionism see Genovesi (2018).

<sup>42</sup> Not to be confused with Black's use of the same term.

The metaphor works its magic by ‘filtering’ the target (i.e., “Man”) through the properties and attributes of the source term (i.e., “wolf”). This produces a new context of understanding which serves to impose an extension of meaning on the source term.

To make sense of the metaphor, an interactionist would say that by calling man a wolf the term “wolf” evokes a wolf-system of related commonplaces. Here, the commonplace associated with wolves to make this metaphor successful include properties such as ‘being ruthless’, ‘travelling in packs’, ‘being predatory’, ‘territorial’ and ‘possessive’. Any and all traits that are relevant to seeing a man in this way will be prominent, and those that are not will be ignored. In this process, certain human properties, such as ‘walking on two legs’ are pushed to the background.

What matters is not the properties of the actual objects, or even if anyone believes the objects possess them, but stereotypical properties. That is to say, ‘commonplaces’ need not be true, or associated with the encyclopedic entry of the term, B, itself.<sup>43</sup>

Commonplaces remain relevant even though wolves are non-moral creatures, and so cannot arguably be ruthless. Likewise, the last two properties would continue to be relevant even if it turns out that wolves travel in pairs, and are herbaceous.

One of the factors motivating this view is the attempt to preserve the semantic content they seem to express. Metaphors involve more than seeing men as wolves, but involve seeing a particular conceptual domain (e.g., social interaction) in a novel way

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<sup>43</sup> Davidson, in *A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs* (1986), makes a similar point. He claims that conventional meaning is neither necessary nor sufficient for communication to be successful. This point significantly differs from his views of the role of semantics in communication in his article *What Metaphors Mean* surveyed in section 5.1.1.

(e.g., bestial terms). As the interactionist claims, we didn't just have a linguistic deficiency. Rather the linguistic gap reflects a privation in understanding. A freshly minted metaphor allows us to bridge a cognitive gap where there was no word or expression per se that expressed it (from occasion to occasion) beforehand. Thus, any attempt to reduce metaphorical meaning to literal meaning is misguided.

However, this theory is not without its own set of issues. The interaction theory as presented by Black and those developing his theory employ metaphorical terms to describe the magic of the metaphor itself. Black's account is vague, and employs terms such as 'interaction', 'association', 'frame', and 'filter' which are themselves metaphorical, and seem to lack the explanatory power of theoretically tractable terminology.

Moreover, many theorists are suspicious of Black's claim that metaphors are irreducible to precise literal paraphrase. Davidson, for one, objects that if we grant Black this assertion, why should we suppose there is any meaning in the metaphor at all? If metaphors do have some cognitive import beyond their literal meaning, then why should it be so difficult, or perhaps impossible, to capture that content in literal terms?

Furthermore, Black fails to specify exactly what a commonplace system of knowledge is. For example, he doesn't explain how a shift in meaning takes place; or how domains of commonplace knowledge are structured and interact with one another. Moreover, it is hard to see how Black's proposal takes into consideration metaphors that do not explicitly identify the objects of comparison. Thinking back to Richards' example of the 'stubborn and unconquerable flame' we agreed that 'flame' is modifying the term

‘fever’, which is not explicitly mentioned in the line.<sup>44</sup> Black’s account seem to work best for metaphors that consist of a general kind predicate predicated of an individual or kind. But not all metaphors are of this form (Reimer & Camp, 2006, p. 854).

Despite the objections to Black and interactionism more generally, Black is on the right track. In the next section, I attempt to flesh out exactly what is missing from interactionism, and try to provide a means through which to mitigate his shortcomings. At the very least, it will be important to offer more substantive criteria for determining what a ‘commonplace’ is, and perhaps how commonplaces are ‘associated’ with one another into a coherent system, or frame, F. And, we will need a clearer picture of what these relations are like so that we may appreciate the relevant sort of structure among thoughts—or what it might be.

### **5.3 A better understanding of metaphorical meaning**

In this section, I want to lay my understanding of metaphorical meaning on the table. To this end, I develop Black’s ‘system’ of ‘commonplaces’. For, it is one that will underpin my view of metaphorical communication in chapter 10. Black’s understanding of metaphor as a complex communicative tool is something echoed by cognitive scientists. For example, Glucksberg and Keysar (1993, p. 421) say that metaphors “present a complex of properties in one chunk”. This is a result of the fact that metaphors exploit a more general fact about our way of thinking and dealing with the world. When we

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<sup>44</sup> See footnote 14.

experience the world, we typically experience “multiple properties instantiated together, first in particular individuals and again across individuals of certain kinds” (Camp, 2006a, p. 3). As a result we “intuitively associate these properties in our thinking” (Camp, 2006a, p. 3).

What Glucksberg, Keysar, and Camp are referring to is roughly similar to what some call ‘stereotypes’ or ‘prototypes’. Following Camp (Camp, 2003) I employ the term ‘characterization’ to do justice to Black’s ‘system of associated commonplaces’. However, I do not want to get bogged down in the details of her work. For this would take us too far from philosophy of language into the philosophy of mind—and is a task that is beyond my present purpose. I will mention only those features that are most important for our present purpose and leave out many of the details. Because Camp has done most of the groundwork my attempt will seem clumsy at best.<sup>45</sup> The reason(s) I find characterizations to be so crucial to my investigation will become clear below. I first give an explanation of the characterizations, and then offer some examples of how metaphor exploits them to produce its rich meaning.

The notion of characterization shouldn’t seem controversial to us; it is an intuitive one. And the way in which I use it is close enough to our intuitions. Characterizations are often exploited in dealing with and understanding the world around. For instance, we do not simply exploit beliefs about particular things in the world. Rather, our beliefs hang together with along with our attitudes and perceptions in a

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<sup>45</sup> I want to direct the readers’ attention to Camp’s (2003) dissertation for her treatment and discussion of concepts and characterizations.

complex structure. Some new beliefs, attitudes, etc. can be accommodated easily by characterizations; others cannot. Thus, some new beliefs make sense to include, or are appropriate, in our characterization of a particular thing, while others are less appropriate. Essentially, we may think of a characterization as a representation of a particular thing. Under this term, we can include actions, events, and situations as being things that we characterize. When we characterize something, we structure a thing's properties in a particular way.

Importantly, characterizations are intimately associated with concepts, but we would do well to think of them as distinguishable in three important ways. Characterizations differ (i) in their structure, (ii) the features that characterizations include, and (iii) the sort of commitment that is involved in including something within a characterization. I will briefly describe these features below.

Characterizations have a complex set of properties. The properties within the structure have three mutually irreducible dimensions. We can think of certain properties as more prominence, centrality, and depth. Prominence can be thought of as roughly equivalent to salience. For example, my characterization of my friend John may include his profession as a prominent feature of how I attend and think about his character; while other features such as his hair cut may not play a central role. At the same time, this latter feature may play a more prominent role in my characterization of someone else—say an Instagram model who is showcasing her hair for a particular brand of hair spray. Prominence can also be used in a more general sense across individuals of a certain kind. For example, we typically take features of a group's socio-economic status as relatively important criteria for thinking about that group.

Centrality is meant to capture the idea that certain features are more important in determining other aspects of an individual's characterization. For example, a psychoanalyst could interpret certain properties of a person's dreams as being the manifestation of some past trauma. By removing this trauma, we would need to change our interpretation of those specific dream elements. The experience of trauma may not itself be all that prominent, but the trauma itself may play a central role in determining other character traits.

In addition to prominence and centrality, some features have a certain depth.<sup>46</sup> These are "deeply rooted elements" that are "highly impervious to change" (Camp, 2003, p. 93). Features that run deep may not be prominent nor central to our thoughts about an individual. For example, Bill may have deeply bigoted beliefs about a certain group of people, but takes care to hide this from many people. Still there may be certain situations where he feels "a violent revulsion at the presence of someone whose kind he disdains" (Camp, 2003, p. 93). Basically, depth is determined by how difficult it would be to remove a particular feature from our understanding of an individual or kind.

Now that I have established these three dimensions of the structure of characterization, it should be apparent that characterizations are not merely the sum of their parts. Two individuals who possess nearly all the same properties may still have a fundamentally different character. This is due to the fact that we attend to the properties

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<sup>46</sup> Now, depth doesn't play a significant role in my theory of metaphorical communication. I discuss it only to acknowledge it as a crucial component of characterizations. However, I do take it to be a particularly important feature in our understanding of people.

in certain ways so that the way they hang together produces a different structure. So too can we say that

...two thinkers may have very different characterizations of the same individual without disagreeing about which properties it possesses, because they may structure those properties quite differently. When those differences merely involve prominence, they will notice different similarities between that subject and others. When those merely structural differences turn on centrality or depth, as they often will, the characterizations will objectively differ in how they represent their subjects as being. (Camp, 2003, p. 93)

Furthermore, characterizations often include experiential features<sup>47</sup>, affective attitudes, emotions, and moods that all play important roles in the characterization they participate in as central, prominent or deep.

Affective attitudes can play two sorts of roles within a characterization. On the one hand, we may think it is fitting for the individual or kind characterized itself to have a certain attitude, emotion or mood. So, we might impute a feeling of wounded pride to a caged lion or to a downsized CEO, or a feeling of defiant glee to the arsonist standing before his latest crime. On the other hand, we may think it is fitting for us to have certain feelings in our interactions with that individual or kind. So, I might think it would be fitting to feel rage toward that arsonist, to feel awe before Mother Teresa, to feel piety when standing in a grove of aspens, to feel simultaneous curiosity and revulsion before an artwork by Damien Hirst, or to feel raucous excitement in sports stadiums. (Camp, 2003, p. 105)

It is vital to acknowledge the fact that emotions and moods are important constituents of characterizations because they colour them with a crucial psychological force.

Finally, in providing a characterization of a thing, it is important to appreciate what the speaker is committed to. In uttering a metaphor, a speaker intends to communicate certain beliefs and attitudes, and perhaps intends for the auditor to share these beliefs and attitudes. Here, Black's notion of 'commonplace'—what I'm calling a

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<sup>47</sup> For a more detailed discussion of 'experiential features' see Camp (2003, pp. 101–104).

‘characterization’—is especially important. In speaking metaphorically, a speaker may intend certain properties that are not actually literally possessed by the thing they have characterized.

As Black points out, some ‘commonplaces’ may be mistakes—but can be included in how we characterize a thing.<sup>48</sup> Other features that a thing possesses may not be intended because they are unimportant. Romeo’s belief that the sun is a gaseous ball presumably does not make its way into his characterization of Juliet. Rather, when we characterize someone or something we maintain that a certain character is ‘fitting’ or ‘appropriate’ as a means to represent that individual or kind. Camp makes an important distinction in what she refers to as ‘fittingness’:

I want to mention a distinction between two ways in which one might entertain the thought that some feature, *F*, is fitting for an individual *a*, or kind *A*. On the one hand, one can entertain what I’ll call a general thought that *F* is fitting for *a*. The judgment is ‘general’ in the sense that it affirms merely that there is some way of fitting *F* into *a*’s character, without staking any sort of commitment as to just which way that is. On the other hand, one might entertain the singular thought that *F* fits *a*’s character in a particular way. Doing this requires actually fitting *F* into one’s own characterization of *a*. This in turn means locating *F* with some rough measure of prominence, centrality and depth within the structure of one’s characterization of *a*, and getting some sense for how *F* connects up with the other elements in that structure. Adding a new feature to one’s existing characterization in this way will usually also force alterations in the rest of that characterization, by motivating some new structural relations between already established features and undermining some others. (Camp, 2003, p. 99)

Here, *F* is understood as the source or governing characterization, and *a* is the subject characterization under discussion. Now that we have a better understanding of what characterizations are, I want to turn back to how this has bearing on metaphor.

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<sup>48</sup> For example, the characterization of the ‘lone wolf’ is not accurate, but allows us to make sense of ruthless and solitary individuals that take care of business by themselves.

Consider again “Juliet is the sun”. Unlike Davidson, I view Romeo’s utterance as expressing some cognitive content  $F^*$  about Juliet. Unlike the simile theory, this content is not the property of being *like* the sun. Rather,  $F^*$  is a property (or rather, a chunk of properties)<sup>49</sup> that is intimately connected to  $F$  that is associated with the sun. The relation  $F^*$  bears to  $F$  cannot simply one of literal similarity. This would limit Romeo’s utterance to certain higher-order literal relations, such ‘being a source of life for things’, ‘facilitating growth’, ‘being central’, or a combination of these. We would be remiss to cash-out Romeo’s utterance as one that simply appends higher-order similarity-based matches.

The characterization of Juliet as  $F^*$  presented by Romeo makes certain properties, emotions, and moods more prominent than others (at least in the context of utterance). And, some of these features will be more central than others—in the sense that they determine some of the other features Romeo is predicating of Juliet. A view in which  $F^*$  ascribes all properties the sun and Juliet share is not plausible. Rather,  $F^*$  must be restricted to shared properties in virtue of the three dimensions that constitute a characterization. Thus, the characterization  $F^*$  associated with  $F$  is to be understood on an analogical model.<sup>50</sup> In this model, certain physical properties associated with  $F$  (“the

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<sup>49</sup> By exploiting a characterization, a metaphor can invoke a number of salient properties. The speaker and the hearer don’t need to identify each constituent element. The metaphor bundles together the properties into a characterization—a complex content of the subject under discussion. The “chunks” communicated by metaphor make up a rich structure that hangs together in a certain way. And some of the features in the characterization are more important than others.

<sup>50</sup> I expand on this in the following section.

sun”) become features that are human-specific, including psychological features.<sup>51</sup> Thus, analogously to the way the sun has been revered by various cultures as a source of awe, beauty, and goodness, Juliet is exemplary of beauty and goodness. In addition, analogously to the way in which the sun helps things grow physically, Juliet helps Romeo grow emotionally, etc.

For Romeo, the property ‘being the paradigm of beauty and goodness’ is perhaps the most prominent, central, and deep feature. This feature is more important than the property ‘helping Romeo grow’. So, if one wants to give someone a summary of what Romeo communicated, it would be better to cite the first property and not the latter. Otherwise, you would misunderstand Romeo’s metaphor. Furthermore, certain features that Romeo claims Juliet possesses imply others. For example, ‘Juliet is worthy of worship’ is entailed by her being the paradigm of beauty and goodness. There are other prominent, though less central features, such as ‘Juliet is the most beautiful women’. Other features are not very central, though prominent, such as ‘Juliet makes Romeo feel warm’. Finally, we can identify features that are neither prominent nor central in Romeo’s utterance, such as ‘Juliet nurtures Romeo’s maturity’.

These features form an interconnected network of implications with ‘being the paradigm of beauty and goodness’ at the centre. In forming a characterization of some individual or kind, we don’t simply put together properties we believe the thing characterized possesses. Rather, they almost always go beyond the content that is conventionally encoded in the words deployed and the concepts they represent. They are

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<sup>51</sup> I discuss the nuanced way in which matchings are made in the following section.

structured so that certain properties are more prominent than others, and certain among them will play a more central role in that they determine other properties.

Equally as important, Romeo imputes affective attitudes in his characterization of Juliet. The affectively-laden features permeates the structure of his characterization of her and highlight those features which fit with them, adding vivacity to the structure.

Metaphors exploit the rich and complex structure of characterizations of individuals or kinds to structure our thinking about something else. Metaphors perform this complex task almost effortlessly.

### **5.3.1 Metaphor and aspectual thought**

Now that we have an adequate understanding of characterizations, I would like to say a few more things about the specific role they play in metaphorical thought. Following Camp (2008) and Reimer (2008), I will use the term ‘aspectual’ to refer to the mechanism under which a characterization is employed in seeing one thing *as* something else. Many of our everyday interactions with the world involve thinking under an aspect. Such interactions include the telling of stories, both fictional and non-fictional. To see what I have in mind by ‘aspectual thought’, let’s consider the parable of King David and the prophet Nathan. As the story goes, King David takes Bathsheba—the wife of Uriah—as his mistress. Uriah is a soldier in David’s army. When David impregnates her, David basically condemns Uriah to die by exposing him to enemy attack. David orders Bathsheba to live with him in the palace. The lord sends Nathan to reprimand David. Nathan tells him the following story:

There was a rich man with many flocks of sheep and a poor man with just “one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew together with him, and

with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.” One day, the rich man needed to kill a lamb to feed a traveler, and he took the poor man’s only lamb rather than one of his own plentiful supply.<sup>52</sup>

Upon hearing the story, David becomes enraged at the rich man’s behaviour. At this point, Nathan says to him: “Thou art the man.” David repents. He does this because the parable induces a shift in the way David thinks about the situation. This allows David to see his own conduct in a drastically different way. Yet, he does not acquire any new first-order beliefs about what he did or the consequences of his actions. He already knew that Uriah loved Bathsheba; that she was Uriah’s only wife; that David had many wives; that it’s wrong to take things without compensating those from whom you have taken, etc. The story does however allow him to reconfigure the importance of certain facts, and thereby also make various different emotions more fitting.

The primary effect here is perspectival, and essentially non-propositional. The aspect under which David comes to think about his actions allows for him to restructure his existing thoughts. Secondly, the aspect makes a real difference in David’s thoughts about his actions. The parable achieves this effect by bringing one characterization to a play a role in the other. The governing characterization (e.g., the parable) serves as a lens through which we view the target subject (e.g., David’s actions).

In more general terms, when we think of *a* under the aspect *F* where we bring “the concept of being *F* within [our] *a*-characterization so that *F* is both fitting and as central as possible to *a*’s character” (Camp, 2003, p. 143). To bring *a* under the aspect *F*

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<sup>52</sup> Samuel, Chapters 11-12. The parable is discussed as a case of aspect shift by Ted Cohen (1997) and Josef Stern (2000).

so that  $F$ -things ( $F_i$ ) are central produces further realignments in the structure of our  $a$ -characterization that brings to light other features that are produced by  $F$ 's fittingness for  $a$ . By doing this, we take our  $F$ -characterization as governing the structure among the elements in our  $a$ -characterization.

This process involves reorganizing our subject characterization,  $a$ , so that it's as close as possible to the governing characterization,  $F$ . Thus, in Nathan's parable, or the case of Romeo's metaphor, we must reconfigure our subject characterization so that it is as close as possible to the governing characterization. Just how long this process takes will depend on our needs within and beyond the present context. The context may be such that it requires we construct a quick-and-dirty characterization. For example, everyday conversations make use of one-off metaphors that are used in local discourse contexts, but are not themselves the focal point of the conversation topic. Certain other contexts, on the other hand, may require that we invest a great deal of time in reconfiguring our subject characterization, and attending to the features the governing characterization brings to prominence within it. For example, a class on Modern British Literature may involve spending multiple weeks deciphering the implications of just one metaphor.<sup>53</sup> We may continue to put effort into our reconfiguration as long as we need to.

How does this restructuring take place? Arguably, we begin by matching the most central and prominent features of the governing characterization to those within our

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<sup>53</sup> Here, I am reminded of a class I had taken with Dr. Tom Dilworth where we spent nearly three weeks discussing the metaphor of the 'rose garden' in Eliot's *4 Quartets*.

subject characterization. Matches themselves can be made on the basis of *identity* and *similarity*. The distinctiveness of metaphor lies in the matches that it employs.

### **5.3.1.1 Matching and meaning**

Identity matching a property, *P*, means that both the governing and subject characterizations contain the very same property *P*. However, the governing characterization deploys *P*, in order to restructure the subject characterization so that it takes on a different significance. For example, one may be aware of the fact that US President Donald Trump referred to Baltimore as a “rat and rodent infested mess”.<sup>54</sup> One may also be aware of the fact that Hitler referred to Jewish populations as ‘rodents’ and ‘rats’ during his rise to power. However, in the case of Trump, many supporters may not have considered this comment as a prominent or central feature of their characterization of him.

However, if someone wanted to draw your attention to the current state of the American presidency they may juxtapose these two facts between the comments made by Trump and Hitler’s rhetoric in order to restructure our thoughts about Trump. In which case, certain other features of Trump may be reconfigured to see him as more sinister and dangerous, whose actions are more calculated than one may have assumed.<sup>55</sup>

Many metaphors, especially poetic metaphors, do not invoke many identity matches between the governing and subject characterizations. In metaphor, when identity

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<sup>54</sup> See: <https://www.apnews.com/3b82dd98c56f45d4a97170c3f758cb84>.

<sup>55</sup> In fact, there is an entire psychology dedicated to understanding how ‘dehumanization’ of groups by political parties and their rulers can lead to cruelty and genocide. See Livingstone (2011).

features cannot be matched, the processor will look to match *similar* features from *F* to *a*. This can happen in four different ways. First, two features *P* and *Q* may be matched in some scalar respect. Secondly, there may be some *structural analogy* between the role that *P* plays in the governing characterization, and that *Q* plays in the subject characterization. Third, *P* and *Q* may be *metaphorically* similar.<sup>56</sup> Finally, features from the governing characterization can be *introduced* into the subject characterization. This is not based on similarity matchings *per se*.

In non-literal cases of scalar similarity, there is some feature *P* that occurs on some extreme end of a defining scale in our governing characterization. Because *P* is toward some extreme on a scale, it features prominently in *F*'s character, which makes it an obvious candidate for matching. *P* is matched with the less extreme *a*-feature *Q*, and thus raises *Q*'s prominence. For example, I may refer to one of my colleagues as a block of ice because the extremity of the coldness of ice on a temperature scale selects for my colleague's lack of sympathetic comportment on an emotional scale.

*Analogical* similarity occurs when sets of elements within each characterization, or sets of relations between elements, stand in an identical high-order relation. Gentner (1983) offers the example "a cigarette is like a time bomb." Here we have the structural relation of one igniting-event *causing* an annihilation-event. We can represent the shared structure of the two events thusly:

CAUSE[IGNITE(man, cigarette), ANNIHILATION(cigarette, man)]::

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<sup>56</sup> I take up the problem of circularity in regards to metaphorical matchings a little later in this section.

CAUSE[IGNITE(man, time bomb), ANNIHILATION(time bomb, man)].<sup>57</sup>

Often, the relevant higher-order relations that are matched will be ones of causation, dependence, or implication. When this is the case, the feature that represents this sort of relationship is more central than others. But, not all analogical relations are the same. For example, when we think of Nathan's parable, we get the following matches:

MORE POWERFUL THAN (David, Uriah):: MORE POWERFUL THAN (rich man, poor man)

ONLY BELOVED OF (Bathsheba, Uriah):: ONLY BELOVED OF (ewe, poor man);

GRATIOUSLY TAKES [MORE POWERFUL THAN (Uriah), ONLY BELOVED OF (Uriah)]::

GRATIOUSLY TAKES [MORE POWERFUL THAN (poor man), ONLY BELOVED OF (poor man)].<sup>58</sup>

These matches don't rely on dependence, inference, or causation, rather they depend upon social roles, and hierarchies (Camp, 2003, p. 149).

The final sort of similarity that can be matched between a feature *P* and a feature *Q* can be one of *metaphorical* similarity (Ortony, 1979, pp. 168–169). For example, if one calls President Trump a gorilla, at least two prominent features of gorillas are matched to Trump. These are *being prone to aggression* and *being primitive*. In each case, however, these two features are different in each case. The way in which Trump is

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<sup>57</sup> In the syntax, there is a distinction between first-order predicates (taking objects as arguments) and second- and higher-order predicates (that take propositions as arguments). For example, if COLLIDE (x,y) and STRIKE (y,z) are first-order predicates, CASUE[COLLIDE (x,y), STRIKE (y,z)] is a second-order predicate.

<sup>58</sup> This representation comes from Camp (2003, p. 148).

prone to aggression is more verbal and symbolically-driven<sup>59</sup> than physical; in comparison to humans, gorilla tribes are primitive in the sense of their cultural practices. The way in which Trump is primitive seems more about his poise and reluctance to ‘play by the rules’ in the office of the president. Here, the governing characterization possesses the literal sense of the qualities being matched, whereas the subject characterization has these in a figurative sense.

Now there is an important distinction to draw between analogical similarity and metaphorical similarity. Analogical similarities seem to depend on very tight isomorphic matches between sets of elements. Importantly, metaphorical matches are not as strict. These types of matches require that some set of matches are established, they do not need to be mutually consistent (Camp, 2003, p. 151).

There is at least one problem that faces the notion of metaphorical similarity. This is the problem of ‘metaphor within a metaphor’ or ‘circularity’ (Ritchie, 2013). That is, applying an aspect is supposed to explain metaphor; yet, it seems we call on metaphorical interpretation in order to explain certain kinds of relevant matches involved in metaphor interpretation of a given metaphor, *Fa*.

I don’t think circularity poses a great theoretical problem, so long as “the salient element *P* within our *F*-characterization is metaphorically similar to an element *Q* in our *a*-characterization, so long as understanding the similarity between *P* and *Q* doesn’t in turn require appealing to the similarity between *a* and *F*” (Camp, 2003, p. 150). I believe that metaphorical mappings can be virtuously circular provided that the embedded

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<sup>59</sup> Here, I am thinking about his presence on Twitter.

metaphorical mappings between  $P$  and  $Q$  be less complex than the initial mapping between  $F$  and  $a$ . This is likely to happen when the constituent metaphorical matches between  $P$  and  $Q$  are highly familiar, and shared among linguistic communities, such as calling someone a gorilla.

In addition to these ways in which features are matched, the governing characterization can *introduce* features into the subject characterization (Camp, 2003, p. 152; Ortony, 1979, p. 173) provided that the feature  $P$  that is introduced is prominent in the governing characterization.  $P$  must be fitting for  $a$  given the characterization within the current discourse—conversational principles, background and mutual knowledge help facilitate the introduction of the relevant feature(s) into one’s  $a$ -characterization.

The introduction of features typically amplifies our  $a$ -characterization, especially in regards to our affectations, when other matches between features can independently support the introduction of  $P$ . For instance, if a speaker calls Bill a “mouse” in conversation referring to his performance in the board meeting in order to prompt the auditor to introduce the prominent feature of ‘being timid’. The auditor, unfamiliar with Bill, can still introduce this feature into their characterization of Bill. The introduction of this feature is facilitated if one already thinks of Bill as diminutive in size, or soft spoken, for example.

We can wrap up this subsection by saying that a governing characterization allows us to see something under an aspect. In order for this to take place, certain focal (prominent and central) features must be matched to the subject characterization in one or more of the ways sketched above. When the aspect is applied to the subject characterization, the effort of establishing matches must be equal to or exceed the effects

of the change in the subject characterization.<sup>60</sup> In other words, the imaginative and interpretive effort put into processing matches from the governing characterization to the subject characterization must be worthwhile in that they yield some difference to the auditor's subject characterization.

The type of interpretive reasoning I have in mind, i.e., seeing under an aspect, is part of our general reasoning capacities. Seeing under an aspect is not specific to metaphor, rather, metaphor exploits certain types of feature matches (see above) in order to yield a metaphorical interpretation. It is hard to say what sorts of matches come first. At least logically, it seems that identity matches are sought after. If identity matches are not sufficient to retrieve the intended alterations in the characterization that the speaker has in mind, then the auditor will begin the climb to more abstract similarity-matching strategies (i.e., scalar, analogical, and metaphorical in that order). As a last resort, auditors will introduce features from the governing characterization into their subject characterization.

Despite this tiered process, individual reasoners differ amongst themselves. Some may proceed methodically, while others may wait until a certain match leaps out to the fore. At the same time, in certain respects, some matches just seem to be automatic, while others require a more concerted and explicit effort.

In regards to metaphor, one attempts to bring the concept of being *F* under one's characterization of *a*. That is to say, the concept of *being F* will play a governing role within one's *a*-characterization. One's *a*-characterization is altered to be as close as

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<sup>60</sup> See Sperber and Wilson's *Cognitive Principle of Relevance* (2004).

possible to the governing characterization. This occurs by employing matching strategies. The effort to search for matches is proportional to the effects that such matches will have in satisfying the intended meaning in context.

Matches are sought after by employing one or more of four types of matching-strategies: identity, scalar similarity, analogy, and metaphorical similarity. In certain cases, features are introduced to the subject characterization. Finally, aspects in the service of literal utterance and metaphorical ones differ in the proportion of the type of matches employed. A literal aspect will primarily rely on identity matches, and secondarily, scalar similarity. By contrast, a metaphorical aspect will rely on analogical and metaphorical similarity—although not exclusively (Camp, 2003, p. 157).

### **5.3.2 The problem of paraphrase**

I have mentioned that metaphorical meaning, exploiting characterizations, goes beyond the conventionally encoded content. I do not want my readership to be led to think that because of this fact, that their contents cannot be given literal translation. I believe that we can offer paraphrases of metaphorical content. We simply need to identify what is necessary to literally paraphrase. I focus on Black's arguments against paraphrase as representative of this objection. He writes:

Suppose we try to state the cognitive content of a...metaphor in "plain language." Up to a point, we may succeed...But the set of literal statements so obtained will not have the same power to inform and enlighten as the original. For one thing, the implications, previously left for a suitable reader to educe for himself, with a nice feeling for their relative priorities and degrees of importance, are now presented explicitly as though having equal weight. The literal paraphrase inevitably says too much -- and with the wrong emphasis. One of the points I most wish to stress is that the loss in such cases is a loss in cognitive content; the relevant weakness of the literal paraphrase is not that it may be tiresomely prolix or boringly explicit (or deficient in

qualities of style); it fails to be a translation because it fails to give the insight that the metaphor did. (Black, 1955, p. 293)

Here, Black makes three objections against literal paraphrase. His first objection against literal paraphrase is that it fails to capture the metaphor's content. His second objection that paraphrase fails to translate metaphor because it 'says too much'. His third objection is that paraphrase fails to give the same 'insight' as the metaphor it attempts to translate. I respond to these three objections in turn.

In his first objection, Black seems to suggest that the rich and complex structure of metaphor cannot be translated by literal paraphrase. However, I don't think this is exactly right. It may be the case that without tropes we lack convenient and efficient linguistic tools. But this doesn't mean that we cannot provide an approximation. To be sure, I attempted to do just that in the previous section. My paraphrase of Romeo's metaphor to Juliet is meant to show that such a complex structure of properties are communicated and that they hang together in a particular way. At most this argument establishes that a literal paraphrase may often be difficult; it does not convincingly argue that literal paraphrase is impossible.

The second objection Black offers against literal paraphrase is that it 'says too much'. Here he seems to express the idea that a paraphrase could go on indefinitely because metaphorical meaning is something inherently indeterminate. Davidson makes a related point when he says "when we try and say what a metaphor 'means', we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention" (Davidson, 1978, p. 263). The fact that metaphorical content is indeterminate does not undermine paraphraseability. At least, it undermines paraphraseability to the extent that it does so with many literal utterances.

Let's imagine a situation where I am trying to explain the meaning to someone of one or other of the following sentences:

(49) Boys don't cry.

(50) Life is life.

Both (49) and (50) seem to express an array of possible contents. I could try and offer some of these to you (such as 'boys are supposed to have their emotions in check' or 'boys are not supposed to display weakness', some further proposition, or a combination of them, etc.). The point is that any restatement will leave out part of what the speaker was originally after, while at the same time to force a more definite and explicit commitment than the speaker originally had in mind (Camp, 2006a, p. 8). The original utterance reflects the openendedness of the speaker's thoughts in a way paraphrase does not. A lot of what we speak about tends to be evocative and rich in just this way even though it is literal. In such cases, paraphrases will only be approximations.

Black's final objection against literal paraphrase states that literal paraphrase doesn't offer the same 'insight' as the original metaphor. This, I believe to be correct for the most part. Metaphors reveal a filter through which to think of the individual or kind under discussion. In exploiting a characterization a metaphor allows us to see something under a perspective or an aspect. In speaking metaphorically, speakers intend for the auditor to construct a characterization of the subject under discussion as similar as possible to the governing characterization of the metaphorical term. When speakers merely want to make a determinate point, they may intend for the auditor only to identify a few features in the subject characterization that can be matched to prominent features in

the governing characterization.<sup>61</sup> Perspectives/aspects is a cognitively holistic way of structuring something, but not itself a thought. Since a paraphrase need only capture the speaker's intended speech act (which includes the illocutionary force provided by the mood of the grammar). So, I think Black is correct in insisting that a paraphrase lacks the same insight as the original metaphorical utterance. However, this fact does not go far enough to undermine our ability to offer an adequate paraphrase whereby we try and be as faithful as possible to the intended meaning.

To conclude, I think literal paraphrases can be given of metaphorical utterances. An adequate paraphrase will be one whose semantic content will be as close as possible to the speaker's intended speech act. But in order to offer a paraphrase, a literal-reporter of the metaphor must construct the relevant characterization of the appropriate emotion and features guided by what she thinks the speaker is after. That is, the literal-reporter must engage in pragmatic interpretation. This requires that speaker and auditors "coordinate their interpretive assumptions so as to converge upon the appropriate content" (Camp, 2006a, p. 13). This doesn't require that the assumptions be true or correct. Recall that for metaphorical interpretation, speakers need to coordinate their characterizations of the relevant features, and characterizations do necessarily have to be true, accurate, or just believed to be relevant for grasping the speaker's intention vis-à-vis the subject.

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<sup>61</sup> When a speaker utters a more deeply meant and richer metaphor, the speaker expects the auditor to take the task of applying the governing characterization to the subject characterization more seriously. In this case, a speaker's communicative intention are opened. In fact, speakers may intend that the auditor participate in determining the metaphors content.

## Chapter 6: Metaphor and the context wars

Let's assume that metaphors have non-literal meanings. If so, how do they manage to communicate these contents? Cognitivist answers to this question differ among themselves as to whether metaphorical content is part of the utterance (truth-conditional) content, or whether it is part of the speaker's meaning. David Hills (2016) refers to this as metaphor's 'context wars'.

And like many wars, those involved have created numerous allies, and have had their share of proxy wars. As a result, contemporary strategies for answering the question 'how do metaphors work?' do not fall into the same clear boundaries that marked the four traditional approaches surveyed in chapter 2.

For example, Hills (2016) divides the current state of research into 'literalist' and 'contextualist' accounts which is loosely based on the individual theorists methodological approach to metaphor and their commitments vis-à-vis the semantics/pragmatics interface. However, between these two broad categories there exist many overlapping viewpoints; and within each camp there are just as many diverging opinions. Literalists, like Stern, seem to respect a Gricean boundary between 'what is said' and pragmatic meaning—only making the exception for metaphor. Contextualists, such as Sperber and Wilson replace the concept of 'what is said' with explicature. This new notion is supposed to include many various pragmatic phenomenon under what a speaker says.

Camp (2003), on the other hand, divides the contemporary debate into 'new-school semanticists' and Grice-inspired pragmatists. Here, the division is one based on overlapping outcomes among theorists, and not necessarily the methodology used, nor the commitments regarding the semantics/pragmatics interface.

‘New-school semanticists’ include contextualists such as Sperber and Wilson, Carston. But the list also includes theorists such as Bezuidenhout, Recanati, Wearing, Nogales, and literalist Stern among those who endorse the idea that metaphor is part of an enriched ‘what is said’.

Many pragmatists working in the Gricean tradition, such as Searle, Moran, and to a certain extent, Camp, develop accounts of metaphor as a means of saying one thing literally, while implicating something metaphorical. Pragmatic accounts that subsume metaphorical content into speaker’s meaning share the idea of a special interpretive mechanism reserved for metaphor and various other pragmatic phenomena such as implicatures, and indirect speech acts.

Popa-Wyatt (2009) seems to respect Camp’s distinction, but she sees the important way to draw the boundary as one between strategies that view the difference between metaphoric and literal communication as a difference in degree rather than a difference in kind. As a result, she uses Grice-inspired models and their focus on metaphor-as-implicature to mark the boundary between the various accounts.

The reasons for marking the boundary in one of these three ways seems largely rhetorical— I use this term without any of the negative connotations one may want to bring to it. So, for stylistic reasons, I think it will be consistent to mark the boundary by the systematic labels offered by Hills. However, I must qualify this. Although Stern and Camp are considered to be ‘literalists’ in Hills’ understanding of the term, they differ markedly in their methodology and their conclusions. In fact, Stern’s methodology is more akin to Kaplan’s treatment of indexical and demonstrative expressions. In addition, his conclusions have more in common with those drawn by contextualists. Thus, in the

next section (6.1), I focus exclusively on Stern's claim that metaphor is a semantic phenomenon. I reserve analysis of his methodology and conclusion—that metaphor should be treated semantically in the way he suggests—for chapter 7.

In section (6.2), I examine the contextualist claim that metaphor should be treated as a loose use of language involving the construction of an ad hoc concept, contributing to explicature. On this view, metaphorical meanings are a part of an enriched 'what is said', and are fundamentally different from conversational implicature. I reserve analysis of their methodology and conclusions for chapter 7. In chapter 7 I draw out the similarities between Stern's literalist approach, and contextualism's approach to metaphor and offer a critical evaluation.

## **6.1 Literalism and metaphor**

Intuitively, metaphor seems to be a pragmatic phenomenon. However, this wasn't explicitly recognized until Searle (1993), following Grice (1989), had developed a Grice-inspired account of metaphor. Until that point, most theorists had treated metaphor as a semantic phenomenon. Traditional semantic accounts of metaphor assumed that a sentence contained a fixed set of metaphorical meanings. Tied to this was the assumption that fixed metaphorical meaning is the result of a grammatical deviance that resulted in a category mistake. This 'mistake' prompted an interaction which results in a transformation in one of the sentence's constituent terms.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> There are at least two possible means for this transformation. We will not concern ourselves with the details of either.

Eventually, semantic theories of metaphor were abandoned in favour of pragmatic theories that identified the unruly nature of metaphorical meaning—one which cannot simply be settled by appealing to the literal meanings of the utterance’s constituent words and phrases. David Hills (2016) has aptly captured this unruly feature of metaphorical meaning by observing that just as the sun nourishes life and facilitates growth, so too can it burn and destroy. So, what I can say about a person when I liken them to the sun will largely depend on what is brought to mind in the context of utterance. Thus, it seems that metaphors exhibit a deep dependence on context. A lot of the work being done on metaphor to-date has been informed by more general debates about the proper treatment of context and how it affects communication within the philosophy of language.

Some theorists have begun to bring recent insights from this general debate to revisit the idea that metaphor should be treated semantically. Josef Stern (2000) argues in *Metaphor in Context* that metaphor is a semantic issue on a broadly Kaplanian understanding of semantics. Stern’s motivation is twofold: (i) he wants to show that determining the content of a metaphorical expression is based on assigning properties *m(etaphorically)-associated* with the metaphorical expression in context; (ii) to identify constraints on metaphoric interpretation that can block over-generation of those *m-associated* properties to include only those that contribute to the utterance’s truth conditions. Stern posits an unpronounced metaphorical operator ‘Mthat’ that is analogous to Kaplan’s ‘Dthat’ (but functions to make the term or phrase to which it is appended contextually-sensitive specific to metaphor) in order to accomplish these two tasks.

To illustrate what Stern has in mind, I offer one of his ‘ellipsis’ arguments that he uses to establish the existence of an Mthat operator. Stern argues that the following two metaphoric expressions using verb phrase anaphora are semantically ill-formed:

(51) \*The largest blob of gases in the solar system is the sun, and Juliet/Achilles  
*is, too.*

(52) \*Juliet is the sun, and Achilles *is, too.*

The reason Stern considers (51) and (52) to be semantically ill-formed is because the only available interpretation of the second conjuncts are determined by our interpretation of the first conjuncts. Our interpretation of the second conjuncts above, he believes, are guided by our interpretations of the first two, on par with utterances such as

(53) John may leave tomorrow, and Harry, too.

whereby the interpretation of ‘may’ in the first conjunct governs our interpretation of the second.

So, if we read the first conjunct as *it’s possible* that John leaves tomorrow, we cannot read the second as saying that Harry *has permission* to leave tomorrow. Similarly, the interpretation of ‘sun’ in (51) and (52) is given the same interpretation in both conjuncts, governed by ‘is, too’. So, in (51) we get a literal interpretation, while in (52) we apply those features metaphorically predicted of Juliet to Achilles. Because the interpretations of the second conjunct are absurd, Stern considers the sentences semantically ill-formed. He goes on to argue that “it is difficult to see how we might account for these constraints [whose violation produces the ill-formedness] in terms of

use or mutual beliefs and expectations” that “we must attribute to metaphor the semantic structure, or meaning, necessary for the requisite condition to apply” (Stern, 2000, pp. 70–71).

Stern accounts for the ‘requisite constraint’ on metaphor interpretation in the following way: Assume there is an ‘Mthat’ operator at the level of logical form that, when prefixed to a (literal) term or phrase  $\emptyset$ , transforms  $\emptyset$  into a context-sensitive metaphorical expression. ‘Mthat[ $\emptyset$ ]’ is governed by the following semantic rule:

(M): ‘Mthat’ is a lexical operator (i.e. a term forming operator on terms) at the level of logical form which, when prefixed to a (literal) expression  $\emptyset$ , yields a context-sensitive expression ‘Mthat[ $\emptyset$ ]’ whose tokens in each context  $c$  express a set of properties presupposed in  $c$  to be m(etaphorically)-associated with the expression  $\emptyset$ , such that the proposition  $\langle \dots \{[\text{Mthat}[\emptyset]](c) \dots \rangle$  is either true or false at a circumstance. (Popa, 2009, p. 162)

Or

For every context  $c$  and for every expression  $\emptyset$ , an occurrence of ‘Mthat[ $\emptyset$ ]’ in a sentence  $S$  ( $=$  Mthat[ $\emptyset$ ]) in  $c$  (directly) expresses a set of properties  $P$  presupposed to be m-associated with  $\emptyset$  in  $c$  such that the proposition  $\langle \dots P \dots \rangle$  is either true or false in the circumstance of  $c$ . (Stern, 2000, p. 115)

So, Stern maintains that a metaphor such as

(6) Juliet is the sun

has the following logical structure:

(6) Juliet Mthat[‘is the sun’].

He argues that (51) is ill-formed at the level of logical form because ‘is the sun’ in the first conjunct lacks the metaphorical operator M[that], and forces a literal reading of the elliptical ‘is, too’ in the second conjunct.

For Stern, knowing the character of a metaphor consists in mastering a rule that enables speakers, for each expression  $\emptyset$  that can be interpreted metaphorically in a

sentence,  $S$ , “to map the properties presupposed to be metaphorically associated with the expression  $\emptyset$  in context  $c$  into a subset of properties that determines the truth value of the utterance of  $S$  in  $c$ ” (Stern, 2006, p. 263). By placing the content of a metaphor within the scope of a linguistic operator, the proposition metaphorically expressed by a sentence in a context gives us what is said, or the utterance’s truth-conditional content.

Stern’s account draws two parallels between metaphors and indexicals/demonstratives in three important respects. The first concerns a distinction Stern (2000) makes between the three roles that context plays with respect to indexicals/demonstratives and metaphor. These three roles are the ‘pre-semantic, semantic, and post-semantic’.

Context, in the pre-semantic role, establishes that an utterance is to be interpreted metaphorically rather than literally, or some other way (such as literally or metonymically, for instance). So, when we hear a metaphor such as (6), we generate four possible logical forms, with the  $M$ that operator appended to the whole sentence or one of its constituent parts. This includes:  $M$ that[‘Juliet is the sun’],  $M$ that[‘Juliet’] is the sun,  $M$ that[‘Juliet’]  $M$ that[‘is the sun’], Juliet  $M$ that[‘is the sun’]. The hearer selects the appropriate logical form based on context. Assigning the right metaphorical character is based on a process of disambiguation similar to what is involved in structure ambiguity (e.g., the man was looking at the woman with binoculars).

Context in its second semantic role functions as an argument to the character of an expression, giving the expression’s semantic value in the context. For example, if the auditor selects the last logical form, the auditor selects a set of properties that are *m(etaphorically)-associated* with the (literal) expression ‘is the sun’ in the context of

utterance. This includes ‘being the paradigm of beauty’, ‘being the centre of one’s thoughts and affections’, etc. The set of properties are determined by extra-linguistic relations of *similarity*, *exemplification*, or *stereotype* with a given term or expression.

Context, in its third, post-semantic role, serves as a *circumstance of evaluation*. The auditor evaluates whether the metaphorical content produced by the logical form is true or false within the context of utterance. However, the metaphor can also be evaluated within other contexts such as when a metaphorical expression is embedded under a modal operator (e.g., ‘possibly’, etc.), or with attitudinal verbs (e.g., ‘believes’, etc.).

The second parallel that Stern (2006) draws between his account of metaphor and demonstratives/indexicals is that characters serve to constrain the role of the semantic context in determining the content of the utterance. Thus, Stern distinguishes between the stages of interpretation: in the first stage, character operates with respect to the context of utterance, from the stage of evaluation, where the content operates with respect to a circumstance of evaluation. With this, he calls for a distinction between interpretative and evaluative presuppositions. He maintains that there are aspects of metaphor interpretation that are autonomous of the “interpreters’ metaphorically relevant intentions, beliefs, and mental associations” (Stern, 2006, p. 260).

Stern’s second argument is based on what he calls the *Actual Context Constraint* (ACC). This argument focuses on the fact that a metaphor’s content is always fixed relative to the context of utterance, even when a given metaphorical expression is embedded in modal or attitudinal contexts. His argument runs as follows: assume that an Mthat-operator at the level of the logical form draws on features of the actual context and

contributes some invariant content to the proposition expressed regardless of the circumstance in which the proposition is evaluated.

For example, the properties contributed by the *M*that operator in (6) must also make their way into the following two expressions:

(6) a. Juliet *might be/have been* the sun.

(6) b. Romeo believes that Juliet *is the sun*.

As I mentioned above, I defer critique of Stern's approach to metaphor until the next chapter. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore contextualist accounts of metaphor. In general, they argue that a pragmatic treatment of metaphor is more plausible and preferable since it requires no additional syntactic or semantic complexity. Before I get to this, I briefly turn to Grice's treatment of metaphor to show how contextualist considerations have evolved from it.

## **6.2 Contextualism and metaphor**

Grice was the first to systemically study cases where speakers mean something distinct from what the speaker said. Grice includes figurative tropes in his category of 'speaker meaning'. Thus, if 'what is said' is a semantic phenomenon, and 'what a speaker means' is a pragmatic one, then figurative meanings fall outside the scope of semantics and lands within the domain of pragmatics. This is because pragmatic comprehension is triggered by the fact that a literal interpretation would result from a departure from conversational maxims (as we've seen in chapter 2).

Again, Grice is instructional here: The speaker has said *p*. However, since we assume that he is being cooperative, it is doubtful that he means the content *p* (as fixed by

the literal meaning of the words uttered). Meaning  $p$  would violate certain mutually shared assumptions about the conversation, and the world more generally. The speaker knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I grasp that he thinks  $q$  is intended. Given further mutually shared conversational assumptions, the most likely interpretation of  $p$  is  $q$ .

Grice illustrates just the sort of reasoning involved in the above sketch by the now famous example in which a philosophy student requests a letter of recommendation from his professor:

(54) Dear Sir, Mr. X's command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc.

The writer of the letter is "wishing to impart more information that he is reluctant to write down" (Grice, 1989, p. 33). However, our philosophy professor did not say that would not make a good candidate for the position sought after. This is tenable if we assume that the professor intends to communicate that Mr. X is not a desirable candidate for the position that he is seeking.

Genuine implicatures (such as the one that occurs in (54) above) occur frequently in everyday communicative interactions. Perhaps, the most widely recognized among them are rhetorical tropes (Hills, 2016). The list includes irony, metonymy, simile and metaphor, to name a few. Consider the following utterance: "Max is wonderful". If the utterance is intended ironically, then the speaker conveys the implicature that Max is not

wonderful; that perhaps he has been awful to the speaker; and the speaker communicates his critical attitude<sup>63</sup> of Max by saying the opposite.

Similarly, many North Americans use the phrase “the White House” to refer to U.S. presidential staff, thereby referring metonymically to this body politic. The point is that figures of speech are seen as departures from literal language. As such, speakers generally do not mean exactly what the words in their conventional sense mean, and they assume that their audience recognizes this as well.

Grice explains examples of conversational implicatures such as (54) above as the result of departing from conversational maxims. For example, in the case of (54) above, the implicature is triggered by the violation of the maxim of Quantity. Grice applies his notion of conversational implicature to explain the emergence of figurative meaning. Grice appeals to the maxim of Quality to explain non-literal uses of language. He maintains that most tropes seem to disrespect the first maxim of Quality (“*Do not say what you believe to be false*”).

Such overt departures from the maxims prompt the auditor to search for an alternative meaning that brings the speaker’s intention as close as possible to the commanding Cooperative Principle. And in the case of figurative language more specifically, to bring about the interpretation of the utterance so that it aligns as closely as possible with the supermaxim of Quality (“*Try to make your contribution one that is true*”).

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<sup>63</sup> For a full treatment on the attitude expressed by irony, see Garmendia (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011) and Popa-Wyatt (2009, 2010, 2017b).

Typical Gricean strategies treat metaphor as an instance of ‘speaker meaning’ where a speaker says something literal, but intends to communicate something else pragmatically. To retrieve the meaning of a metaphor, one must recognize that in speaking metaphorically, a speaker intends to mean something that departs from the conventional meaning of the words uttered. To illustrate how this comes to bear on metaphor, consider the following utterance by Romeo:

(6) Juliet is the sun.

In uttering (6), Romeo seems to be communicating the content of (6c) below.

(6) c. Juliet is the exemplar of beauty, etc.

If you weren’t so cooperatively inclined, then you would take Romeo as committed to the patently false claim that Juliet is the perceivably largest blob of gas in the sky. The Gricean model accommodates metaphor by applying the same pragmatic reasoning<sup>64</sup> from cases of conversational implicature (54). That is to say, in order to arrive at (6c) Grice argues we must differentiate between what a speaker says and what she implicates.

Yet, Grice’s model does naturally suggest a certain processing model. That is to say, in order to calculate the metaphorical meaning, the auditor must first determine the proposition literally expressed  $p$ , and then, given  $p$ ’s inappropriateness in the context of utterance, must engage in pragmatic reasoning to calculate the implicature  $q$  which

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<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the term ‘pragmatic reasoning’ is a bit off the mark, for Grice intended to be offering only a rational reconstruction with the aim of explaining how utterances could in principle enable successful communication. He was not, as is often suggested, concerned with the ways in which utterances are actually processed, nor did he deal with the conscious experience of linguistic interpretation. I deal with this issue in the following chapter.

includes a set of metaphorical properties based on the similarity between what a speaker says and what she intends to communicate. The ‘natural inclination’ to read Grice as offering an empirically-tractable theory has been the focal point of criticism from contextualists, as we’ll see below.

Grice’s account seems intuitive and plausible for at least five reasons. First, it accounts for the fact that there is cognitive content associated with a metaphorical utterance. It recognizes that this content is carried by the implicature resulting from the speaker’s words and the context of utterance, preserving a robust sense of compositionality.

Secondly, it subsumes metaphor within an independent theory of communication tailored to those instances of language where what a speaker says departs from what they communicate by including metaphor interpretation among the list of pragmatic phenomenon dealt with by the same mechanisms as those that are deployed in retrieving conversational implicatures.

Third, it respects Grice’s *Modified Occam’s Razor* (“*Don’t multiply sense beyond necessity*”). It does this by appealing only to literal sentence meaning plus general pragmatic principles of interpretation.

Fourth, it nicely captures the idea that we fail or succeed in interpreting a speaker’s metaphor based on our shared presuppositions, beliefs, and mutual knowledge. Finally, it captures the idea that metaphorical meaning is impart reliant upon literal word/phrase meaning. It is not the case that the literal meaning disappears in metaphor, but plays a role in helping an auditor ‘work out’ the speaker’s intended content.

Despite these virtues, contextualist critics of the Gricean theory cite his account as being empirically inadequate. Specifically, they point to the ways speakers and audiences negotiate meaning in real-time unreflectively as evidence against it. Another way to express the objection is to say that contextualists reject the idea that the meaning of a metaphor undergoes a primary, and obligatory literal interpretation (Bezuidenhout, 2001; Carston, 2002; Nogales, 1999; Recanati, 2001b, 2001a; Sperber & Wilson, 2008; Wearing, 2006; Wilson & Sperber, 1986). We can see how this works by considering the following two utterances:

(55) Bill is a snake!

Compare the conventional metaphor above to a literally loose use of speech:

(56) Have you slept?

In a natural conversational setting, the audience accommodates the speaker as asking a question referring to some relevant and proximal moment. The speaker is naturally understood as having asked whether the hearer has SLEPT\* (last night), and not the absurd question of whether the hearer has slept at any arbitrary point in their life. What the speaker means is accommodated by a process of meaning enrichment where the meaning of the utterance is adjusted to have either a broader or narrower one.

Contextualists treat metaphor on par with loose uses of speech which is driven by a process of enrichment. The modification of conceptual meaning consists of subconscious and automatic inferential processes. These processes pave a smooth road

from literal to intended meaning. These cases are contrasted with the more paradigmatic examples of conversational implicature (54).

The main idea is that in both (55) and (56), the semantic content serves as a springboard to a new, context-specific meaning (or ‘ad hoc’ concept), which is what the speaker says. An auditor can accommodate these utterances by drawing inferences about the speaker’s intention together with the context of utterance to retrieve what the speaker communicates.

Contextualists make the further claim that the alleged similarity between literal loose uses of language (e.g., 56) and metaphor (e.g., 55) establishes the claim that metaphor is not a special use of language and therefore that metaphor does not require any distinct mechanisms for interpretation. Rather, the audience accommodates the utterance and adjusts for the contextually salient meaning by deploying the same basic processes of inference that enrich the speaker’s semantically impoverished utterance—‘broadening’ (extending the ordinary range of associated properties) or ‘narrowing’ (excluding properties that are irrelevant in the present context) or both.

The reason that such examples involve deployment of the same pragmatic processes is based on what is called in the literature the ‘semantic indeterminacy thesis’. Briefly, this means that the linguistic meaning of a sentence underdetermines not only what is meant, but also what is (intuitively) said. That is, the linguistic meaning is not robust enough to constitute a complete proposition, and thus requires pragmatic processes to shape the content communicated.

The processes of broadening and narrowing are complementary and their effects contribute to the determination of the content of the proposition expressed—that is they

take part in the explicature of the utterance. Both of these processes function to create an ‘ad hoc’ concept that results in the enriched, truth-conditional communicated content.

Carston writes that ad hoc concepts are:

...concepts that are constructed pragmatically by a hearer in the process of utterance comprehension. (...) The description of such concepts as ‘*ad hoc*’ reflects the fact that they are not linguistically driven but are constructed on-line (on the fly) in response to specific expectations of relevance raised in specific contexts. (Carston, 2002, p. 322)

Metaphor, on par with loose uses of speech, requires the loosening or broadening of some aspects of the encoded conceptual content, such that

An *ad hoc* concept, formed from the encoded one, contributes to the explicit content of the utterance, and the denotation of the new concept includes, or at least overlaps with, the denotation of the encoded concept. (Carston, 2002, p. 349)

The notion of an ad hoc concept forms the basis of the contextualist account of metaphor. This commits their account to a ‘deflationary’ approach to metaphor in that metaphor is not distinct from other forms of linguistic communication in the sense that it requires a special mechanism of interpretation, as suggested by other theorists we’ve looked at (e.g., Black, Beardsley, Grice). So it seems that contextualists are committed to the idea that metaphors such as the following:

(57) The ATM swallowed my credit card.

(58) My lawyer is a shark.

(59) Hope is the thing with feathers/  
That perches in the soul,/ And sings the tune  
without the words,/ And never stops at all

(60) Jesus was a carpenter.

(61) The hourglass whispered to the lion’s paw.

(62) Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,/ That struts and frets his hour  
upon the stage,/ And then is heard no more.

are simply a range of cases at one end of a continuum that includes literal, loose, and hyperbolic interpretations.

Clearly, the examples express a range of cases: Some, such as (57) and (58), are more conventionalized than others. In other words, the figurative meaning of the metaphor seems to be accessed nearly automatically, as in cases of default meaning; by contrast (59)-(62) are more novel, imagistic, and poetic instances of metaphor, and among the most creative of the examples; and (60) seems to be the most ambiguous in that both a literal and metaphorical reading seems possible.

We can note that some of these utterances are much more conversational, while others are more literary and extended. Contextualists must hold that the perceived differences between these metaphors is merely a distraction. An act of saying is an explicit and direct expression of the intention of the speaker. In certain conversational contexts, speakers can convey their intended thoughts directly in ways that would fail in other contexts, given various background assumptions that work in just those contexts.

At the core of their theory of metaphor, contextualists take conversational, and conventional cases, such as (5) and (6), as paradigmatic. Furthermore, contextualists appeal to speakers' ordinary notions of 'saying' as evidence in their favour. It seems clear, so they argue, that these paradigm cases are direct and explicit expressions of the intention of the speaker that are unreflectively and automatically interpreted by the audience. They further reason that we can expand these paradigm cases to encompass more poetic, imaginative, and open-ended metaphors. Metaphor, on this view, is said to

involve the same sorts of processes that are involved in cases such as (38) whereby contextual factors intrude into the semantics, producing an ad hoc concept that enriches the content expressed by the speaker. In the next chapter, I offer an evaluation of Stern's indexicalism, and contextualism's deflationary account of metaphor.

## Chapter 7: Stern, metaphor, and communication

In this chapter, I will analyse the claims brought forth by one of the two most recent accounts of metaphorical communication that I looked at in chapter 6. In the last chapter, we saw that Stern's account maintained that a metaphorical interpretation is yielded via a covert metaphorical operator ('Mthat') that appends to a term or phrase at the level of the logical form and triggers a metaphorical reading. Recall that Stern employed two powerful arguments in favour of his view.

The first argument is the 'ellipsis argument' whereby Stern seeks to establish that sentences such as (51) and (52) are infelicitous. In (51) Stern argues that it is semantically ill-formed for the predicate 'is a sun' to yield a literal interpretation and a metaphorical one. In (52), he argues that the ill-formedness arises when we assign two different metaphorical readings to the predicate. Stern believes that the problem is semantic in nature. In the first case, the violation arises at the level of the character since the first subject is construed literally, and the second is construed metaphorically. In (52) the issue is at the level of content where the first subject is given one metaphorical reading, while the second is given a different metaphorical reading.

The second argument in favour of his semantic view begins by claiming that metaphorical content is determined by the ACC, regardless of any circumstance of evaluation invoked by operators in which the metaphor is embedded.

This second argument resembles the contextualist (and relevance theoretic) claim that metaphorical meanings are 'lodged in the words'—to use Camp's turn of phrase. It is here, that the conclusions reached by both accounts converge: the fact that the meaning of

a metaphor can be taken up by other interlocutors *proves* that metaphorical meaning is not a matter of speaker meaning, but rather a semantic issue.

With the two most contemporary positions of metaphor interpretation laid, I can now offer an evaluation. First, I examine Stern's 'elliptical argument' then I proceed to examine his ACC argument. It is here that we will segue into contextualists' arguments for treating metaphor as a matter of explicit communication. The conclusions of Stern's ACC argument are shared by others such as contextualists. In speaking metaphorically, speakers don't simply employ their sentences as one-off tools to communicate some distinct content, as seems to happen with implicature.

In speaking metaphorically, speakers seem to offer a broad conceptualization of the subject under discussion. As a result, the metaphorical meaning can be echoed in later uses of the same or related words within the larger discourse context. We can refer to the uptake of metaphorical content as 'lodging in the words'.

### **7.1 Stern's ellipsis argument**

As I mentioned above, Stern's 'elliptical argument' proceeds from considerations of interpretive constraint involving verb phrase anaphora (consider (51) and (52) above).

Stern (Stern, 2000, p. 70, 2006, p. 258) argues, in Davidsonian fashion, that the feeling of pun/play accompanying the imposed interpretations highlights their semantic ill-formedness.

### 7.1.1 Evaluation of Stern's ellipsis argument

There are two objections to Stern's account: The first objection is that I simply disagree with Stern's intuitions regarding sentences such as (51) and (52). To my ear, both sentences sound fine; it seems that we can read both conjuncts with their distinct interpretations. This seems especially to be the case in (52).

The second argument launched by Camp (2005) is more powerful. She argues that the fact that the VP anaphora is possible in ironic and metonymic sentences should make one suspicious that the constraint Stern posits for metaphor is genuinely semantic.

Consider cases such as (63) and (64) below:

(63) John is a real genius, and Sam is too.

(64) Bill served a ham sandwich, and John too.

The central argument is that Stern (2000, pp. 232–233, 2006, pp. 268–272) in rejecting a semantic account for both (63) and (64) off the bat cannot now explain the similarity to sentences such as (51) and (52), above. In considering (63) Stern concedes that the difficulty of offering a mixed interpretation where the first conjunct is read ironically, and the second literally, should be given a pragmatic explanation. In (63), Stern argues that the consequent and the anaphor have the same character, but different content. However, Stern denies that a mixed reading is possible in (64) where we get a mixed figurative (i.e., metonymic) interpretation, where the antecedent is interpreted as the *orderer* and the anaphor as the *maker* of the ham sandwich. This, he believes, shows that a semantic constraint is operating at the level of the logical form—namely, the Mthat-operator. He argues that only when the violation is of character do we witness the semantic constraint.

Stern's account is ultimately inadequate. If we are looking to offer a parsimonious account of metaphor, then a single mode of explanation is desired to encompass examples such as (51), (52), (63), and (64), etc. Because cases like (63) and (64) demand a pragmatic explanation, we should expect a pragmatic explanation for similar cases such as (51) and (52). In addition, accepting that metonymy works the same as metaphor runs the risk of over-generation (Popa, 2009, p. 166): If we accept that cases of metonymy works the same as metaphor, why not then explain hyperbole, synecdoche, irony, litotes, etc., in terms of some silent operator, either as *M*that, or in ways specific to each trope? If it is the former that we choose, then it will be difficult to distinguish between their interpretations. Yet, opting for the latter introduced serious complex machinery into our semantics.

The best course of action is to opt for a more parsimonious account of metaphor; one that doesn't require introducing complex machinery, in turn burdening our semantic theory. And I think there is good reason to do so! The difficulty in capturing mixed interpretations seems to be better explained as a pragmatic phenomenon. One last consideration in favour of this course of treatment is cancellation of the implication of a unified (not-mixed) reading. For example, Stern concedes that cancellation is possible in the case such as

(65) Mark Spitz is a fish, and Richard Nixon is, too.

(65) b. Spitz is a fish, and Nixon is, too—but not in the same sense.

He maintains that cancellation is *not* possible in cases such as:

(66) \*Spitz is a fish, and that shark in Jaws is, too.

(66) b. \* Spitz is a fish, and that shark in Jaws is, too—but not in the same sense.

Presumably, this also holds true for the cancellation of the mixed metonymic reading in (64). That is to say, Stern is committed to denying that cancellation is possible in (64) and (66b). This is misguided. I believe all of these sentences could be uttered with their intended mixed interpretations, where an audience *could* grasp the intended, mixed content in each.

I can explain these mixed readings by appeal to my notion of characterizations and aspectual thought. In this way, our governing characterizations of ‘fish’ or ‘ham sandwich’ must select and match prominent and central features work those within our subject characterization.<sup>65</sup> Undoubtedly, background and contextual information will play a large role in determining just what those matches will be for each individual. For example, in (66), seeing Spitz under the aspect of ‘fish’ an auditor searches for scalar (i.e., “is a fast swimmer”), and metaphorical matches (e.g., ‘is a good swimmer’, or ‘is a natural-born swimmer’). The second occurrence of ‘fish’ will require the strict denotation of the category FISH. Such processing may be costly, but not impossible—as Stern insists it is. In fact, it is precisely this difference in characterization that allows us to make explicit the ‘seeing-as’ the speaker has in mind when they utter “—*but not in the same sense*”. We can tell a similar story for the rest of the examples. The important point is that the factors constraining interpretation in such contexts are pragmatic, and involve

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<sup>65</sup> Camp (2003) makes a similar point about ‘is the sun’ as a governing characterization for Juliet and King Louis XIV.

general-purpose interpretive and imaginative abilities in order to appropriately determine the intended meaning of the predicate in context.

## **7.2 Stern's ACC Argument**

Recall that Stern's ACC argument begins by claiming that the metaphorical content is determined by the actual context of utterance so that metaphorical expressions are fixed by their contents. As such, it contributes an invariant content to the proposition expressed, regardless of the circumstance of evaluation. He concludes that a semantic account is the only viable treatment to explain the ACC. However, Camp (2005, p. 725) has observed that invoking operators under which a metaphor may be embedded can be used against Stern.

### **7.2.1 Evaluation of Stern's ACC argument**

Because Stern's account of the M<sub>that</sub>-operator requires the ACC constraint, it would undermine his account if we are able to show that it is sometimes absent. As it turns out, it is absent sometimes. In particular, the ACC is absent from subjunctive conditionals in which the antecedent specifies counterfactual circumstances relative to which a metaphor in the consequent is interpreted. Think back to example (6), and imagine the hypothetical scenario between Romeo, Paris, and Benvolio where the latter two interlocutors respond (6'a-b) to Romeo's initial utterance (6) respectively.

- (6') a. As matter stand, Juliet is no sun. If she had married me, though, she *might have been* the sun. Then she would have been the leading lady of Verona, and all the other ladies would have deferred to her.
- b. If we were living after a nuclear apocalypse, then Juliet *could have been* the sun. After all, she's pale, cold, and distant, and that's how the sun would be then. But I can say she sure isn't the Tuscan sun.

In (6'a) Paris imagines Juliet as she would be if she married him. Here, 'the sun' takes on a different meaning than it had in Romeo's utterance. For example, Romeo's utterance views Juliet's virtue as natural and original. Paris' utterance by contrast sees Juliet as someone who could have become important given his station in Veronese society. The two meanings are not just distinct, they are incompatible.

In (6'b), Benvolio's characterization of Juliet is incompatible with Romeo's (e.g., being emotionally distant and indifferent). Camp explains that the fact the contents of 'the sun' differ in from one another is evidence that the metaphoric interpretation of the consequent depends on the counterfactual circumstances in which it is embedded, rather than the actual context, as Stern's analysis claims.

Stern attempts to address this worry by arguing that the counterfactual subjunctive adds to the prior context of utterance a new set of counterfactual presuppositions so as to update the actual context of utterance. However, Camp's point is more general: metaphorical meaning is not lodged in the words in the way that Stern thinks it is. We can see that the difficulty presented by Camp is insurmountable in attitudinal contexts, as in (6c) as said by Benvolio:

(6c) Romeo said/believes that Juliet is the sun.

Stern's account holds that a metaphor, embedded in a speech/belief report fixes its content relative to the actual context (i.e., Romeo's intended interpretation), regardless of shifts in presuppositions brought about by the report itself. However, this is in tension with Benvolio's intended interpretation of 'the sun' in the same context:

(6d) Juliet is the sun

where he means something different than Romeo's utterance. Thus, Stern would predict that Benvolio's utterance of (6d) has the same content as the belief report, although it does not inherit this content, but is something like (6b). Sterns tries to accommodate this issue by arguing that in belief/speech reports the reporter can temporarily adopt the speaker's content, and smuggle in the presuppositions into the actual context of utterance.

Stern suggests that metaphoric interpretation always depends on presuppositions active in the actual context of utterance. However, Camp points out that this strategy only works for metaphorical reports *de dicto*. In *de dicto* reports, the assumptions that govern the interpretation do shift from the reporter's actual attitudes to those of the initial speaker. In contrast, this is not the case in *de re* reports. Here, the assumptions of the reporter, and not those of the speaker that are relevant to the interpretation of the embedded clause. It is precisely this possibility of using metaphors in attitudinal reports in ways that echo the initial speaker's presuppositions that provide evidence that metaphoric interpretation relies on alternative contexts.

In brief, it is Stern's commitment to indexicalism to deal with contextual effects on truth conditions that makes him vulnerable to arguments against indexicalism to those we looked at in chapter 4. For example, Stern's account requires an increased amount of disambiguation relative to the preferred account: Syntax of the metaphorical utterance

requires juggling with the number and scopes of occurrences of the Mthat-operator. This can be avoided on a more parsimoniously, and broadly pragmatic account whereby auditors apply governing characterizations to subject characterizations in order to determine the appropriate intended content. I have argued above that the Mthat-operator is costly in that it implies a host of additional operators for various other figurative tropes—if Mthat does all the work, it becomes vacuous. This is because every lexical item can be ambiguous, or used metaphorically, metonymically, or otherwise, distinguishing between them is a task for pragmatics, and not for semantics).

In the remainder of this chapter, I will focus on contextualism and their arguments in treating metaphor as what a speaker says. I then offer my account as a means to deal with issues that are both general to contextualism as a response to the shortcomings of Grice, as well as those that are specific to their treatment of metaphor.

## **Chapter 8: Contextualism, metaphor, and communication**

In this chapter, I turn to an analysis of the contextualist arguments offered in favour of their semantic treatment of metaphor. For example, Nogales (1999, 2012) has offered a broad overview of these arguments, so I will take her position as representative of the main arguments in favour of the contextualist position.

Recall that contextualists argue contextual factors pervasively intrude on semantics to affect what speaker says. Contextualist accounts treat metaphor on par with other forms of meaning enrichment (i.e., loose and hyperbolic speech) and see a stark difference between metaphor and paradigmatic Gricean implicatures, such as (54).

They have offered a number of arguments to support this claim that metaphor should be included in ‘what is said’. First, we consider how contextualists understand the notion of ‘what is said’. Contextualists argue that metaphorical content does not seem to be consistent with the literal content of the sentence uttered. Second, ordinary speakers are normally willing to use ‘say’ to *report* metaphorically expressed contents. Third, speakers can commit themselves to their metaphorical contents. Auditors are able to respond to the intended content by echoing their words.

I contrast my account with several of the philosophers we have discussed along the way before presenting my view of metaphorical communication. On the preferred view speakers say one thing, which they usually don’t mean, in order to say something else. As such, I defend a more classical, broadly Gricean account of metaphor.

Recall that, following Grice (1975), traditional pragmatic accounts (Camp, 2006b; Martinich, 1984; Searle, 1993) typically treat metaphorical content as speaker meaning where a speaker says one thing (e.g., (6)) in order to communicate something else (e.g., (6’)). For instance, when Romeo utters:

(6) Juliet is the sun.

He means something like:

(6’) Juliet is an exemplar of beauty and goodness.

Traditional pragmatic accounts classify metaphor as implicature—or in Camp’s case, as something *like* implicature, but in many ways, different<sup>66</sup>—in contrast to ‘what is said’. The broadly Gricean view is intuitive because it provides a technical overlay to our common sense understanding of metaphorical meaning, and couches it within a view of communication where speaker and hearers exploit principles of conversation to communicative ends. I think this is essentially right.

Nogales (2012) provides a comprehensive overview of contextualist arguments in favour of the deflationary account of metaphor. Contextualism is semantic in that it claims that the propositional content expressed by a metaphorical utterance is its metaphorical content; but pragmatic in the sense that extralinguistic knowledge is required for the derivation of this content.

Before we proceed, it is worthwhile to recall that in chapter 4 we saw that contextualists allow ‘what is said’ to come apart from the semantically encoded meaning. As the term suggests, contextualists maintain that each utterance is contextually underdetermined and that the success of the communication rests on the way the (metaphorical) utterance gets semantically enriched or expanded and ends up expressing a truth-evaluable proposition. From this re-worked understanding, they make four arguments in favour of classifying metaphor as ‘what is said’ rather than what is implicated by a speaker.

I have identified a number of arguments that contextualists make in support of their position. First, they point out that language users are often willing to use ‘say’ to

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<sup>66</sup> See Camp (2003).

report the content of a metaphor. Thus, our philosophical notion of ‘what is said’ ought to be sensitive to our common sense intuitions about saying. Second, metaphors cannot be implicatures because the metaphorical content  $P^*$  of an utterance,  $U$ , must be consistent with the content the speaker uses to prompt the implicature (Nogales, 2012).<sup>67</sup> Third, the content of a metaphor is explicit, in the sense that hearers can respond to and reject the speaker’s intended content, in a way that cannot be done with the literal meaning of the utterance. Finally, empirical evidence allegedly points in favour of the contextualism’s preferred classification of metaphorical as ‘what is said’. In the next section, I present contextualist arguments for including metaphor into ‘what is said’ and provide rejoinders.

### **8.1 The argument from ‘what is said’**

The first line of argument pursued by Nogales relies on redefining the term ‘what is said’ to accord more with ordinary intuitions of ‘saying’, which, she says must take into account those aspects of the utterance speakers are committed to.<sup>68</sup> I will quote some of the key passages, then reconstruct the argument below. Recall that for Grice, ‘what is said’ by a sentence  $S$  is tightly constrained by the linguistic meaning of  $S$ .

Contextualists assume that we need to redraw the boundary of ‘what is said’ to align with ordinary intuitions. For instance, Nogales proposes that ‘what is said’ be

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<sup>67</sup> See also Carston (2002)

<sup>68</sup> More specifically, in contrast to an analysis of indexicals, such as that of Stern (2000), or enrichment and loosening, such as Bezuidenhout (2001), Nogales claims that her preferred “notion of ‘what is said’ comes from the notion of speaker commitment (tied to semantic competence)...that functions as the truth conditions of an utterance” (Nogales, 2012).

defined as “the truth conditions to which the speaker becomes committed to having said in performing the utterance they do in the context in which they perform it” whereby “the difference between saying and implicating has to do with the nature of the commitment and the relationship between deduction of content and the derivation of inferences such that the derivation of the content of implicatures always starts with the derivation of the content of ‘what is said’” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1000).

Both Bezuidenhout (2001) and Nogales (2012) argue that metaphorical content is the launching point for both implicatures and ironic content. This seems to suggest that metaphorical content belongs to ‘what is said’. Uniquely, Nogales favours the idea of commitment as determining ‘what is said’ because, as she argues, it accords more with everyday intuitions of saying. Like contextualists and relevance theorists, redefining ‘what is said’ based on our ordinary practices of saying is an attempt to show that pragmatic processes “contribute not only to what is implied, but also what is explicitly communicated by a speaker” (Haugh, 2002, p. 119). She argues that redrawing the boundary allows us to respect the traditional distinction between ‘what is said’ and what is implied, where speakers are committed to the content of ‘what is said’ and that this can serve as the springboard to implicatures.

### **8.1.1 Counterargument**

The notion of ‘what is said’ proposed by Nogales is practically synonymous with what contextualists and relevance theorists call *explicature*. Explicature is the development of the logical form encoded by an utterance, whose content includes both linguistically decoded, and pragmatically inferred content. The processes involved include

disambiguation, saturation (including reference assignment), enrichment (including unarticulated constituents) and ‘ad hoc concept construction’. The term explicature is meant to reflect our ordinary intuitions about ‘saying’.

For example, when a speaker says “I’ve eaten” we typically understand the speaker as meaning that they have eaten earlier *that day*—and that the speaker is committed to that fact. The italicized bit constitutes the explicature of the utterance and corresponds to the contextualist notion of ‘what is said’. Nogales accepts this, but goes further. She says that “the difference between ‘saying’ and ‘implicating’ has to do with the nature of the commitment and the relationship between deduction of content and the derivation of inferences such that the derivation of the content of implicatures always starts with the derivation of the content of ‘what is said’”(2012, p. 1000). Presumably, this means that some paradigmatic phenomena such as conventional implicatures, generalized conversational implicatures, as well as figurative tropes such as metaphor and metonymy are all a part of ‘what is said’ if the speaker seems to express, with candor, some commitment to the unarticulated content.

I have three issues with stretching the definition of ‘what is said’ in the way Nogales does. The first is that it is unclear to me where she draws the boundary between her notion of ‘what is said’—understood as explicature—and content that is typically regarded to be paradigmatic implicatures, such as ironic utterances or Grice’s letter of recommendation.<sup>69</sup> If I’m interpreting her correctly, and ‘what is said’ is treated as “the truth conditions to which the speaker becomes *committed* to having said in performing

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<sup>69</sup> See Camp (2006b) for discussion.

the utterance they do in the context in which they perform it” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1000)<sup>70</sup> then, presumably, this classifies ironic utterances as part of what a speaker says. For if I perform an ironic statement well, and with outward show of candor, it becomes clear that I have committed myself to the ironic content, and thus the truth conditions that obtain just if the ironic content is the case.

But this is a rather bold claim, considering that numerous theorists (e.g., Camp & Hawthorne, 2008; Carston & Wearing, 2015; Garmendia, 2010; Popa-Wyatt, 2017; Recanati, 2001; Wilson & Sperber, 1986) agree that ironic content counts as an implicature. I am not entirely sure she is willing to endorse this claim. I will represent Nogales’ definition of “what is said” as ‘what is said<sub>N</sub>’. Perhaps even more generally, the notion of commitment to the content may conflate the distinction between a locutionary act of ‘saying’ from illocutionary acts, such as assertion. I think that speakers can assert things they do not say, and say things they do not assert. It is not clear how ‘what is said<sub>N</sub>’ deals with this.

Secondly, she claims that implicatures are prompted by the assumption of the truth of the content of the conventional meaning of an utterance. She says: “When one communicates something indirectly (such as the message “No, John won’t fly to Paris” by saying “John now has five children”), it is the assumption that John now has five children (the assumption of the truth of ‘what is said’) that prompts the auditor to derive the implied request” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1000).

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<sup>70</sup> Emphases, mine.

However, there are numerous examples of paradigmatic implicatures that do not require either the hearer or speaker to make an assumption about the truth of ‘what is said’. One such example comes from flouting Grice’s maxim of Quantity. Suppose a professor writes a letter of recommendation consisting entirely of:

(54) Dear Sir, Mr. X’s command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular. Yours, etc.

Here, it isn’t important if the audience assume the truth of what the author said; what is important is that the author has written a rather peculiar letter of recommendation, one that insists upon its peculiarity as a piece of evidence for a job application.<sup>71</sup> I would argue that the implicature (that puts Mr. X’s competence into question) is generated by the tension between the content of the utterance in (54) and the expectations surrounding letters of recommendation as providing a relevant assessment of a candidate’s suitability for a specific job.

Finally, I want to consider a more general point concerning the notion of explicature that underlies Nogales’ conception of ‘what is said<sub>N</sub>’. Neo-Griceans, such as Bach (2001a, 2001b), Haugh (2002), and Levinson (2000) note that the idea of explicature as a catch-all for numerous pragmatic phenomena is a dubious one.<sup>72</sup> For

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<sup>71</sup> The implicature can also be interpreted as flouting the maxim of relation, which maintains that one be relevant, and say things that are pertinent to discussion. Here, it is obvious that native-like speech production and punctuality are presumably irrelevant (even if they are true) to the committee. As Grice himself notes, some quantity implicatures can arguably “be explained by the reference to the maxim of Relation without evoking an alleged second maxim of Quantity” (1989, p. 34).

<sup>72</sup> Under a contextualist approach, the category of ‘what is said’ seems to fall victim to the *Humpty Dumpty* criticism launched by Alfred MacKay (1968), attacking Donnellan’s theory of reference. The idea is that it

example, contextualists subsume pragmatic features identified by neo-Griceans, such as generalized conversational implicatures, short-circuited implicatures, conventional implicatures, and metaphor and metonymy under the category of explicature. But this approach neglects important features of the various pragmatic phenomena. Take for example, the indirect requests below:

(67) Can you pass the salt?

or

(68) Could you close the window?

A contextualist interpretation of the data would understand the requests associated with utterances like (67) and (68) as explicatures rather than short-circuited implicatures. However, Haugh (2002)<sup>73</sup> believes this categorization is weakened by the fact that “there is no mention at all of the potential politeness effects associated with *Can you...?* as a request” (Haugh, 2002, p. 122).

He asks us to contrast this with similar cases, such as, “can you do a handstand?” where no such politeness effect arises. Furthermore, the notion of explicature fails to capture the intuition that “one can still ‘hear’ in a peripheral kind of way the ‘ability reading’ of *can*” (Haugh, 2002, p. 123). I believe that this point can be extended into arguing that the degree of conventionalization of indirect requests does not thereby

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relies too heavily on the intentions of the speaker at the expense of semantic input. I thank Eros Corazza for pointing this out to me.

<sup>73</sup> For a more comprehensive treatment of the ways in which the notion of explicature can be problematized, see Haugh (2002).

constitute firm criteria on which to extend the notion of 'what is said' to cover these cases. Finally, doubt about the empirical data of explicature is also well-documented. As

Haugh (2002, p. 122) notes,

Bach (2001a: 26, 2001b: 23) and Levinson (2000: 197) both argue that what ordinary speakers consider to be 'what is said' depends on how one elicits the response. What is said is commonly interpreted in two ways (Wilson and Sperber 2000: 253): In an indirect-quotational sense and in a commitment sense (what the speaker is committing herself to in producing the utterance). Ordinary speakers vacillate between these two senses in describing what is said, creating problems for empirical studies such as those conducted by Gibbs and Moise (1997) and Hamblin (1999). Bach (2001b) argues that ultimately Gibbs and Moise's (1997) results show: "...how people apply the phrase "what is said" and perhaps of what they mean by the word "say". It tells us little about what is said, much less about the cognitive processes whereby people understand utterances..." (p.23) (Bach, 2001, quoted in Haugh, 2002).

Moreover, Haugh notes that other experiments demonstrate that ordinary speakers may perceive unequivocal examples of implicature to be a part of what the speaker has said in some cases (Ariel, 2002; Bezuidenhout & Cutting, 2002; Nicolle & Clark, 1999). These results indicate that intuitions about what is said may actually overlap with what is implicated.

Furthermore, explicature, as formulated on Carston's (Carston, 1988, p. 40) account understood by contextualists can be problematic. Davis (2014) argues that the idea of explicature assumes that implicatures are never logically related to 'what is said', when in reality, some implicatures may entail 'what is said'. For example, litotes is a figure of speech in which a speaker understates. For example, a speaker can utter "that's not bad" implying that "that's good". In this case, what is implicated entails 'what is said'. Carston argues that (69b) below is an explicature on the grounds that an implicature cannot entail 'what is said' (based on her Functional Independence Principle).

(69) Alice ran to the edge of the cliff

- a. The distraught woman jumped.
- b. She jumped off the cliff.

Yet, it isn't clear that this is a case of explicature. Although a speaker typically utters (69a) to mean that the woman in question jumped *off of the cliff* (69b), (69a) does not mean (69b). Davis argues that if the speaker knew that the woman in question jumped backwards from the precipice, the speaker could be accused of misleading, but not of making a blatant lie (which, presumably, she would be doing if it were a part of what she said). Similarly, if the speaker uttered (69a) to mean that the woman in question jumped up to catch a rescue helicopter *said the same thing* but meant something different (Davis, 2014).

Another reason Carston wants to treat (69b) as an explicature is that she maintains it is what the hearer will remember. However, patent implicatures may be more important than 'what is said' in many circumstances. For instance, consider the following exchange:

(70) John: Are you going to the party, tonight?

Sue: I have to work.

It may be the case that John forgets the excuse that Sue gives him (what she 'says') because he is frustrated that she cannot come to the party (what she implicates) (Davis, 2014). Thus, the move to explain so many pragmatic phenomena as explicature may be quite problematic.

Furthermore, the formulation assumes that implicatures are never logically related to 'what is said', when in reality, some forms of implicatures may entail 'what is said'.

For example, litotes is a figure of speech in which a speaker makes an understatement. For example, a speaker can utter “that’s not bad” implying that “that’s good”. In this case, what is implicated entails ‘what is said’. Other examples of this entailment from what is implicated to ‘what is said’ include disjunctive permission and free choice (Kamp, 1973). Here, I have in mind utterances of the form “You may A or B” where the implicated content is “You may A and you may B”. The fact that the speaker implicates that the auditor “may A *and* B” entails that the auditor may do (at least) one thing (A *or* B).<sup>74</sup>

Whether or not explicature is capable of explaining all of these phenomena of traditional pragmatics is unresolved. At the very least, we have some reasonable ground on which to argue that subsuming all of these phenomena under ‘what is said’ requires more careful examination of the phenomena in question.

## 8.2 The argument from norms of consistency

The second argument that contextualists make in regard to subsuming metaphor under the category of explicature can be captured by the following line of reasoning:

[F]or any proposition to be a content of implicature of the utterance meaning of a speech act, that proposition must be consistent with the content the speaker uses to provoke the implicature. In fact, it’s the assumption of the truth of the content that allows the derivation of the implicature...the fact that metaphorical content is incompatible with a literal interpretation of the utterance makes it impossible for metaphorical content to be an implicature of it. (Nogales, 2012, p. 1001)

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<sup>74</sup> These issues are related to the next argument in section 7.3.2

This quote requires a bit of explication. First, Nogales finds it useful to distinguish between content and manner implicatures. A manner implicature is one which is implicated by the way that the utterance is performed. A content implicature is one which follows from the content of an utterance. Nogales argues that the traditional pragmatic account treats metaphor as a content implicature. But, she continues, this is mistaken, since the literal content of a metaphor is inconsistent with the metaphorical content produced by the metaphor. To illustrate this point, consider:

(71) Bill is a bulldozer.

(71') Bill is a large excavator, capable of moving large amounts of earth and rock.

(71'') Bill is very forceful in dealing with others.

Nogales argues that it is impossible for an entity to be both an inanimate object, and a person who embodies certain characteristics. From this, Nogales concludes that (71'') cannot be an implicature of (71) because it clashes with the literal interpretation (71'). She further argues that “this inconsistency does not lie in the conflict of the claims to veridity [sic] of different interpretations, but rather in the clash between assumed taxonomies (or cognitive environments)” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1001). In her words, the content of a content implicature “follows from the content expressed by an utterance in a context” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1001). The point she makes about the alleged veridicality of an interpretation is a good one, for it seems to shut down possible counterarguments by pointing to what Ted Cohen (1976) calls ‘twice-true’ metaphors. A twice-true metaphor is a metaphor which is true on both a literal and metaphoric level. Consider, a twice-true metaphor:

(16) No man is an island.

Here, (16) is true on a literal and figurative reading. If the inconsistency were about the veridicality of interpretation, then twice true metaphors could possibly undermine her argument. The reason is that the content of the literal interpretation is not a patent falsehood, or an absurdity. In fact, the veridicality of both the literal and metaphorical interpretation is the same. Given that both interpretations have the same truth conditions in their context of utterance, she reasons that it must be something else that discredits the view that metaphors are a matter of what is implicated. Thus, the content must be inconsistent in another way. Nogales refers to this ‘other way’ as an ‘assumed taxonomy’. I discuss this below.

### **8.2.2 Counterargument**

By drawing a contrast between what she calls manner and content implicatures, Nogales claims that the latter, but not the former must ‘follow from’ the content expressed by an utterance in a context. I am not entirely convinced that all the types of implicatures that Nogales wants to consider respect this principle.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, we may ask, just what does she mean by ‘follows from’? On one (rather general) reading, her definition falls in line with Gricean theory, and for that reason, is inconsistent with her argument. For Grice’s calculability assumption maintains

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<sup>75</sup> When we consider norms of consistency, it is not completely obvious that they remain entirely relevant for the computation of an implicature. For example, in the Gricean framework, cases of obvious flouting, even tautologies and many metaphors, render consistency irrelevant. On the other hand, consistency matters for some implicatures. For example, scalar implicatures demand consistency with “what is said” because their computation requires belief in “what is said”.

that *all* implicatures ‘follow from’ the content expressed in the context of utterance. To work out that a particular conversational implicature is present, the hearer relies on the data from (i) the conventional meaning of the words used, together with the identity of any references that may be involved, (ii) the Cooperative principle, its maxims, (iii) the context, (iv) linguistic background, and (v) the fact that data (i)–(iv) are available to the discourse participants. Given her contrast, however, it seems clear that she does not intend such an encompassing reading of ‘follows from’.

A strict reading of the phrase ‘follows from’ may treat it as entailment. Yet, “most implicatures (by speakers) are not entailments...but there are exceptions” (K Bach, 2005, p. 5). He gives the example: “nobody has ever long-jumped over 28 feet.” And your friend replies “Bob Beamon long-jumped over 29 feet”. Here, the second speaker has implicated that somebody has long-jumped over 28 feet; it is entailed by the fact that Beamon long-jumped over 29 feet. But I’m not sure that Nogales is wanting to restrict the scope of content implicatures to these ‘exceptional’ cases. For this would limit implicatures to a subset that betrays the principle that implicatures that are independent of the truth of what is said (Levinson, 2000). Finally, reading ‘follows from’ as ‘entailment’ would violate Carston’s ‘Functional Independence Principle’.<sup>76</sup>

A more charitable reading may understand ‘follows from’ as some sort of relation of similarity between the content of an implicature and the utterance from which it is generated. This is perhaps why Nogales brings into play the idea of an ‘assumed taxonomy’ and equates it to the term ‘cognitive environment’. The term cognitive

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<sup>76</sup> Although, as we have noted, there are reasons to doubt the validity of this principle.

environment is a technical one introduced by Sperber and Wilson (1986) that encompasses the set of assumptions an individual exploits during online processing of an utterance. By equating conceptual taxonomies with cognitive environments, perhaps she is saying that taxonomies represent a network of related concepts, structured by our worldly assumptions about particular domains of knowledge—a kind of ‘family resemblance’ among our conceptual domains.

Using this notion as our guide, presumably, each domain carves up the world by dividing it into things that are composed of particular properties, whereby the members within a taxonomy will share similar properties. How does this come to bear on implicature? It seems that something is a content implicature if it is consistent with the set of properties subsumed by the content of the utterance under a literal interpretation. That is to say, the content of an implicature must be related to the content of the utterance in that it shares similar salient properties. Under this rubric, Nogales is led to reject the implicature view of metaphor because a metaphor, such as (71), exhibits two incompatible contents, represented by (71’) and (71’”). At the level of assumed taxonomy, in-animacy is incompatible with animacy.

I think understanding the calculation of the content of a content implicature in this way actually reinforces the traditional pragmatic classification. Following Black (1955), Goodman (1968, 1979); Ricoeur (1977); Beardsley (1978); Camp (Camp, 2003, 2006b, 2008); and Reimer (2008) develop the idea that metaphor works its magic by evoking a “system of related commonplaces” (Black, 1955, p. 288). I have attempted to explain this idea in chapter 5 via the notion of ‘characterizations’.

Recall that a characterization is not simply the sum content of encyclopedic information. Characterizations are often rough, approximate mental representations, replete with non-propositional content, such as affective, imagistic, and experiential features. Some of these features are more prominent and central to the individuals and kinds that they characterize. Recall, too, that they often include “half-truths or downright mistakes” (Black, 1955, p. 287). As we know, characterizations can be composed of many *stereotypical* properties.<sup>7778</sup> The upshot of this is that we typically have characterizations of the source and the target in a metaphorical utterance. If so, then a metaphorical interpretation does not have to clash at the level of assumed taxonomy with the sentence literally understood. Rather, the metaphor can serve to emphasize our ways of thinking about the target via our stereotypical ways of understanding the vehicle of the metaphor.

I would like to turn back to Black’s example “Man is a wolf”. It is worth quoting a great deal of this passage, here. I will unpack it below. He says:

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<sup>77</sup> I have attempted to develop Black’s ‘commonplaces’ as ‘characterizations’. Unlike Black, I do not take characterizations to be properties of words (as I believe Black had intended). Rather, I think about them as mental structures associated with our concepts of individuals, and kinds. To be clear, an individual must exploit a commonplace that leads them to establish the appropriate relations between the literal and intended content of a metaphorical utterance. I would like to thank Jacob Hesse for helping me flesh out this point. This

<sup>78</sup> One way in which this could be interpreted empirically is along with Glucksberg & Keysar (1993), who suggest that metaphor is based on dual reference. This means that processing a metaphor does not require interpretation of the literal utterance. Assuming that the source of the metaphor has both literal and metaphorical reference, in order to process a metaphorical meaning, an auditor need only to select the appropriate meaning. Consider the metaphor *Bill is a bulldozer*. When an auditor interprets this metaphor, what hat is activated are only those aspects of the category of *bulldozer* that are relevant for the metaphor (e.g., being forceful). It also maintains that none of the properties irrelevant to the metaphor are activated (e.g., having a shovel). In this case, access to literal meaning is not obligatory. I do not wish to endorse this interpretation. I believe that the literal meaning of a metaphor facilitates its metaphorical one. I discuss this in more detail below.

[T]he metaphorical sentence in question will not convey its intended meaning to a reader sufficiently ignorant about wolves. What is needed is not so much that the reader shall know the standard dictionary definition of ‘wolf’—or be able to use that word in literal senses—as that he shall know what I will call the system of *associated commonplaces*. Imagine some layman required to say, without taking special thought, those things he held to be true about wolves; the set of statements resulting would approximate to what I am here calling the system of commonplaces associated with the word “wolf”. I am assuming that in any given culture the responses made by different persons to the test suggested would agree rather closely, and that even the occasional expert, who might have unusual knowledge of the subject, would still know ‘what the man in the street thinks about the matter’. From the expert's standpoint, the system of commonplaces may include half-truths or downright mistakes (as when a whale is classified as a fish); but the important thing for the metaphor's effectiveness is not that the commonplaces shall be true, but that they should be readily and freely evoked.

[...] I am suggesting, literal uses of the word normally commit the speaker to acceptance of a set of standard beliefs about wolves (current platitudes) that are the common possession of the members of some speech community [...] A speaker who says ‘wolf’ is normally taken to be implying in some sense of that word that he is referring to something fierce, carnivorous, treacherous, and so on. The idea of a wolf is part of a system of ideas, not sharply delineated, and yet sufficiently definite to admit of detailed enumeration.

The effect, then, of (metaphorically) calling a man a ‘wolf’ is to evoke the wolf-system of related commonplaces. If the man is a wolf, he preys upon other animals, is fierce, hungry, engaged in constant struggle, a scavenger, and so on...(Black, 1955, pp. 287–288)

If we take seriously the view that the interpretation of metaphorical content is applying our governing characterization (which can include stereotypes, and downright mistakes) then perhaps there is a reason to reject the idea that the content of a metaphor runs orthogonal to its literal interpretation.

It may be the case, for instance, that my characterization of wolves includes at least some stereotypical properties that allow me to match with some features of people without being inconsistent at the level of the ‘assumed taxonomy’. For example, suppose I have an acquaintance, Bill. My knowledge of Bill includes, among other things, the fact that he regularly goes to bars alone, behaves aggressively towards other patrons when he

is drunk, and quite often flirts aggressively with women. So, when I call Bill a wolf, I intend to assign certain salient stereotypical properties of wolves (e.g., fierce, independent, predatory etc.) to my knowledge of Bill so that I highlight important (and rather alarming) features about Bill's behaviour. In opposition to Nogales, I don't think there is that great an inconsistency between my beliefs about Bill's behaviour, and my stereotypical beliefs about wolves.

The second part to Nogales' argument is to claim that twice-true metaphors always exhibit a clash at the level of assumed taxonomy. However, armed with the idea that metaphors can freely evoke stereotypical properties, we can regard her view as mistaken. Consider (72) uttered about John who has just donated a great deal of his earnings to charity, despite the fact that he struggles to make a livable wage. I spell out the possible interpretations of the utterance below:

(72) John is warm-blooded.

(72') John is an endothermic mammal.

(72'') John is altruistic.

Presumably, within our feature set of mammals, we include humans. Among humans, one may hold a general belief that they possess a capacity for altruistic behaviour.

Specifically, we may consider John's act of charity altruistic. I believe this reasoning also applies to

(73) Donald Trump is a primate.

(73') Donald Trump is a homo sapiens among the order of primates.

(73'') Donald Trump is a wild, unrefined beast.

whereby the metaphorical content is a subset of the things associated with the literal content, strictly speaking. For example, there are many species within the order 'primate' that are wild, prone to aggression, and display particularly relevant attitudes concerning things such as acquiring and defending territory.

These beliefs may make up part of the stereotype of primates being brutish, and unrefined, which can be extended to our metaphoric appraisals of people we take to exhibit similar characteristics. I must admit that the content of a metaphor may not always be consistent (in Nogales' sense) with the content of the utterance literally expressed. However, my only concern is to show that speakers regularly utter metaphors with the intention to exploit stereotypical properties in order to produce meanings that do not necessarily clash with the content of their utterance, literally understood—if we allow characterizations into the picture.

It is worth pointing out that there are also many cases of content implicatures that violate the principle of consistency that supports Nogales' distinction between manner and content implicatures. That is to say, there are many cases of inconsistency between literal and conveyed content so that the alleged consistency of content implicatures does not hold. For example, I may go to the theatre to see what is hailed an extremely accurate depiction of the Rohingya crisis. You ask me: "How did you like the documentary?" I answer by saying sarcastically: "It was excellent; it was the best fictional story I have

seen this year”. Being an excellent documentary is inconsistent with being a terrible fictional story, which is what I intend to convey.<sup>79</sup>

### **8.3 The argument from speech reporting**

Another argument made by Nogales (and her contextualist allies) to include metaphor in ‘what is said’ is that people are typically willing to report the contents of their metaphorical utterances as something that the speaker ‘said’. Nogales offers a rejoinder to an issue brought up by Camp (2006b). Camp identifies conventional metaphors with other implicatures. She points to the fact that speakers are usually willing to report the implied contents of utterances such as conventionalized indirect requests (74), and computational implicatures (75) as things a speaker says.

In drawing our attention to the kinds of speech acts that people are ordinarily willing to classify as having said, Camp hopes to show that the problem of redrawing the boundary of “what is said” to reflect ordinary use is that metaphors and implicatures “fall on both sides of the line between what speakers are and are not willing to report people as having said” (Camp, 2006b, p. 286).<sup>80</sup> For example, it may be fine to report the speaker of (55), (44), and (61) as having ‘said’ their implied content, whereas it is unacceptable to report the speaker as having said the implied content of (59).

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<sup>79</sup> I would like to thank Genoveva Marti for offering me the example as well as sharpening the argument in this section.

<sup>80</sup> See section 1.2

(55) Bill is a bulldozer

Speech Report: Bill is pushy and forceful.

(62) Life's but a walking shadow...

\*Speech Report: Life is futile.

(74) I could use some salt on this pork chop

Speech Report: She said she'd like the salt.

(75) Inquirer: Did Alice pass the exam

Professor: I did not fail any students

Speech Report: The professor said that Alice passed the exam.

Nogales argues that due to the high degree of conventionalization in indirect requests and computational implicatures, Camp's examples (59) and (60) are not representative of the entire class of implicatures. This consideration leads Nogales to conclude that Camp's arguments are unsuccessful.

#### **8.4 The argument from speech reporting of poetic metaphors**

Nogales devotes a section of her article to consider what she takes to be one of the most compelling arguments against her view. Camp (2006b) argues that the content of a poetic metaphor is difficult to capture, and not easily paraphrased. She asks us to consider the following poetic metaphoric utterance:

(76) The hour-glass whispers to the lion's paw (Auden)

Camp offers the following interpretation of (76):

(76') Every source of activity and forcefulness is undone by the passage of time

Since there are many poetic metaphors, speech reporting is undermined as a method for arguing that the content of a metaphor belongs to 'what is said'. Nogales argues that the alleged difficulty with paraphrasing is not an objection. She argues that we can offer, what she calls, speech reports of (76) which can serve to make explicit its indeterminacy and therefore 'remedy' the issue Camp raises. Consider:

(76'') Auden claims that the very source of activity and forcefulness is ultimately undone by the passage of time, I *think*, by saying "the hourglass whispers to the lion's paw," but he said this in the context of...and literary theorists have said...and Auden may have wanted to express this overall message...and to do...using this metaphor and poem.

and

(76''') Auden said the hour-glass whispers to the lion's paw—and I *don't know what that means* but he said this in the context of...and literary theorists have said...and Auden may have wanted to express this overall message...and to do...using this metaphor and poem.

Finally, she argues that literal utterances can exhibit similar under- and indetermination that is so often attributed to poetic metaphor. She offers the example:

(77) *Department chair*: Call me only in the case of an emergency. And by emergency I mean "a death threat, the demand of the College dean, etc."

Reporting on a metaphor, Nogales argues, is no different than when speaker provide extensions of what they said in a way that contributes to the truth conditions.

#### **8.4.1 Counterargument**

Still, Camp's argument is largely untouched. To acknowledge that speakers can and do report the contents of poetic metaphors does not by itself mean that the reported content is part of what the speaker said. Camp observes that in addition to conventionalized speech acts where speakers mean "something *more* than the content of their uttered sentence's conventional meaning, that it is often acceptable to use 'say' to report the speaker's intended content when she means something different from her uttered sentence's conventionally encoded content" (Camp, 2006b, p. 285). Camp offers the sarcastic utterance (78) below as an example where speech reporters report the intended content as what the speaker said. It is not uncommon, she says, for the following exchange to take place:

(78) What a brilliant idea: let's spend our last dollar on beer! Then I suppose we can hitchhike home.

Speech Report: She said that we should save our money for the cab.

In the case of sarcasm, we have a gap between the sentence meaning and the reported content that is too great for even contextualists to include (78) into 'what is said'. Thus, Camp's original point still holds firm: there are other pragmatic phenomena (in addition to conventionalized conversational implicatures) that speakers are willing to report as having said, but under no reasonable account would they be included in a theoretically

disciplined understanding of ‘what is said’.<sup>81</sup> For example, we can and do report sarcastic speakers as having ‘said’ their intended content. In addition, this meshes well with Haugh’s (2002) point above: that we ought to be a bit cautious using ordinary intuitions about “what is said” since ordinary speakers are not as theoretically disciplined in carving out each of their utterances at their theoretical joints. The leading idea here is that the mere fact that a speaker can (and often does) report the intended content of an utterance does not justify classifying the content of the report as what the speaker said.

At the same time, we can and do put our literal utterances to poetic uses in interesting and novel ways. Consider the poem by Rihaku below:

(79) The jeweled steps are already quite white with dew,/ It is so late that the dew  
soaks my gauze stockings,/ And I let down the crystal curtain/And watch the  
moon through the clear autumn.<sup>82</sup>

The poem clearly demonstrates how difficult it can be to provide an adequate paraphrase of even a nearly entirely literal utterance. The translation by Ezra Pound provides some useful information for cultivating, what Camp (2008) refers to as an “appropriately open-ended, imagistic, affectively-laden understanding of the scene being described, it doesn’t aim to restate the poem’s meaning in explicit literal terms” (2008, p. 20).<sup>83</sup> That is to say,

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<sup>81</sup> For a more detailed discussion, see Camp (2006b), especially section 2.

<sup>82</sup> Example taken from Camp (2008).

<sup>83</sup> For a complete contrast between metaphor and various other poetic features, see Camp (2008).

like metaphor, the poem evokes many different emotions and images (i.e., non-propositional content) which can be difficult to capture in paraphrase.<sup>84</sup>

Similarly, consider the Nietzschean dictum:

(80) Become who you are!

This statement is entirely literal, but it's cryptic, and its meaning is not immediately obvious. In order to profit from it—to understand what Nietzsche's Zarathustra is trying to convey—it's necessary to engage in a bit of interpretation. A simple expansion of the text, such as

(80') Become who you are! And by this Nietzsche means that one ought to be true to oneself.

To my ear, (80') does not do justice to the sort of interpretive game that is required to understand the dictum. Nor does it capture the presuppositions about the dialectic between Heraclitian and Parmenidian philosophy. At the very least, it doesn't seem to exhaust the meaning of the utterance in the way refinement of (80) does.

We offer interpretations of poetic language, not mere speech reports. This is the reason why (80') seems to be incomplete: (80') is a speech report; it isn't a reflective interpretation nor is it a meditative paraphrase. For it doesn't seem to fully exhaust the communicative and imaginative import of the utterance. Indeed, alongside the intended

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<sup>84</sup> The poem is clearly meant to be meditative. However, a paraphrase could grossly downplay that cerebral quality. For example, I can paraphrase it in the following way: *I am walking home at night. I see the moon, and my socks are wet from the dew.* There is something very important missing from the above paraphrase.

propositional contents<sup>85</sup> the speaker intends to communicate something essentially non-propositional<sup>86</sup> which the audience is expected to cultivate in their imagination.

Now, I agree with Nogales that (76') through (76''') count as (potential) metaphorical interpretations. My disagreement is with treating these interpretations as what the speaker 'said' in uttering (76). The mere fact that someone can report their interpretation of (76) does not by itself count as evidence that it *is* 'what is said' by the utterance.

Nogales overlooks the fact that (76')-(76''') are interpretations and not merely speech reports. That is to say, the contents in (76')-(76''') are markedly different than mere clarification such as that offered in (77). Poetic interpretations, of the kind I have in mind, are products of research, scholarship, imagination, etc. Interpretations serve as adequate ways to paraphrase (and, thus capture) the speaker's intended content, but interpretations are better understood as what the speaker or author intends to convey, as opposed to what they 'said'.

Recall that I mentioned that a faithful paraphrase is one that captures the content of the speaker's intended illocutionary act, and not simply the content of what she said. In uttering a metaphor, a speaker utters something with a certain illocutionary force, and often intends their utterance to include several propositions as well as imagistic and

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<sup>85</sup> These contents can be numerous, to be sure.

<sup>86</sup> For a detailed discussion on this aspect of metaphor, see Donald Davidson (1978). The term 'non-propositional' is often used synonymously with 'non-cognitive'. Briefly, they are meant to capture those aspects of an utterance that are non-propositional. In fact, Davidson argues that a metaphor communicates no propositional content at all. All that it can achieve is its literal meaning *plus* non-propositional features. An oft-quoted passage from Davidson makes this point: "A picture is not worth a thousand words, or any other number. Words are the wrong currency to exchange for a picture" Davidson (1978).

evocative features. A paraphrase is to be faithful if it attempts to capture all of this in a way that makes the intentions explicit.

By extension, a literary interpretation, like those offered by Nogales and Camp, are forensic investigations in the sense that they involve some exploratory method and diligence for uncovering, or discovering the meaning of the utterance. We can identify this even in Nogales' examples. Clauses such as 'but he said this in the context of,' 'literary theorists have said,' 'Auden may have wanted to express this overall message,' and 'using... [such and such device]' It seems obvious to me that the interpreter is involved in a game of meaning discovery, by utilizing literary devices employed in the poem, its surrounding context, as well as relevant para-textual information, including other prominent interpretations offered by other literary critics.

We would be remiss to treat (76')-(76''') as mere speech reports akin to the quick elaboration in (77) or on par with (81), below:

(81) It's freezing

Speech Report: She said that it's cold in *here*.

to mean that it's FREEZING\* (or, merely cold), in the current physical context in which the utterance takes place. Here, linguistic competence (understood as the basic ability to assign values to semantically context-sensitive terms) does not include the rich sort of interpretive abilities we bring to bear in the recovery of meaning in poetic metaphor. Classifying the content of (76')-(76''') as 'what is said' by (76) would be to miss an important feature of poetic language. We can see that the paraphrased interpretations are just a few among many possible candidates. Some will be better representative of the

meaning than others. In fact, some authors argue that a complete understanding of the poem requires readers to be familiar with Shakespeare's "Devouring Time, blunt thou the line's paw"<sup>87</sup> as well as seeing it in relation to other works by Auden.

For instance, we can elaborate Camp's interpretation by adding that there is good reason to see these lines as an elaboration of a recurrent theme in Auden: it is not simply the abstract concept of time that the poem is depicting, but humanity's attempt to 'capture' time via technology—a mechanical realization of time, as it has been suggested by some. Not to mention, once one finishes the poem, Auden seems to flip the power he places in the concept of time demonstrated by the opening lines. If so, there is reason to re-read (76) with a sense of dramatic irony. Now, all of this changes our original interpretation of (76).

A better understanding of the lines would view Auden in conversation with Shakespeare, arguing that our phenomenological conception of time, and its mechanical realization are in fact naïve approximations of a much grander, more mystical process. Surely, this adds an entirely new dimension to the meaning of the metaphor. I will go so far to say that this content can *in a way* be reported as what the poem intends to communicate. But the claim that that content is part of 'what is said' is left in want of justification.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Sonnet 19.

<sup>88</sup> Recall the discussion on the problem of paraphrase.

## 8.5 The argument from metaphorical content and speaker commitment

To further distinguish metaphor from implicature Nogales appeals to an alleged difference in speaker commitment to content. She argues that in the case of genuine implicatures, an audience is aware that they cannot hold speakers accountable to the implied content. This claim rests on the assumption that speakers can be held accountable only for content that is directly expressed. Presumably, she means that a speaker is held accountable to ‘what is said’, writing that the audience is usually aware they are unable to hold speakers accountable for implicated content, “but can only hold him/her accountable for direct content” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1006). For example, consider the implicature generated by an utterance where it is common knowledge that John has a wife:

(82) John is going out with a woman tonight.

A hearer may challenge the implicature (+>) that John is being adulterous. Nevertheless, based on Grice’s defeasibility principle, the speaker can undermine the perceived commitment to the content of their conversational implicature by cancelling it with some other utterance. Specifically, the speaker can challenge their audience by stating that all she meant to say was what the sentence means on its conventional understanding and nothing more. Alternatively, the speaker has the ability to cancel the implicature in question by offering that his true intention was to say that the woman John is going out with tonight is, in fact, his wife.

Conversely, the speech reporter of a metaphor would under no circumstance “answer with the sense and reference of the literal interpretation”...speech reporters of metaphors either cite metaphorical content as “what is said” or restate the sentence, word

for word...so their audience can derive the appropriate metaphorical content themselves” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1005). I think this claim also misses the mark and denies an important fact about what makes metaphor a special case of language use.

### 8.5.1 Counterargument

Nogales claims that speakers are held accountable for the contents of their utterance. In the case of genuine implicatures, speakers can cancel the intended meaning. The assumption is that metaphorical meaning is ‘directly expressed’ whereas in genuine implicature it is not.

Before turning to the issue of accountability, I would like to examine what Nogales refers to as ‘direct content’. How exactly are we to interpret ‘directness’? If Nogales is to be consistent with contextualism, it is worth examining the contextualist notion of ‘directness’. Recanati (2001a), for example, grounds directness in our ordinary views of meaning. To say that metaphorical meaning is direct is to say that it doesn’t flaunt its nonliteralness: auditors just *get* the meaning.<sup>89</sup> By contrast, for something to count as nonliteral, an auditor must be aware of the two layers of meaning (i.e., between the conventional and intended meaning). In his own words, for something to count as non-literal “it must not only go beyond the conventional significance of the uttered words [...] but it must be felt as such” (2001a, p. 271).

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<sup>89</sup> This view is itself problematic. I am not usually aware of the inferential process involved in interpreting utterances contextualists usually maintain to be indirect. For example, when speakers are being sarcastic. Often times, I simply just understand the implied content, although I am definitely aware of the two layers of meaning available to me.

Recanati refers to this as the ‘transparency condition’. Speakers are aware of the two layers of meaning involved in paradigmatic implicatures, such as (26), (27), (54) and sarcastic utterances such as (78) and (85), above. Metaphor, he argues, does not count as a genuine nonliteral utterance because speakers can jump so easily and unreflectively to the metaphorical meaning. However, I think that speakers can generally articulate between the two layers of meaning at play in metaphor. Moreover, I think a view that argues that a speech reporter of a metaphor would under no circumstance answer with the literal interpretation misses the point. Language users can and often do point to the literal content as a means to differentiate between the two layers of meaning in the metaphor.

We can consider the conventional metaphor (71) above. Camp argues

[Speakers] can and do offer justifications along the following rough lines: ‘Well, she can’t really be claiming that Bill is a bulldozer, because that’d be absurd: he’s a man, not a piece of landscape machinery. But he does share with bulldozers a propensity to obliterate obstacles. Since we’re talking about whether Bill would be a good department chair, she must mean that he would stand up to the administration and get things done (Camp, 2006b, p. 289).

Here, the ‘but’ functions to caution the audience to take the utterance figuratively.

It emphasizes the two layers of meaning available to the discourse participants, showing that “metaphorical speech exploits established conventional meanings to novel ends” (Camp, 2006b, p. 289), contrary to what Nogales and contextualists claim.

Furthermore, I believe the above leads us to wonder whether the options that ‘speech reporters of metaphors either cite metaphorical content as “what is said” or restate the sentence, word for word’ is exhaustive of those available to ordinary language users. I don’t believe it is. In fact, I think speakers can respond by highlighting their

intended meanings. For example, a speech reporter may offer their audience the following derogatory reports of (71).

(71''') He said that Bill is a (pushy) asshole.

(71''''') He said that Bill is a large and aggressive man.<sup>90</sup>

Of course, this is not what the speaker of (71) said, but it does represent an approximation of the speaker's intended meaning. Rather than coming out and putting themselves on record as *saying* (71''').

What I want to draw your attention to is the accountability Nogales claims speakers of metaphors allegedly undertake in making them. As we can see, the speaker of (71) has various contents that she could mean. Like Nogales, I don't think speakers can be held accountable to things they intend to communicate, but do not say. For example, it would not be permissible to hold the writer of the letter of recommendation (54) accountable to the content that Mr. X is a bad philosopher.<sup>91</sup> Unlike Nogales, I think metaphors make up part of this class of phenomena with this kind of deniability. In fact, I think this is one of the reasons speakers often employ metaphor in speech. Consider a remark made by Bernie Sanders when asked to reflect on the character of Donald Trump.

(83) Trump is a snake.

Someone at Fox news might hold Sanders accountable for saying something along the lines of:

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<sup>90</sup> These interpretations were offered to me by two colleagues.

<sup>91</sup> We could perhaps hold them accountable for writing such a spectacularly poor letter of recommendation, but I think this is another issue.

(83') Trump is deceitful and treacherous

However, I think it is plausible to deny the content of (83'), claiming that this is something he does not endorse and instead offer clarification of his utterance of (83):

(83'') And what I mean is that Trump is someone who, like a snake, has shed his old skin *so to speak*, and is a new man.

Discourse participants may take issue with (83''), given their knowledge of Sanders, his opposition to Trump, and his earlier criticisms of him. Yet, they cannot deny that (83'') is a legitimate interpretation. For what the metaphor leaves *implicit* is precisely the ways in which Trump is like a snake. Rather, Sanders may be criticised for speaking indirectly, and not explicitly about his views on Trump<sup>92</sup>.

It is worth pointing out the major difference between my view of metaphor and implicature. By implicating something, speakers are able to deny the commitment to their implicated content simply by sticking to the literal content of what they said. For example, in the case of the professor's utterance of (54), he may stick to the literal content: "Oh, no I think he's very good, but punctuality is a quality I deem worthy of reporting". Here, the professor does not appeal to some other interpretation to deflect the commitment. Contrast this with a metaphorical utterance: such a possibility of sticking to the literal content (in most cases) is barred. However, there are contexts in which recourse to the literal content would be appropriate (e.g., twice-true/apt metaphors, or to generate humour, such as a pun). In other words, a speaker's commitment to

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<sup>92</sup> Often times, politicians can be criticized for their rhetoric. Metaphor is no exception. One of the benefits of uttering a metaphor is that it often buys the speaker a bit of deniability of the intended content.

metaphorical content is not as strong as it would be to a genuine literal assertion. In metaphor, a speaker has recourse to other legitimate interpretations of the metaphorical utterance (for example, if a speaker wants to save face, as illustrated by the above example).

## **8.6 The argument that metaphor is the springboard for implicatures**

In a footnote, Nogales makes a passing argument that metaphorical content ought to be part of “what is said” because it serves as the input to implicatures. She says, metaphorical content is the launching point for both ironic content and implicatures. This seems to show that metaphorical content is “what is said” (Nogales, 2012, p. 1000 ft. 6). As I hope to show, the fact that an interpretation can serve as a launching point for implicature is not sufficient to establish a boundary of “what is said”.

### **8.6.1 Counterargument**

It is widely known that implicatures and figurative language can be used to generate further implicatures. For example, consider the following utterance:

(84) I’ve listened to a few Stones records in my day.

Here, it seems to be the case that the speaker is indicating that they have listened to more than one Rolling Stones album. At the same time, this knowledge, combined with the triteness of the response, further implicates that the speaker is also a hipster and diehard fan, and therefore somewhat of an expert on the Rolling Stones’ discography. The same thing can happen in sarcasm. Suppose John asks Jane whom they should invite for dinner. Jane gives the response:

(85) Joe is always so utterly wonderful to be around.

Here, the speaker implicates a critical attitude about Joe (i.e., that Joe is not very pleasant). And the speaker further implicates that Joe should not be invited for dinner.

In the next chapter, I want to consider some recent empirical work in the domain of metaphor comprehension. I believe looking to cutting-edge research is important so that we are not tied down by earlier scientific and philosophical assumptions. A great deal of this empirical work, I believe, runs counter to some of the claims that RT and their friends in contextualism hold of metaphor. I identify three further problems with the deflationary account. First, it neglects Davidson's insights: metaphors have non-propositional features. Second, it seems to neglect the role of the literal in the facilitation of metaphor interpretation. Third, it rejects a broadly Gricean model of metaphorical communication based on an error in interpreting Grice's aim.

## **Chapter 9: Metaphor and psycholinguistics**

This chapter will examine some outstanding issues regarding metaphor, contextualism, and phenomenological and empirical data. I have divided the chapter into three parts to examine these issues. In the first section, I reject RT and contextualism's claim that metaphorical meaning is automatic and unreflective. Rather, auditors can and do appreciate the difference between the metaphorical and literal meaning of their words—this claim holds even in conventional metaphors. I believe an adequate theory of metaphor should be alive to the phenomenology of metaphor interpretation.

In section 9.2 I examine recent empirical work regarding metaphor comprehension. It is here that I reject RT and contextualism's argument that Grice's theory is empirically inadequate on the grounds that Grice did not intend for his theory to be empirically tractable. Taking a lead from Chemla and Singh (2014b, 2014a) who offer a similar critique of the mismatch between current empirical and theoretical results for pragmatic theories of scalar implicature, I point out how the mismatch between Grice's rational reconstruction and empirical claims can be resolved.

In section 9.3 I cite recent empirical data on metaphor comprehension that seems to suggest a role for literal meaning in the on-line interpretation process. These data inform my model of metaphoric communication in chapter 10.

### **9.1 Metaphor and the 'felt gap'**

In this section I argue that contextualists are wrong to reduce metaphor to loose talk. Metaphors, unlike loose speech, depends on thinking under an aspect whereby we deploy our governing characterization to see our subject characterization under that aspect.

Recall that Recanati referred to metaphorical meaning as ‘direct’ and ‘unreflective’. What he meant was that metaphors don’t flaunt their nonliteralness. Auditors simply *get* the meaning.<sup>93</sup> By contrast, for something to count as nonliteral, auditors must be aware of the two layers of meaning (i.e., between the conventional and intended meaning). In his own words, for something to count as non-literal “it must not only go beyond the conventional significance of the uttered words [...] but it must be felt as such” (2001a, p. 271).

Recall that Recanati referred to this as the ‘transparency condition’. Whereas speaker and auditors are aware of the two layers of meaning involved in paradigmatic implicatures, such as (26), (27), (54) and sarcastic utterances such as (78) and (85), above, metaphor, he argues, does not count as a genuine nonliteral utterance because the literal content is opaque. In other words, the distinguishing feature for genuine implicatures is that two layers of meaning are ‘available’ to speakers and their audience, in the sense that they cannot be ignored<sup>94</sup>. The question of whether metaphorical meaning can make use of the availability condition postulated by contextualists is what is at issue.

Contrary to contextualism, metaphor comprehension is not simply ‘automatic’ and ‘unreflective’, but is ‘available’ to speakers and their audience. The gap between

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<sup>93</sup> This view is itself problematic. I am not usually aware of the inferential process involved in interpreting utterances contextualists usually maintain to be indirect. For example, when speakers are being sarcastic. Often times, I simply just understand the implied content, although I am definitely aware of the two layers of meaning available to me.

<sup>94</sup> Conversely, an utterance is *direct* just in case the speaker is not consciously aware of the inferential process in determining the actual meaning.

literal and metaphoric meaning can be taken up by speakers and auditors to produce clarity, puns, and jokes.

Camp (2008) employs the phenomenological phrase ‘felt gap’ to capture the idea that speaker and auditors are aware of the difference between ‘what is said’ and ‘what is meant’ as consciously available content via introspection (Stöver, 2013). I maintain that this gap is prompted by a shift in ‘seeing’ one thing as something else. In order to highlight the importance of the phenomenology of metaphoric interpretation, I proceed in the following way. First, I discuss cases of highly poetic and rich literary metaphors, such as (61) and (62) above. I then extend the discussion to our model cases, such as (58) and (57). Finally, I discuss Davidson’s notion of ‘seeing as’ that I have included in my account of metaphor (chapter 5) as an alternative to a continuity view of metaphor as defended by contextualists.

Certain other theorists, such as Carston (2010)<sup>95</sup>, Reimer (2008), and Stöver (2013), have argued along similar lines.<sup>96</sup> The ‘gap’ between conventional and figurative meaning is most strongly noticeable in poetic metaphors such as (61) and (62). Here, a

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<sup>95</sup> Carston’s account presents perhaps the most radical break with the views of the theorists mentioned. Following Davidson (1978), she seems to be committed to the view that highly poetic metaphors — although reliant on the lexically encoded content — do not say anything beyond their literal meaning. As I understand her, Carston concedes that there is no *ad hoc* process at work in these cases because the metaphor maker only *says* the literal content of her utterance. What marks the difference between conventional metaphors and novel ones is that there is a contextual adjustment process that intrudes upon the semantics of the utterance, directly contributing to what the speaker says. If there is no *ad hoc* adjustment process that intrudes upon the semantics, then the processor simply gives the lexical meaning as output. For Carston, and other contextualists, there is never a secondary metaphorical meaning.

<sup>96</sup> It is worth noting that these theorists are not necessarily in agreement as to what Camp (2008) has said of this ‘gap’. Nonetheless, these theorists do point out the fact that *ad hoc* concept construction does seem to deliver the explanatory power in dealing with the issue flagged by Camp.

non-theorist of English can easily appreciate that there is marked difference between the conventional and intended meaning. In fact, if we are going to make sense of them at all, then they seem to require a bit of sustained effort on the part of the interpreter.

Consider the meaning of examples (61) and (62). Now, if pressed, I would be willing to commit myself to the claim that both (61) and (62) have a similar meaning. I believe I can capture it by saying that its something like the following. No matter the force by which we live our lives, or the status that we attribute to it, death inevitably finds us all. Now, I am not entirely sure as to the accuracy of the reconstruction I have offered, nor am I certain that it gets to the heart of the matter (and surely more can be said in terms of what (61) and (62) communicate); the important point is that I seem to be pushing credulity when arguing that my explanation is what the poets have *said* when they composed these lines.

Yet, this is precisely what the deflationary account offers. In the contextualist view, we would need to suppose that for (61) we are forming multiple *ad hoc* concepts sequentially, HOURGLASS\*, WHISPERED\*, LION'S PAW\*<sup>97</sup>, for instance, where the lexical meaning of each is substituted upon interpretation and we arrive at the *direct* and *explicit* meaning. Although the contextualist account offers a rather clean theory, it seems far removed from what is actually happening in these two cases. Conversely, if we maintain that interpretation relies on the 'felt gap', then we are in a position to argue that the lexically encoded meaning is what allows us to work-out the further, intended metaphorical content of the utterances in question. The lexically encoded core features

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<sup>97</sup> The case becomes more alarming in (62), given the fact that this is an abridged version of the soliloquy, and nearly every word following 'Life' is used metaphorically in the unabridged version.

serve us as a springboard for calculating the figurative content. This undoubtedly requires that a hearer entertain the ‘felt gap’.

However, this argument is not necessarily conclusive to those theorists who endorse the deflationary account. They may well concede that poetic and imagistic metaphors, such as those such as (61) and (62) do in fact work as I am arguing, but that we need to be alive to the fact that they represent unique instances of poetic language. These metaphors are more like implicatures such as (54), they might say. They may go on to point out that there is still an appreciable difference between examples like (54), (61), and (62), and the majority of metaphors that we utter in everyday conversational exchanges, such as (58) and (57). Another way to construe this would be to say that novel and poetic metaphors flaunt their metaphoricity, whereas conventional metaphors do not, and so their figurativeness is less explicit. However, as Camp points out “[w]e often act intentionally and automatically, for reasons that are ‘available’ to us but which we don’t articulate explicitly even to ourselves” (Camp, 2006b, p. 289). Linguistic interpretation, she says, would simply be a special case of this.

In applying this reasoning to our present case, we can show that speakers can and do articulate between the two layers of meaning—that the figurative meaning *is* ‘available’ to speakers. For example, it is plausible to assume that a speaker, if pressed by her audience, could offer a justification of her utterances of (58) in conversation. Consider a scenario where (58) is uttered, and the recipient of the utterance questions the

absurdity of the claim<sup>98</sup>. The speaker would be in a position to rectify her utterance by indicating that she does not *in fact* think that her lawyer is a shark.

Rather, what she means to say is that her lawyer is vicious and predatory in a way that would benefit our hypothetical speaker if she were on trial. The fact that speakers *can* and *do* offer such reconstructions of their metaphorical utterances suggests that the metaphorical meaning is in fact ‘available’ for speakers to exploit. If this is correct, then we must reject the contextualists’ claim that metaphorical meaning is automatic, unavailable, and direct.

### 9.1.1 ‘Seeing-as’

To take up our second issue mentioned above, I make the case, *pace* contextualism, that metaphor *also* involves something that is distinctly non-propositional<sup>99</sup>. What I have in mind here has been given numerous terminological definitions, but for the sake of consistency, I side with Camp (2008) and Reimer (2008) in calling this particular property ‘aspectual’. I believe that the term is apt at capturing precisely those imagistic and affectively-laden qualities that metaphors seem to have.

Davidson forcefully rejects the claim that metaphors are in the same business of meaning as their literal counterparts. Rather, what metaphors do, he says, is attract our

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<sup>98</sup> We often exploit the ‘felt gap’ between default meaning and metaphorical meaning to produce humour.

<sup>99</sup> Precisely what ‘non-propositional’ amounts to is unclear since it has been explored in a variety of ways by a number of authors. It is not within the scope of the paper to commit myself to, or argue in favour of, any particular viewpoint. I simply make use of some of the terminology employed in capturing the intuition that metaphors seem to be in the business of doing more than simply expressing indirect cognitive (i.e., propositional) content. I draw the reader’s attention to Black (1962), Camp (2008), Davidson (1978), Reimer (2008), and Ricoeur (1977) for a fuller discussion on this topic.

attention to aspects of the topic that we do not otherwise notice. Rather than communicating genuine cognitive content, metaphors evoke mental images. It is the spirit (and not the letter) of Davidson's insights that I want to agree with—metaphors do in fact invite us to entertain aspects of the topic. However, I want to remind the reader that the proposed account encompasses both propositional and non-propositional components. It should be obvious that my agreement with Davidson begins and ends with his insight into the imagistic properties of metaphor<sup>100</sup>. That said, I would like to highlight his emphasis on the *cognitive effects* of metaphor. Davidson, in making this point, offers the following analogy:

If I show you Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit, and say "It's a duck," then with luck you see it as a duck; if I say "It's a rabbit," then you see it as a rabbit. But no proposition expresses what I have led you to see. Perhaps you have come to realize that the drawing can be seen as a duck or as a rabbit. But one could come to know this without ever seeing the duck drawing as a duck or as a rabbit. Seeing as is not seeing that. (Davidson, 1978, p. 47)

In distinguishing 'seeing as' from 'seeing that' Davidson is able to point to two distinct cognitive states, where being in one does not entail being in the other. The proposed view maintains this distinction, and claims that metaphor participates in both. We can highlight the aspectual feature of metaphor by appealing to another kind of literary trope that shares specific features with metaphor. Namely, imagery. Here, I would like to acknowledge that imagery of this sort differs from metaphor in significant ways; I am

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<sup>100</sup> His account has generated a large body of discussion that has since persuasively shown that metaphors do in fact participate in communicating genuine cognitive content. Rather than re-running these arguments here, I simply take their conclusions for granted.

merely trying to highlight the imagistic component at work by way of analogy<sup>101</sup>.

Consider the following abridged lines from a poem by Mary Oliver:

*At Black River*

All day

its dark, slick bronze soaks

in a mossy place,

its teeth,

a multitude

set

for the comedy

that never comes--

its tail

knobbed and shiny,

and with a heavyweight's punch

packed around the bone.

In beautiful Florida

he is king

of his own part

of the black river,

and from his nap

he will wake

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<sup>101</sup> For a discussion on the way metaphor differs from other literary tropes, such as imagery, see Camp (2008).

into the warm darkness  
to boom, and thrust forward,  
paralyzing  
the swift, thin-waisted fish,  
or the bird  
in its frilled, white gown,  
that has dipped down  
from the heaven of leaves  
one last time,  
to drink.

The effect of the passages are largely imagistic: these first five stanzas provide a rich description of a particular kind of creature. At first, we are unaware that the poet has intended this, but eventually, as we make our way through the poem, we begin to piece together various attributes that conjure up a particular image. Here, we are given details such as 'slick bronze' (read: armour-plated), a 'multitude' of teeth, the mention of a dangerously powerful 'tail' that one would imagine a dinosaur to have, as well as the geographical location ('beautiful Florida') where this poem seems to be set. All of these come together to offer the reader a holistic picture of a beast that is silently lurking behind the words, patiently waiting to capture an unsuspecting prey, until it suddenly dawns on the reader: 'this is an alligator!'

The point I want to make is that although the lines contain virtually no metaphor, they nevertheless work to produce the same sort of 'aspectual thought' that metaphor

does. The preceding lines can be organized and gathered together to produce an overall image that relies upon, but is independent of, the stanzas.

As we noted earlier, ‘seeing as’ is not entailed by ‘seeing that’. It is possible to read through this poem, understand all the lines, but still fail to *see* the poem *as* an alligator, covered in a shiny suit of scales, breaking the surface of the water slightly, all the while patiently waiting for unsuspecting prey—in fact, you may not have known this poem was describing an alligator until I mentioned it, even though you could grasp and understand each description throughout. Perhaps you have never seen an alligator, and therefore cannot seem to conjure up an image, even with the aid of the descriptors. There is nothing paradoxical about this epistemic state (Reimer 2008).

Rather, what the poem does, and what metaphors do, is invite or *inspire* us to think about the meaning. These imagistic effects (i.e., ‘seeing as’), you will recall, are precisely what are left underspecified on the deflationary account because the theory maintains that ‘poetic effects’ can be fully cashed out in terms of a wide range of weakly communicated propositions.

To put the point slightly differently, I return to one of our earlier examples.

(58) My lawyer is a shark.

The proposed view entails that metaphor, while having genuine propositional content, is also in the business of generating non-propositional ‘aspects’ that allow one to construct imagistic impressions of the topic that are distinct from propositional content. Suppose that a speaker of (58) intended to include (something like) the content that is captured by the literal statement in (58a)

(58) a. My lawyer is vicious in court.

Certainly, our speaker is in a position to insist that this is not *all* she intended of her assertion. She may insist that there is something that is not captured by simply understanding the literal interpretation—*that* her lawyer is simply vicious in court. An audience may well grasp the approximated content without seeing the lawyer as a shark: the calculated way he seems to pace around the courtroom, the way he preys upon witnesses under cross-examination, etc. In order to see *that* the lawyer is vicious is not to see him *as* embodying any of these specific characteristics.

Perhaps, when you imagine what it is to be vicious you think back to a traumatizing event in childhood where you were attacked by your neighbour's dog. The point is that the propositional content of (58a) does not capture the aspectual thought generated by (58). This point nicely captures the intuition that metaphor is not completely amenable to literal paraphrase. At the same time, it doesn't exclude the fact that we can approximate our meaning to satisfy the demands of our conversational exchanges (Camp 2008).

### **9.1.2 Aspects of a Theory of Metaphor**

Although is not the intention of this paper to offer a conclusive theory of metaphor, I would like to suggest that the above arguments are, at the very least, necessary to consider. With the above discussion in mind, I believe that we are now in a more desirable position to provide some important insights that a theory of metaphor should be alive to. I believe that the following insights nicely align with our intuitive, pre-theoretical understanding of metaphor.

First, contrary to the deflationary account, a theory of metaphor ought to preserve the intuition that metaphor represents use of language that is distinct from its literal counterpart. Recall that contextualists argued that metaphor is understood automatically and unreflectively in a way that we comprehend loose speech. It was demonstrated that speakers are aware of the layers of meaning in metaphorical utterances, and can exploit this division to novel ends. The case was made for both novel and conventional metaphors. For this reason, I argued against including metaphor into ‘what is said’ (i.e., the proposition explicitly and directly asserted).

Secondly, people intuitively attribute rich, poetic, evocative, and imagistic qualities to metaphorical language. This feature is preserved on the proposed account. Metaphor allows us to construct an image of the topic that can assist us in furthering our cognition of it. The case was made by looking at metaphor in relation to imagery — another form of poetic language used to construct images. Both metaphor and imagery invite an audience to entertain an image of the topic — something that I referred to as ‘aspectual thought’.

Thirdly, and related to the last point, is the distinction between ‘seeing that’ and ‘seeing as’. This distinction allowed us to account for the open-ended and imagistic nature of metaphor. Given that there are features of metaphor that are ‘imagistic’ or aspectual and therefore, non-propositional, we may account for a metaphor’s resistance to being fully captured by literal paraphrase. However, as I mentioned, this does not exclude the possibility of approximating meaning to suit the demands of our linguistic exchanges.

Taken together, these three aspects respect our intuitive understanding of metaphor *qua* poetic device as communicating cognitive content, but in a way that is essentially open-ended and imagistic. It is these latter two qualities that allow us to reject the deflationary account's insistence that metaphor belongs to 'what is said'. An adequate theory of metaphor must be alive to the specific ways it diverges from and shares similarities with other forms of speech.

## **9.2 Metaphor and the psycholinguistic strawman**

RT and Contextualism often hurl the charge of 'empirical inadequacy' at Gricean theories of metaphor (Carston, 2010; Nogales, 2012; Sperber & Wilson, 2008) on account of the fact that in many cases, metaphorical meaning. One of the central questions surrounding metaphor in this domain is whether meaning is accessed directly or indirectly. Many contextualists and RTs (Carston, 2002; Nogales, 2012; Sperber & Wilson, 2008) assume that the Gricean picture of metaphor predicts comprehension to be indirect.

The basis for this claim is that the Gricean model "requires that the audience first derive the literal content, then notice the incongruity that signals the flouting of a maxim and then, by some unspecified process (of which Searle (1979) provides a faint sketch), derive the metaphorical content" (Nogales, 2012, p. 1007). The idea is that comprehension of metaphorical utterances are predicted to exert a cognitive cost relative to literal counterparts. The theorists Nogales cites are Gibbs (1994), Glucksberg and Keysar (1990), and Pierce and Chiappe (2009) who have all found evidence in support of the direct access model. They have done so by conducting reading/reaction time

experiments where subjects are asked to read through a list of stimuli, indicating if and when they have ‘understood’ the passage, or provide a reconstruction of the meaning of a metaphorical utterance.

A few authors have noted that the inference patterns active in metaphor as described by Grice and many of his followers do not differentiate it from other figurative tropes and implicatures.<sup>102</sup> She suggests that this is disadvantageous. I agree with her.<sup>103</sup> A theory of metaphor ought to describe the mechanisms that delineate it from other uses of language—whether this explanation be couched within philosophical or psychological terms will largely depend on the author’s intentions. What is necessary, I think, is that any account be informed by the empirical data, and any empirical account provide a theoretical apparatus through which to couch the data.

Now, while Grice and Searle did not separate metaphor from, nor contrast it with other forms of indirect uses of speech, there have been numerous contributions that pick up where they remained silent. Metaphor has been shown to share features with, as well as depart from, other forms of figurative language such as sarcasm and irony (Camp & Hawthorne, 2008; Carston & Wearing, 2015; Garmendia, 2008; Popa-Wyatt, 2017a; Wang, Lee, Sigman, & Dapretto, 2006), simile and analogy (Barnden, 2012; Carston & Wearing, 2011; Gentner, 1982, 1983; Gentner, Bowdle, Wolff, & Boronat, 2001; Glucksberg & Haught, 2006; Glucksberg & Keysar, 1990), hyperbole (Carston &

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<sup>102</sup> I don’t think there is any specific criterion that helps a speaker identify an utterance as metaphorical in advance of actually interpreting it. Most figures of speech involve some sort of deviation from the literal to prompt the search for an alternative meaning while taking into account a host of contextual factors.

<sup>103</sup> However, contextualist and relevance theoretic notions of “loosening” in literal interpretation whereby thoughts ‘resemble’ their semantically encoded content seems just as general, and vague.

Wearing, 2015; Walton, 2017; Wilson & Carston, 2007) as well as implicature (Camp, 2003, 2006a, 2017). The issue most central to present concerns is whether metaphors are processed differently from literal speech. Despite the research RT and contextualists cite, I present more recent empirical evidence to the contrary.

Grice did not say much about metaphor. But what he did say follows entirely from his treatment of implicature. What Grice intended to do was identify the necessary pieces of information an auditor requires to compute a metaphor. This picture, though it naturally lends itself to being understood as an empirical claim, is a rational reconstruction. Theorists looking to develop an empirical model of metaphor often criticize Grice's account as psychologically implausible. Instead, they opt for a model that does not rely on serial processing, or input from the literal meaning. I argue that the serial processing model is a strawman of Grice's rational model. This is because there are a number of auxiliary assumptions one must make when extending Grice's theory to the empirical domain. I examine these auxiliary assumptions I believe to be tacitly at work. Once identified, I believe we may avoid the strawman. In what follows, I will present my ideas of a broadly Gricean account that deals with recent empirical data on metaphor processing.

Human communication often transcends the compositional computation of literal meaning. For example, in English, you may hear someone utter a sentence such as

(71) Bill is a bulldozer.

A competent speaker of English will most likely conclude that Bill is a large, aggressive, and pushy person. We refer to such inferences<sup>104</sup> that hearers make as metaphor. In “Logic and Conversation”, Grice (1975) offered a systematic study of the ways in which speakers often mean something different than or more than what their utterance literally means. Grice coined the term implicature to capture this difference.

One of the most widely recognized forms of implicature is metaphor. I may tell you that

(17) My job is a jail.

Whereby I do not intend my utterance literally: that I really work in a jail. For I could be a contract instructor at a university—yet my utterance is still informative. In this case, an auditor will recognize that I intended to implicate that my job shares certain salient properties with jails. For example, that I feel confined, that I may feel a sense of helplessness, and the displeasure with my current station is a direct result of poor decision making (that I should have taken that carpentry job).

The two examples above seem to suggest that by uttering a metaphor, a speaker does not intend their literal meaning, but something else.<sup>105</sup> Although these are now

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<sup>104</sup> Roughly, that is to say, an inference drawn by an auditor who recognizes that the speaker is using a comparison to establish commonalities between two unlike things. The comparison is commonly understood to be non-literal.

<sup>105</sup> Although there are exceptions. See Cohen (1976), and Hills (2004) and Camp (2008) who discuss ‘twice apt’ and ‘twice true’ metaphors. Briefly, a ‘twice apt’ metaphor is one whose literal and figurative meaning are relevant to the discourse context. For example, I may say “you know, Jesus was a carpenter” trying to evoke both his actual profession (and perhaps say something about hard and honest work), while also figuratively communicating that he was a renovator of souls, etc. A ‘twice true’ metaphor is one that is true on a literal reading. John Donne’s “No man is an island” is typically given as an example.

familiar ideas, Grice was one of the first theoreticians to offer an account of how speakers can achieve their communicative goals by using metaphors. His work in this area was later developed by Searle (Searle, 1993) and Martinich (1984). In Grice's terminology, metaphorical meaning is not a part of 'what is said'. Rather, it is something that the speaker intends to convey. Specifically, Grice analyzed metaphor as a category mistake. A goal of the Gricean line of research is to treat the computation of metaphor as a cooperative enterprise that rests on a set of conversational maxims. The driving force behind metaphor computation is the expectation that, despite the fact that a metaphor seems literally absurd (i.e., Bill is not really a bulldozer), a speaker uttering a metaphor intends to be informative.

The general idea is that a speaker says P, and means R. The auditor computes P, but realizes that it is contextually inappropriate, and searches for the contextually appropriate meaning. In empirical terms, theorists hold the Gricean model to the view that the processor begins with input from an utterance's literal meaning. The empirical model is often referred to as the indirect access model (Weiland, Bambini, & Schumacher, 2014).

Why are people so interested in this debate? I submit that interest is of two kinds: (i) it is a debate that gets at the heart of a very common phenomenon of language use; (ii) it raises questions of significance for the cognitive sciences, linguistics, and philosophy. For example, it raises questions about the organization of mental faculties (i.e., modularity), as well as the contribution from semantics and pragmatics. As a result, empirical data from psycholinguistics becomes important.

Since Grice's initial treatment of metaphor, there has been a lively debate concerning the empirical status of metaphor processing. One theory that is often called on in experimental literature to derive online predictions from offline theories is Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber, 1986). Many contemporary theorists working within this tradition, such as contextualists Bezuidenhout (2001), Carston (2008), Hills (2004), Recanati (2001), and their semanticist counterparts Nogales (2012), and Stern (2000) resist Grice's now classical treatment of metaphor.

Instead, they opt for treating it as what a speaker says. One important reason for abandoning the Gricean approach is the alleged body of empirical evidence against it (Gibbs, 1990; Gibbs & Tendahl, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Thibodeau & Durgin, 2008).

Empirically speaking, the common thread among these theories is the view that the processor only processes the relevant meaning. Because there is no obligatory literal stage of processing, such accounts are typically referred to as the direct access model (Weiland et al., 2014). The direct access model developed from the assumption that Grice's initial sketch of metaphor was an empirical account of the computational mechanisms involved in metaphor processing.

Grice, however—like Frege—was not interested in armchair speculations about the general psychological patterns of how we actually think (Camp, 2003). Grice only ever intended his account to be taken as a rational reconstruction that identified the necessary ingredients for an auditor to interpret a speaker's metaphor. It seems fair to say that Grice was primarily concerned with the speaker-auditor's knowledge of the grammar

and pragmatics. This is sometimes referred to as speaker-hearer's competence (e.g., Chomsky, 1965).

However, theories of competence make no predictions about how our knowledge systems are used to answer questions about, for example, the length of time it takes to compute the inference in (71) or (17), or whether such an inference is 'costly' in comparison to their literal counterparts. These questions, and other related to it, belong to the sphere of behaviour, and are sometimes referred to as a theory of performance (e.g., Chomsky, 1965).

The 'Competence Hypothesis' (Bresnan & Kaplan, 1982) relates competence systems to their realization in performance, but this requires auxiliary assumptions that are not necessarily a part of the rational theory. My reading of much of the experimental literature on metaphor suggests that Grice's competence theory has been extended to a theory of performance. I believe this move is implicitly assumed in the experimental literature that tasks itself with determining the performative aspect of a theory of metaphor. These auxiliary assumptions are precisely what are at issue in the present essay.

How we specify our processing model is undoubtedly a matter of empirical discovery. But, I submit, that doing so departs from Grice's intent. Therefore, in order to properly appraise Grice's contributions to a theory of metaphor, as well as extend it to a theory of performance, we should be aware of the auxiliary assumptions at play.

Questions that must be asked of the performance theory include whether the processor computes serially or in parallel; what information the processor has access to at different steps within computation, and the related question as to what constitutes a 'step' in

computation; and what it means for something to be costly.<sup>106</sup> Ultimately it is my hope to impress upon the reader that framing the debate between direct and indirect model (see above) is something of a false dichotomy.<sup>107</sup>

In what follows, I provide Grice's own philosophical account of metaphor (9.2.1). I then sketch the psychologized version of his argument offered by his opponents (9.2.2 and 9.2.3). I argue that this psychologized version of Grice's philosophical account makes two fundamental errors. First, it mischaracterizes Grice's account as empirical. That is to say, it extends his competence model (i.e., a model of the necessary components in metaphor interpretation) to a model of performance (i.e., a model of the actual stages of processing).

Secondly, and perhaps more boldly, I argue that the empirical understanding of Grice's theory of metaphor mistakenly identifies his account as committed to a serial processing mechanism, the result of which yields a figurative meaning. I believe it is possible to offer a renovated, but still broadly Gricean account. I provide some recent psycho- and neurolinguistic evidence to support my view (section 8.3).

### **9.2.1 Grice's account of metaphor: A brief restatement**

The starting place for Grice's theory of metaphor comes to us from his "Logic and Conversation". After establishing his Cooperative Principle, Grice proceeds to sketch out

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<sup>106</sup> This is not to say that Grice's account doesn't naturally suggest an empirical model of some sort. Rather, the point I am trying to make is that we need to be careful about how we extend Grice's rational model to a performance model. In fact, I will argue for the set of things that may be logically included in a broadly Gricean empirical model side-stepping issues found in the caricatured version.

<sup>107</sup> A parallel debate is taking place concerning the status of scalar implicatures. For a full treatment of this debate, see Chemla & Singh (2014a, 2014b).

the subordinate maxims. Grice believed that metaphor interpretation came from flouting the submaxim of Quality. He offers an example of a metaphor where the maxim of Quality is flouted. He writes:

Examples like *You are the cream in my coffee* characteristically involve categorical falsity, so the contradictory of what the speaker has made as if to say will, strictly speaking, be a truism; so it cannot be THAT that such a speaker is trying to get across. The most likely supposition is that the speaker is attributing to his audience some feature or features in respect of which the audience resembles (more or less fancifully) the mentioned substance (Grice, 1975).<sup>108</sup>

Keeping the above example in mind, I offer you the most common interpretation: A speaker has said that “you are the cream in my coffee”. The speaker, if she meant it, would commit herself to the claim that the intended referent is cream in coffee. In normal circumstances, she wouldn’t intend to be committing herself to such an absurd statement. The auditor realizes this and interprets her metaphorically instead. It is also generally understood that the particular assumption she intends her audience to employ in order to determine her metaphorical content can vary across conversational contexts, resulting in a number of possible metaphorical meanings. Here, it is argued that Grice’s model naturally lends itself to being understood in the following, empirical way:

Stage 1: Compute the literal meaning of the utterance, S.

Stage 2: Given contextual information, reject S

Stage 3: Search for a contextually appropriate meaning, R.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Italics and capitalization in original.

<sup>109</sup> This process is often criticized for being too broad a heuristic. That is to say, it doesn’t do enough to distinguish metaphorical interpretation from, say, the interpretation of a metonymic utterance. I do not deal

The number of stages are not at issue; rather the important point is that Grice's model of metaphor comprehension is treated as a tiered, serial process. Another important point to bear in mind is that the literal meaning, S, plays a role in the construction of the figurative meaning, R. Importantly, the metaphorical meaning, R, is constrained by S. Although Grice never intended his model as an empirical one it is quite tempting to understand him as making a claim about the psychological reality of metaphor processing. We should not be led into temptation.

### **9.2.2 Empirical debate over metaphorical meaning**

It is assumed that metaphorical interpretations, like other conversational inferences (i.e., scalar implicatures, conversational implicatures, etc.), involve a stage of computation at which the hearer reasons about the speaker's mental states (goals, beliefs, desires, etc.). However, there are disagreements about the precise mechanics of these inferences, about the division of labour between conventional meanings and rational inference, and about the relation between metaphor and, what the literature refers to as, conversational implicatures (i.e., that which is suggested in an utterance though not explicitly stated).

The common empirical interpretation of Grice commits the model to the following three claims: (i) that the processing of metaphor is serial, (ii) that the processor always begins from the literal meaning and proceeds to the metaphorical meaning in stages, and (iii) that the utterance's literal meaning actively facilitates metaphor comprehension. Under this view, computing the meaning of a metaphor requires an

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with this issue in this paper. However, I will say that I do not consider this a defect in Grice's theory, but a virtue. An auditor doesn't know whether a given utterance is metaphorical, metonymic, or otherwise until the meaning is calculated.

obligatory comprehension of the literal meaning. The story goes that given its serial processing, the model seems to predict that computing a metaphorical meaning ought to be more cognitively costly, relative to literal utterance computation.

Direct access theorists are committed to the idea that metaphor does not require any more processing stages than their literal counterparts. Therefore, one prediction their model makes is that it requires less cognitive expenditure than its Gricean counterpart. Instead, they argue that only the relevant meaning is computed in both literal and metaphorical utterances.<sup>110</sup>

Previous experimental evidence seemed to support the direct access model, challenging the indirect access model. One of the hallmark experiments used to demonstrate whether there are any costs are reaction time studies. Reaction time studies serve as measurements of the speed (i.e., reaction time) by which a metaphor is processed. The outcome is compared to a similar, albeit literal, sentence. By taking the difference in time to process both, we can say something about the cognitive cost associated with sentence processing across the two conditions (i.e., literal and metaphorical). If a metaphor takes longer to process than its literal counterpart, it is said to be more costly.

What is at issue is the alleged division between an indirect and direct account. Essentially, the division is marked by the role that literal meaning plays in the processing of metaphorical inference-making. According to the direct access theorists, literal

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<sup>110</sup> Between these two extremes exist a number of more nuanced positions, all of which are not entirely relevant for our present purposes.

meaning is not accessed first, nor is it obligatory in computing the meaning of a metaphor. Rather, the processor need only select the relevant one.

This idea originates in dual reference theory (Glucksberg, 2003; Glucksberg & Keysar, 1990, 1993). On the assumption that the vehicle (the source) of the metaphor has a literal and a metaphorical reference, the processor need only select the contextually appropriate meaning. In uttering “my lawyer is a bulldozer”, the metaphorical meaning is selected immediately given the context. All and only those properties relevant to the metaphorical meaning are selected (e.g., being big, and pushy). All other properties not relevant to the metaphorical meaning are suppressed (such as being yellow, or having a shovel).<sup>111</sup> This view predicts that literal and metaphorical meaning ought to be processed equally as fast.

Similarly, Relevance Theorists advance the idea that the linguistic content of any utterance is semantically underdetermined, and the underlying process of both literal and metaphoric utterance proceeds in the same fashion. In order to arrive at the speaker’s intended meaning, an auditor will pragmatically modulate the encoded meaning of

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<sup>111</sup> The theory seems to suggest that the computation of a conventional metaphor is an automated task that involves the processor simply selecting the stored metaphorical referent. However, recent studies looking at literal and fictive motion utterances have showed that processing is all but automatic. For example, Yang & Shu (2016) found that sentences about fictive motion (e.g., the highway runs through the house) elicit strong activity in the right parahippocampal gyrus. The area is also elicited in literal motion sentences (e.g., the man goes through the house). The parahippocampal gyrus is a grey matter cortical region that surrounds the hippocampus. Previous studies have found this region to be crucially involved in encoding and recognizing spatial information in humans. This finding, at least on the surface, seems to suggest that the mechanisms through which we grasp our literal, embodied, real-world motion utterances facilitate the computation of more abstract ones.

utterance. This modulation of meaning directly contributes to the utterance's explicit meaning. The outcome of these processes is an ad hoc concept.<sup>112</sup>

A more contemporary version of the Relevance Theoretic model is developed by Carston (2010) who argues for the role of literal meaning in extended and novel metaphors. She bases her claims on findings from Rubio Fernandez (2007) who demonstrated that literal meaning lingers throughout processing. Here, pace RT, Carston seems to recognize a role for literal meaning, accessible at an early stage of interpretation and which remains active throughout the metaphor's processing.<sup>113</sup>

### 9.2.3 Back to Grice

I have said that the attempt to understand Grice empirically, as involving commitments (i)-(iii), is a strawman. This is because I believe that seriously positing a serial processing model in terms of metaphoric communication to be a gross oversimplification—and one that is easily disproven—of the factors involved in processing metaphors. Moreover, this (mis)characterization is backed by the view that the alleged cognitive cost supported by the Gricean model is something that can be put to bed using RTs. It seems to be the case that there is no (significant) difference between metaphorical and literal utterances in terms of RTs. However, this is, not by itself, conclusive evidence to support the direct access model, or to make the further claim that Grice was completely wrong about

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<sup>112</sup> On this account, the ad hoc concept BULLDOZER\* is constructed whereby certain elements of the encyclopedic entry of BULLDOZER that are highly accessible in the particular context are carried over into the construction of the new concept. I follow the convention that a word in all capitals indicates a concept. It indicates an ad hoc concept when followed by an asterisk.

<sup>113</sup> I am largely sympathetic to this view, but I subsume conventional metaphors under the sort of processing she reserves for novel metaphors. See Genovesi (2018).

metaphor processing. Rather, cognitive cost can be measured in terms of the resources recruited for comprehension. In other words, it is less a matter of processing speed, and more a matter of processing volume.

In fact, there are new, more fine-tuned techniques that can assist us in probing the question of the cognitive cost(s) associated with metaphor. As I hope to show in the next section, there is ample evidence to suggest that metaphors are in fact more costly, where cognitive cost is understood as cognitive resources brought to bear on comprehension.

Because Grice was unconcerned with the empirical reality of his model<sup>114</sup>, I don't see an issue with admitting that commitments (i) serial processing and (ii) literal-first can be removed without significantly undermining his rational model. Recall that Grice was mostly concerned with identifying the 'ingredients' so to speak necessary to compute the meaning of a metaphor. In other words the only thing that Grice's model is committed to is (iii)—that the literal meaning is active in the facilitation of metaphorical meaning. Thus, a faithful, yet still broadly Gricean model need only make explicit the commitment to the role of literal meaning in the processing of a metaphor. Here is what I imagine such a model to look like instead.

### **9.3 The role of the literal**

It is not difficult to see why Grice's empirical model of metaphor is a strawman. Given what we know about the brain, such a serial processing model would seem

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<sup>114</sup> For better or worse.

hopelessly naïve.<sup>115</sup> For a long while the direct access model which claims that the input from semantics is unnecessary, had gained traction. Since people say things and implicate things by them, one may naturally take this to mean that what is implicated is figured out only after determining what is said. However, it is a mistake to suppose that what is said must be determined first (Bach, 2005; Bach & Harnish, 1979; Korta & Perry, 2006, 2011, 2015). In fact, there are numerous examples where it seems pretty clear to an auditor that the speaker doesn't mean what they are saying without explicit awareness of what the speaker said. Consider, "my lawyer is a bulldozer". A hearer doesn't have to be aware of the referent of "my lawyer" (and thus not a full grasp of what is said) in order to know what is being said about (predicated of) "my lawyer".

Bach offers another example: if you're discussing a touchy subject with someone and they say, "I should grab my laundry, clean my bathtub, and make sure that I run those errands", you could probably figure out that they were implicating that they didn't want to discuss the touchy subject before they were finished saying all of that.

A more plausible version of the Gricean model would be one concerned with the role of the literal meaning in the construction of metaphorical meaning. On this account, bottom-up syntactic and semantic processing occurs, while top-down pragmatic processes consider contextual factors/background information in parallel. It may turn out that during online comprehension, one process is selected over the other. In the case of

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<sup>115</sup> Since at least the early 1970s, cognitive psychologists and neuroscientists have widely acknowledged the brain's use of parallel processing methods (as opposed to serial, hierarchical processing). Some important works include the following: in cognitive science, see the collection by Hinton & Anderson (1989) for parallel processing of memory and knowledge systems. See LaBerge & Samuels (1974) for a parallel model regarding visual information processing in reading. In neuroscience, see Enroth-Cugell & Robson (1966) for a seminal paper discussing the parallel processing of retinal cells in cats.

metaphorical meaning, it could be the case that the literal interpretation is quickly extinguished. Literal meaning serves as a complement to the metaphorical meaning, where literal meaning undergoes contextual adjustment so rapidly that the hearer is unaware of it.<sup>116</sup>

The account predicts that metaphorical meaning, although making use of literal meaning, would become less dependent on it given the conventionality of the metaphor. As such, an auditor would become less aware of the role of literal meaning given the familiarity and conventionality of the speaker's metaphoric utterance. Although reading time paradigms could show differences between poetic metaphors and literal utterances, they are less sensitive to the cognitive differences between conventional metaphors and their literal counterparts. However, as I mentioned above, the processing time is not the only way to cash out the cognitive effort involved in metaphor processing. Rather, just what exactly accounts for the differences may centre on which cognitive resources are recruited.

Recently, more fine-grained analyses in psycholinguistics have been implemented to probe this question. It has been shown that metaphors do, in fact, exert cognitive costs relative to literal controls. Several psycholinguistic studies have significantly qualified the findings of the direct access view. For example, Cacciari & Glucksberg (1994) have

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<sup>116</sup> In fact, contextualist Robyn Carston (2010) proposed the idea of a dual-route model of metaphor comprehension to account for the fact that some metaphors do require assistance of their literal meaning in order to generate and fix the appropriate metaphorical content. I am sympathetic to this view, but believe it does not go far enough.

shown that the relative ease with which a metaphor is processed is dependent upon factors such as its familiarity, aptness, and the larger context.

Other studies have demonstrated that novel metaphors take significantly longer to process than both literal sentences and familiar metaphorical ones (Blasko & Connine, 1993). In addition, Bowdle and Gentner (2001) found that novel similes are processed significantly faster than novel metaphors, suggesting that it is not the unfamiliar juxtaposition of terms, but the literal sentence meaning itself that comes to bear on processing time. At the same time, features such as the aptness of a metaphor seems to have a significant role in processing speeds. Among unfamiliar metaphors, highly apt meanings are interpreted quickly, although not as quickly as literal meanings while less apt metaphors take significantly longer to process.

In neurolinguistics, electroencephalography and functional magnetic resonance imaging have been implemented to uncover the cognitive underpinning of metaphor processing. A compelling number of ERP studies have been conducted in various languages. For example, in English: Coulson and van Petten (2002); Lai, Curran, & Menn, (2009); De Grauwe, Swain, Holcomb, Ditman, & Kuperberg (2010). In French Pynte, Besson, Robichon, & Poli (1996). In Hebrew, Arzouan, Goldstein, & Faust (2007). In Italian Resta (2012). In German, Weiland, Bambini, & Schumacher (2014). All ERP studies have reported an enhanced N400<sup>117</sup> component for metaphors in contrast to

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<sup>117</sup> The N400 is a negative-going waveform. This is an event related potential linked to meaning comprehension. It has been identified as a stable component in metaphor research. In this context, it is typically associated with a search conducted in semantic space triggered by the processor identifying an aberrance in comprehension. Thus, the presence of an N400 is taken to reflect extra cognitive effort.

literal control conditions. Furthermore, various types of metaphors, such as literary (Resta, 2012), commonplace, both verbal (Lai et al., 2009), and nominal (Pynte et al., 1996), have also shown an enhanced N400 component.

Furthermore, experiments conducted by Pynte et al. (1996) and Lai et al. (2009) had manipulated the conventionality of the metaphors as well as the surrounding context. The data indicated a more pronounced N400 for all metaphors, where amplitudinal variations were understood as a function of the examined factors (e.g., unresponsive context increased N400 amplitude). These studies corroborate that the N400 component is linked to additional processing costs needed to comprehend a metaphor.

In addition, fMRI has been used to determine differences in regional recruitment between metaphors and literal controls. Studies conducted by Mashal, Faust, Hendler, & Jung-Beeman (2007) and Stringaris, Medford, Giampietro, Brammer, & David (2007) and Ahrens, Liu, Lee, Gong, Fang, and Hsu (2007) and found lateral differences in hemispheric activation, as well as regional differences between metaphoric and literal sentences. The first study found that there is significant involvement of the right hemisphere (Mashal, Faust, & Hendler, 2005), particularly in the posterior superior temporal sulcus (PSTS) in processing the non-salient (low apt) meanings of novel metaphors.

The PSTS has been shown to be involved with creative tasks, such as verbal problem solving, verbal creativity, and multisensory processing (Jung-Beeman et al., 2004). The second study determined that metaphoric sentences, and not literal ones,

recruit the left inferior frontal gyrus (LIFG) and the left thalamus.<sup>118</sup> This region of the brain is associated with Brodmann's area 44, 45 (together, Broca's area), and 47—our language processing network. The third study indicated that both conventional and anomalous metaphors differ from literal controls. Conventional metaphors differ with a slight amount of increased activation in the right inferior frontal temporal gyrus. Anomalous metaphors differed from literal controls by increased bilateral activation of the frontal and temporal gyri.

The activation of the RH in verbal creativity allows us to explain the comprehension of distant and multimodal semantic relationships in metaphorical comparisons. In support of this result, studies have been conducted on patients with left (LHD) and right hemisphere damage (RHD) (Rinaldi, Marangolo, & Baldassarri, 2004). In two studies, subjects listened to sentences containing metaphoric expressions and were presented with four pictures that were related either to the metaphoric or literal meaning of the sentences, or to a single word in the sentences. In a visuo-verbal task, patients were asked to point to the picture that they felt represented the meaning of the sentence. RHD patients preferred pictures related to literal meaning, but were able to explain verbally the metaphoric meaning of the sentences, suggesting that without the aid of the RH in general, and the PSTS in particular, preference for metaphorical interpretation can be overridden for LH preference of literal interpretation.

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<sup>118</sup> This study did not support the laterality thesis found in the former one.

The recruitment of the PSTS and the LIFG suggest that metaphors typically involve extra processing effort. This is likely because metaphorical language, in contrast to literal language, involves rich, imagistic, and poetic—highlighted by potent metaphors.

Finally, a study by Lacey, Stilla, Deshpande, Zhao, Stephens, McCormick, Kemmerer, and Sathian (2017) has shown that metaphors related to body-parts (e.g., ‘Jon has noodle arms’) activate body-part-specific motor, somatosensory and visual cortical regions, relative to literal and control sentences. Localizer scans identified metaphor-specific activity in the left extrastriate body area (EBA). EBA is a region for visual processing of static and moving images of the human body and its parts. It responds during perception of other people’s bodies and goal-oriented movement of the participant’s body in goal-directed activities. This seems to suggest that body metaphors require a visualizing component during the comprehension process, which lends credence to theories of metaphor that highlight their imagistic and experiential features. All of these contemporary studies significantly qualify the direct access model.

#### **9.4 Conclusion**

It seems that metaphors do exhibit a cognitive cost relative to literal controls. However, this cost is not necessarily manifested in a reaction time differences. Rather, the cost is better understood not as time of processing but as the specific neural mechanisms that are brought to bear on metaphor comprehension—and which are absent, otherwise—which is often referred to as ‘cognitive load’. The studies mentioned above seem to preserve the

intuitive idea that metaphor and literal language differ linguistically.<sup>119</sup> This difference seems to be the result of psychological and neurological nuances. The results above also indicate that the metaphorical meaning is not accessed first, or automatically. Thus, theories that argue that metaphor is interpreted as easily as comparable literal utterances are challenged. The only issue that is unresolved is that we are unable to discriminate between the number of stages involved in the computation. It seems clear that the literal meaning plays a facilitating role in the construction of metaphorical meaning even when the context biases a metaphorical reading (Fernández, 2007; Weiland et al., 2014). But this doesn't mean that we proceed from stages (1) through (3) as I outlined earlier. Rather, one plausible way to interpret these findings is that bottom-up syntactic-semantic processes and top-down, pragmatic ones happen simultaneously, where an auditor can refine the speaker's intended meaning.

The issue of the stages involved in metaphor comprehension and comparable literal utterances is an interesting empirical question, and one that requires more investigation. More philosophically, the question as to what counts as a 'stage' in the

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<sup>119</sup> This is not to accept a categorical difference between the two. I, like many theorists, believe in a continuum between the literal and figurative depending on the speaker's goal. I do see a difference in offering an assertive literal utterance, and a metaphorical one, whereby the metaphor will employ an aspect via the application of the governing characterization onto the subject characterization. Nevertheless, a chief example of capturing the continuum comes from the influential Career of Metaphor Hypothesis (Bowdle & Gentner, 2005) which presents us with a very satisfying story of how novel figurative expressions become conventionalized. It offers predictions about the cost of processing involved. As a metaphor becomes highly conventionalized (nearly or totally idiomatic) it ceases being 'figurative'. For example, we use the verb 'give' literally to mean the transfer of possession of an object to someone. However, we also use it figuratively to mean the transfer of an idea to someone. Although 'give' in the latter sense is technically a figurative use, it doesn't have any of the features of being a figurative utterance. Rather, it has become part of the conventional meaning of 'give'. As a result, we wouldn't expect there to be a difference in processing between these two uses. In my idiom, because of 'routinization', idioms (and possibly some highly familiar) metaphors no longer exploit aspectual thought.

comprehension process is an equally important one. For example, think of a G note that is produced by an orchestral company. If we wanted to know what produced the sound, it seems inappropriate to ask about the stages involved in producing the note. Rather, it seems more appropriate to identify the players involved whose instruments produced the note, and the harmony between them.

In the same way, asking what the stages are of metaphor processing may not be as appropriate as asking which regions of the brain are recruited and in harmony with one another. On this issue, Grice was definitely silent. And because he was, it would be unfair to assume that he intended one empirical model over the other. On my view, a psychologized version of the Gricean model need only commit itself to the role that literal language plays in the construction of metaphorical meaning, and does not need to commit itself to any auxiliary hypotheses about successive processing stages.

## Chapter 10: Metaphor and critical pragmatics

Briefly, my theory of metaphor maintains the following: A metaphorical utterance is one in which the speaker does not primarily intend to commit herself to “what is said”. Rather, a metaphorical utterance demands that an auditor generate the appropriate aspect<sup>120</sup> that guides them from “what is said” to speaker’s intended meaning. I draw heavily from Garmendia's (2008) *critical* approach to irony. I explain what taking a *critical* approach means in more detail below.

Theorists of metaphor all want the same thing: we want an account that can accommodate and generalize across cases without needlessly multiplying the machinery and information required to compute metaphorical content. This is the one of the primary motivations behind applying the notion of enrichment to metaphor. As I mentioned early, enrichment is considered to be the content conveyed by an utterance which comes to include all sorts of elements which are contextually implied without being part of what the utterance literally means. And this process carries one from the speaker’s utterance to the metaphorical meaning, directly.

One unfortunate consequence of the contextualists’ application of enrichment to explain metaphor comprehension is that they conflate the act of the computational process with the output of that act. What I mean is that the process of enrichment ought to be sensitive to many different layers of information that lead from ‘what is said’ to the

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<sup>120</sup> The term ‘aspect’ is employed by Camp (2008) and Reimer (2008). Although, Reimer is non-committal on what exactly she intends to mean by the term ‘aspect’. As you may recall, the term emerges from considerations of Davidson’s (1978) comments on metaphor. Specifically from his Wittgensteinian insights regarding the distinction between ‘seeing-that’ and ‘seeing-as’.

speaker's meaning. By glossing over this, these theorists are compelled to cram many important steps together to give as output a singular proposition. This is what I have referred to elsewhere in this work as the dogma of mono-propositionalism. Recall that mono-propositional accounts assume that all the information conveyed by an utterance is part of its interpretation.<sup>121</sup> That is to say, such accounts tend to collapse the breadth of content available to and exploited by an auditor into a single output. As a result, theories led by this assumption often miss the nuances of communication, more generally. As Korta and Perry (Korta & Perry, 2011a) suggest, we may liberate ourselves from this dogma if we view the role of contents/propositions as classificatory and not constitutive of an utterance.

I sketch a theory of metaphor that builds on pluri-propositionalism based on Perry's (2012a) "Reference and Reflexivity" and Korta and Perry's (Korta, 2013; Korta & Perry, 2006, 2007a, 2011b) "Critical Pragmatics", and extended by Garmedia for the purpose of ironic utterances (e.g., "He is a fine friend", said about someone who the speaker believes to be a terrible). This account is a renovation of the classical Gricean paradigm.

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<sup>121</sup> The term mono-propositionalism grew out of the book *Situations and Attitudes* by Barwise & Perry (1983). It was first used when discussing the "fallacy of misplaced information". This error in reasoning holds that all the information conveyed by an utterance is contained in one interpretation.

## 10.1 Metaphor and ‘making as if to say’

Grice reserved the term ‘making as if to say’ in order to deal with the problem of figurative speech where a speaker doesn’t ‘say’ the literal content of their utterance but implicates something else instead. For example, Grice said that in uttering a metaphor, a speaker typically doesn’t mean the literal content<sup>122</sup>, but something *else*. If what a speaker communicates is the sum of what they say and what they implicate, then figurative utterances present a problem. The reason why becomes obvious when we consider that speakers are committed to the contents of what they said.

That is to say, if speakers ‘say’ the contents of their literal meanings, then they are committed to these contents. However, in the case of metaphorical utterance (e.g., 55), this would commit a speaker to a patently false belief (in a case where a hearer can take it as evident that the speaker does not believe the absurd proposition). For example, a speaker who utters (55) metaphorically intends to communicate something like (55’), and not (55’). Metaphor (and figurative language more generally), as Grice noticed, possess an issue for speaker’s commitment to content. In order to avoid the commitment issue, and offer a way for speakers to assert metaphorical utterances, Grice appealed to the notion of ‘making as if to say’ whereby he concluded it was possible to implicate something without ‘saying’ anything.<sup>123</sup> Rather, a speaker ‘makes as if to say’ the literal

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<sup>122</sup> Although, as we have seen, there are exceptions to this (e.g., twice-true and twice-apt metaphors).

<sup>123</sup> I believe a speaker can assert something without saying it, and say something without asserting it. For a detailed discussion on this issue, see Bezuidenhout (2001); Camp (2006b); Cappelen & Lepore (2005).

meaning, and this ‘making as if to say’ prompts the audience to search for a metaphorical meaning.

According to Grice, metaphorical meaning is generated by flouting a conversational maxim.<sup>124</sup> An important question remains: How exactly can a speaker flout a maxim if they merely ‘make as if to say’ something, and therefore, don’t say anything at all?<sup>125</sup> A related issue is how a speaker, not saying anything, can suggest or insinuate something. Grice himself doesn’t offer any solutions to this issue. I attempt to sketch a solution to this problem in the following section.

### **10.1.1 Ways a communicative act can succeed**

My plan in this section is twofold. First, I identify a few ways a communicative act can succeed according to a broadly Gricean, auditor-directed intentional account of communication. Although only one of these acts will be our focus, I present a list if only to alert the reader to this unusually broad point of view, bracketing those that are not pertinent to our present purpose. Along the way, I hope to show that Grice’s notion of ‘making as if to say’ can be viewed as a non-problematic form of communication where a speaker hedges their metaphorical assertion, *x*, with the intent of convey its content, *P*.

One of Grice’s main distinctions in his analysis is between ‘what is said’ and ‘what is implicated’. However, as we have seen, Grice also remarked that there are

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<sup>124</sup> Metaphors are thought to arise primarily from flouting the maxim of quality, but they can also arise from violations of the maxim of manner.

<sup>125</sup> A Gricean could respond to the question by amending the maxims to include ‘making as if to say’ part of the formulation. However, just exactly which ones need to be amended according to the trope employed, and how this is fleshed out is unclear.

implicatures in cases where a speaker says nothing, but ‘makes as if to say’. Metaphor and irony are cases in point. On this account of ‘making as if to say’ a speaker does not commit themselves to expressing the truth of the locutionary content (i.e., the content determined by the contribution of the words used and facts that determine reference). Presumably, in uttering a metaphor, a speaker expects the auditor to understand that she is not committed to expressing the trivially-true content of her literal utterance, and accommodate her figurative use of the metaphor. Yet, the locutionary content does play a role in the understanding of the speaker’s intended meaning.

On my account, metaphor is a form of deliberate and overt suggestion. Nuances aside, a speaker has ‘said’ their content when she is committed to the truth of the locutionary content. A speaker is committed to such content of an utterance if they take responsibility for believing in the truth of that content. However, in genuinely asserting<sup>126</sup> a metaphor a speaker conveys their commitment to some metaphorically-intended meaning by ‘locuting’ the literal content (Korta & Perry, 2007a, 2011)—with illocutionary force, and perhaps hoping to produce perlocutionary effects in the auditor. If requested or challenged by an auditor, the speaker can expand/refine/sharpen (and sometimes cancel) their metaphorical meaning. The difference between a standard implicature and metaphor is that a speaker typically lacks commitment to the locutionary

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<sup>126</sup> I will sharpen my definition of ‘assertion’ in the following section.

(here, literal) content of their metaphorical utterance. The literal utterance prompts the auditor to generate the intended metaphorical content.<sup>127</sup>

I now want to delineate precisely how I understand the speaker's illocutionary act of asserting a metaphor in relation to Grice's 'making as if to say'.

'Making as if to say' revolves around broader considerations of coordinating expectations about communicative plans. First, asserting a metaphor in a discourse context requires some level of accommodation<sup>128</sup> between interlocutors. When everything goes right, the auditor identifies the utterance as a metaphor and an assertion (Bergmann, 1979). The speaker 'influences' the auditor to further mental states and actions. The notion of 'influence' comes from Harris (forthcoming), and is part of a species of communicative acts. The communicative acts I have in mind are those that one performs by producing an utterance with the communicative intention of getting the auditor to *accept* some proposition. I follow Stalnaker (1984, pp. 79–84) in understanding 'acceptance' to mean a family of propositional attitudes that include paradigm attitudes such as belief, but also various more provisional belief-like attitudes that don't entail belief.

Assertion, as Grice thinks of it, has the more precise aim of producing belief. Stalnaker, however, acknowledges a parallel consideration by saying that assertion, as he defines it, is a broader notion than the one that is often discussed by philosophers.

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<sup>127</sup> Although my examples of metaphor focus on a specific subset of metaphorical expressions (i.e., noun-noun predicative metaphors, but I suggest a parallel strategy for various other types as well).

<sup>128</sup> Note that this accommodation is merely optional. Speakers may feel that an interlocutor, insisting on a strict interpretation of their words is being silly or over scrupulous. At the same time, speakers cannot deny that such an interpretation *is* a consequence of their locutionary content.

Following Harris (forthcoming), we can refer to the genus of communicative act ‘assertion\*’ where we can focus on acts of intending to produce acceptance rather than intending to produce belief. Suppose we have a speaker *S* addressing some utterance *x*, to an auditor *A*, thereby asserting\* *P*. Harris lists seven ways in which assertion\* can succeed, along with their corresponding success conditions:<sup>129</sup>

(S<sub>1</sub>) PERFORMANCE

*S* utters *x* intending: (i) for *A* to accept *P*; and (ii) for *A* to believe that *S* uttered *x* intending for *A* to accept *P*.

(S<sub>2</sub>) UPTAKE

*A* accepts that *S* uttered *x* intending for *A* to accept *P*.

(S<sub>3</sub>) ACCEPTANCE

*A* accepts *P*.

(S<sub>4</sub>) INFLUENCE

*A* enters further mental states or takes further actions, partly as a result of accepting *P*, thus fulfilling one or more of *S*’s goals in uttering *x*.

(S<sub>5</sub>) COMMON UPTAKE

*S* and *A* commonly accept that *S* uttered *x* intending for *A* to accept *P*.

(S<sub>6</sub>) COMMON ACCEPTANCE

*S* and *A* commonly accept *P*.

(S<sub>7</sub>) ANAPHORIC LICENSING

Utterances anaphoric on *x* are felicitous

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<sup>129</sup> The list is not intended to be exhaustive.

The precise details of each communicative act of assertion\* aside, I want to focus on (S<sub>4</sub>) as the kind of communicative act that characterizes metaphorical assertions on the basis of ‘making as if to say’. In paradigm cases of literal assertion, a speaker, *S*, says that *P*, with assertoric force, so as to express the corresponding belief,  $\psi$ , thus giving *A* reason to think that *S* holds *P* to be true.<sup>130</sup>

Thus, a genuine act of assertion requires that the speaker, *S*, undertakes a commitment to defending their belief,  $\psi$ , if challenged by *A*, in virtue of having asserted that *P*.<sup>131</sup> This means that *S* is held to defending the truth-aptness of their belief that *P*. So, in a paradigm case of assertion (where speakers mean what they say, and say what they mean), an utterance expresses a belief on the part of the speaker, it has locutionary content, it counts as an act of saying something, and it will be taken a certain way by an audience.

By contrast, ‘making as if to say’ does not require such commitment to the locuted content. On this understanding, a speaker ‘makes as if to say’ the locutionary content, coupled with the communicative plan (S<sub>4</sub>) as the primary goal driving the utterance.

Notice, above, that success conditions are satisfied just if the auditor can satisfy some aspect of *S*’s goal in uttering *x*. Here, the relevant satisfaction condition is for *A* to infer the appropriate further content intended by *S*, by engaging in further reasoning. On

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<sup>130</sup> For example, the literal assertion “the cat is on the mat” has a corresponding mental state that can be represented by the following proposition: <THAT THE CAT IS ON THE MAT>.

<sup>131</sup> Note that the defense of a commitment does not have to be compelling.

this account, the speaker's goal is not to express commitment to the proposition conveyed by the locutionary content.

To capture this more formally, I draw a distinction between a genuine literal assertion (a conflation between  $S_5$  and  $S_6$  where  $S_5 \equiv S_2$  and  $S_6 \equiv S_3$ ) and the kind of communicative act I have in mind. When everything goes right in a basic assertive act:

(S<sub>1-3</sub>)  $S$  utters  $x$ , intending: (i) for  $A$  to accept  $P$ ; and (ii) for  $A$  to believe that  $S$  uttered  $x$  intending for  $A$  to accept  $P$ .  $S$  expresses a *genuine commitment* to  $x$ 's corresponding mental content,  $\psi$ , (e.g.,  $S$ 's belief that  $\psi$ ).  $S$  intends  $A$  to recognize  $S$ 's utterance as a commitment to  $P$  (which involves  $H$ 's recognition of  $S$ 's corresponding mental state,  $\psi$ ).  $A$  accepts that  $S$  uttered  $x$  intending for  $A$  to accept  $P$ .  $A$  accepts  $P$ .

(S<sub>4</sub>)  $S$ 's utterance of  $x$  conveys some mental content,  $\psi$ :  $S$  asserts  $x$  intending for  $A$  to accept  $P$ 's locutionary content provisionally.  $S$ 's asserting  $x$ , influences  $A$  to enter further mental states or to take further actions, partly as a result of accepting  $P$ , in order to fulfill one or more of  $S$ 's goals in uttering  $x$ : such as reasoning about  $S$ 's intended mental state,  $\psi$  via  $S$ 's utterance  $x$

Above, (S<sub>1-3</sub>) expresses the stronger attitude: *one's belief that P*. This contrasts with the weaker formulation in (S<sub>4</sub>) where the speaker locutes *that P* in order to get  $A$  to provisionally accept it.<sup>132</sup> Literal assertion includes endorsement of the locuted content,

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<sup>132</sup> We may understand this as something akin to *simulation*. For discussion and examples, see Cosmides & Tooby (2000); Leslie (1987); Recanati (forthcoming).

while ‘making as if to say’ as I understand it, does not. Rather, a speaker ‘makes as if to say’ their locuted content thereby licensing *A* to engage in further reasoning.

I now want to provide an outline of Korta and Perry’s (2011) Critical Pragmatic theory so that I may demonstrate how their account informs our discussion of metaphor.

When a speaker utters a sentence, there are a variety of contents that reflect the conditions under which the utterance would be true. Within these contents, we distinguish (a) the minimal reflexive content (**P<sub>MIN</sub>**); (b) a variety of reflexive (or, hybrid) contents; (**P<sub>X</sub>**); (c) the locutionary content—or, as I have seen it more often described, the official content (**P<sub>R</sub>**). Roughly, (a) refers to contents or truth conditions that are relative to it. Content at this level is utterance-bound. One grasps the reflexive truth conditions by being *linguistically* competent. This is content that includes the conventional meaning of the sentence uttered, prior to any other pragmatic information that contributes to resolve reference resolution. Given consideration of various contextual factors, an utterance has various reflexive contents that develop incrementally. The locutionary content is the fully incremental content—what obtains after disambiguation and assignment of value to context-sensitive expressions.<sup>133</sup>

For example, suppose Jane and John are in line at a grocery store. They do not know one another. Jane, noticing John putting his green apples to the side, turns to John and says

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<sup>133</sup> I use the notation adapted from Perry (2012a, p. 33) in my treatment of conversations. Bold face tells us which things are the subject matter (named or described). Boldface plus italics indicates the identifying conditions that are subject matter, but not the objects they designate.

(72) I love green apples.

The proposition expressed, or the official content is

(72) a. That **Jane** loves green apples.

However, John doesn't have access to the information in (72a) at the time of the utterance, because at the time, John's back is turned to Jane. He does have access to reflexive content, given his knowledge of English and no other contextual information besides the fact that (72) has been uttered. This can be captured by the proposition:

(72) b. That *the speaker of (72)* loves green apples.

(72b) is reflexive for it has (72), the utterance itself as a constituent. It is therefore a singular proposition having an utterance as a constituent. This is not what Jane said in uttering (72). However, it plays a role in Jane's communicative plan—getting John to offer her the apples. Given that John comprehends (72b), and before turning around to view the speaker, he can comprehend that the speaker of (72) is the person standing in front of him. Therefore, he can grasp the following:

(72) c. That *the person in front of me* loves green apples.

Again, this is not what is expressed by (72). It is nevertheless the crucial content that John must grasp for Jane's plan to succeed. That is to say, this content helps John to be in a position to offer the person in front of him the green apples he was going to put back. It is this content that accounts for the motivating belief and cognitive impact of (72). It is

the content that allows John to compute the implicature that Jane would like John's green apples.

As we have seen, Jane utters a sentence with numerous contents, and expresses beliefs, desires, and intentions which all represent her communicative plan. Among these, there is the motivating belief (**MB**)—it is the belief that prompts the utterance. In paradigmatic cases, the referential content of the motivating belief will be the same as the locutionary content. If, for instance we subtract the implicature generated by Jane's utterance (supposing she simply wanted to assert her love of green apples), then we may represent both contents by the same proposition:

(**MB72**): That **Jane** loves green apples.

(**PR72**): That **Jane** loves green apples.

## 10.2 The critical pragmatics of metaphor

As described above, the speaker's motivating belief prompts a communicative utterance, and in normal circumstances, triggers a communicative exchange. However, in metaphors, such as (55), the referential content of the motivating belief does not match the locutionary content of (55).

Let's take a look at how this framework allows us to keep track of the variegated content at play in a metaphorical utterance. In the simplest case, a speaker utters *a* is (an) *F* intending for the auditor to cultivate the appropriate prominent and central features associated with our characterization 'of being *F*' and matching features  $F_i$  and  $a_i$  characterizations with the goal of structuring *a* so that it resembles *F* as much as possible.

The auditor is able to adopt the relevant way to think of *a* and can identify those prominent features shared between *a* and *F*. We shall call the feature set of mappings from *F* to *a* the ‘associated commonplace content’ (ACC). I shall use (55) as an example (see **Table 1**).

Motivating belief: That **Bill** is a ‘bulldozer’<sup>134</sup>

Reflexive content(s): That the person designated by the name ‘Bill’ is a bulldozer.  
Bulldozer<sub>def.lit</sub>: ‘Bill’ is a large tracker equipped with tread and a blade, equipped for moving large quantities of earth, etc.

Locutionary content: That **Bill** is a bulldozer<sub>def.lit</sub>

As-if content: That **Bill** is a bulldozer<sub>def.lit</sub>

ACC contents:

- +Bulldozers are large
- +Bulldozers move slowly
- +Bulldozers push a lot of weight
- +Bulldozers are loud
- +Bulldozers are boxy
- +Bill is large
- +Bill moves slowly
- +Bill has a lot of clout in the department
- +Bill is loud
- +Bill has a square build

Metaphorical content: That **Bill** is aggressive pushy

Implicature(s):

- +>Don’t get in Bill’s way today
- +>Bill is relentless during departmental meetings
- +>Bill is not tactful
- +>Bill is not graceful

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<sup>134</sup> Following the work on conceptual metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), it seems quite plausible that a belief can take the form of a conceptual metaphor, which I capture by adding the ‘x’ around the predicate. By doing so, I do not intend to suggest that the metaphor is limited to the predicate. I take the entire structure to participate in the metaphor (see my view of characterization matching, section 5.3). By representing the ‘motivating belief’ as the metaphor, we observe the claim made in section 5.3.2 that metaphorical content is often largely indeterminate. Representing the ‘motivating belief’ as the original utterance reflects the openendedness of the speaker’s thoughts in a way that offering a list of the literal content would not.

**Table 1.** A list of the content involved in metaphorical communication.

<b>Level of Content:</b>	<b>Source Characterization</b>	<b>Target Characterization</b>
<b>Motivating belief</b>	is a ‘bulldozer’	<b>Bill</b>
<b>Reflexive</b>	“bulldozer” def <sub>lit</sub> : a large tracker with tread and blade, equipped for moving large quantities of earth, etc.	<i>the person designated by the name ‘Bill’</i>
<b>Locutionary</b>	Bulldozer	<b>Bill/The individual designated by the name “Bill”</b>
<b>As-if</b>	Bulldozer	<b>Bill/The individual designated by the name “Bill”</b>
<b>ACC</b>	+Bulldozers are large +Bulldozers move slowly +Bulldozers push a lot of weight +Bulldozers are loud +Bulldozers are boxy	+Bill is large +Bill moves slowly +Bill has a lot of clout in the department +Bill is loud +Bill has a square build
<b>Metaphorical content Implicature(s)</b>	is aggressive and pushy +>Don’t get in Bill’s way today +>Bill is relentless during departmental meetings +>Bill is not tactful +>Bill is not graceful	That <b>Bill</b>

By uttering a metaphor, a speaker does not *necessarily* commit themselves to the locutionary content. In (55), the speaker certainly doesn’t believe, nor intend to be taken as believing *that* ‘Bill is a bulldozer’. In the case of twice-true metaphors (e.g., 56), a speaker may only be weakly committed to the literal content. Because the locutionary content is so trivial (and already an established part of the common ground) it is most likely not what the speaker intends to commit themselves to. For if it were, and the auditor believed that this is what the speaker intended, there would be no metaphor!

One of the upshots of considering the pluri-propositional approach in relation to metaphor is the way we may speak to the generation of implicatures before calculating “what is said” (i.e., the locutionary content). A Gricean account is unable to accommodate this fact. For example, on a pluri-propositional view, the auditor need not be aware of the referent of ‘Bill’, yet, she may still generate the appropriate metaphorical content. This is because the reflexive content may give way to the ACC content. We have no trouble deploying our common, stereotypical notions of bulldozers to people, in general.

Another benefit of adapting the pluri-propositional account to a theory of metaphorical meaning is the way it preserves the intuition that metaphors often communicate various contents. The pluri-propositional approach allows us to make sense of the content that contributes to the speaker’s meaning. It can also give us an idea of what information is suppressed in comprehension. Such an account attests to the unique ways we employ metaphor. Nogales’ approach does not account for the variegated metaphorical content associated with a single utterance. It may be the case that an auditor entertains multiple relevant metaphorical contents or she could stop computing when she reaches one or only a few of the intended contents. Such processing will depend largely on what the auditor looks to take from the utterance and the constraints in the current conversational context.

### 10.3 On the distinctness of ACC content

What distinguishes metaphor from other non-literal and indirect utterances is that a speaker intends for their auditor to determine the content of the primary communicative commitment by deploying the aspect *F* to identify the metaphorical matches within the subject characterization. On these grounds, metaphor is different from literal utterances in which a speaker also intends the auditor to cultivate an aspect. In speaking metaphorically, the primary communicative commitment is uncovered via the cultivation of the aspect through which the subject characterization is understood. That is to say, generally, in speaking metaphorically, a speaker does not intend to commit themselves to the semantic content; whereas this is the case in a literal utterance.<sup>135</sup>

On this understanding, I align my view with Black (1955), Ricoeur (1977), and Camp (2003), in that I promote a brand of ‘interactionism’. Recall (chapter 5) that ‘interactionism’ promotes the idea that the meaning of a metaphor depends on the ‘interaction’ between the ‘source’ and ‘target’. I refined this account, taking lead from Camp (2003, 2006a, 2008), by treating the cultivation of an aspect as dependent upon the interaction between the governing characterization and the subject characterization. However, I go further than Black and Ricoeur in arguing that matches aren’t simply made between the two subjects—pushing certain features to the fore, while certain others are omitted. Additionally, the matching process alters the role of certain features of the

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<sup>135</sup> However, there may be exceptions to this. See Camp (2003, p. 228)

subject characterization that “are merely similar in some respects to features of the governing characterization” (Camp, 2003, p. 240).

Of course, there is an objection that can be raised against my account. A major problem for my ACC account is that ordinary, conventional metaphors don’t work in the way I am suggesting. One may object that in many conversational metaphors, such as (55) above, we don’t have to cultivate an aspect, or entertain the way the governing characterization interacts with the subject characterization. The relevant resulting metaphoric features have already been established via routinization. However, there are at least two reasons for rejecting this argument.

First, even if the metaphorical meaning that the speaker is committed to is itself a routine interpretation, the speaker “still intends to *suggest* at least some of the features and especially the attitudes that would be delivered by actively applying the aspect” (Camp, 2003, p. 235). This makes the cultivation of the aspect something indispensable to the meaning of the metaphor.

Secondly, routine conversational metaphors that use the same governing characterization can be used to convey different contents and non-propositional depending on the speaker’s intentions, the context of utterance, and the subject under discussion. For example, ‘is a bulldozer’ can be used metaphorically to characterize someone as slow, uncoordinated, loud, heavy, abrasive, large, or some combination of these features. What these features share is that they feature prominently in our characterization of bulldozers. What features are applied to our subject under discussion will depend on which will be appropriate in the current conversational context.

In speaking metaphorically, a speaker intends to convey, more or less determinate

contents. The auditor understands the hearer to the extent that they understand what the speaker is committed to in their utterance. However, unlike the majority of genuine implicatures, speakers don't simply insinuate or suggest what they mean. Rather, they "openly and obviously" commit themselves to certain propositional contents—contents that are distinct from 'what is said' (Camp, 2003, p. 270). Importantly, I disagree with Grice and Searle that metaphor is merely implicature. Metaphorical meaning can serve as the springboard to implicatures, and audiences can adopt or reject the metaphorically intended meaning. That is to say, a speaker can use the locutionary content and information from the context to establish the appropriate ACC to derive the metaphorical content, and move on to the further implicatures.

The speaker is not committed to the locutionary content: an auditor who understands the speaker's intentions is aware that the speaker 'makes as if to say' the locutionary content. By doing so, the auditor recognizes that the speaker intends to communicate the metaphorical content (and perhaps further implicatures). As I've noted sometimes, the metaphorical content can be inferred by departing from the reflexive content. That is to say, what the speaker identifies as the 'making as if to say' need not be identical to the locutionary content.<sup>136</sup>

#### **10.4 Conclusion: Ending where we began**

I have attempted to develop a philosophical view of metaphorical meaning and communication that respects numerous voices in this very old, and ongoing discussion. I

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<sup>136</sup> I believe this point is important not simply for metaphor, but allows us to make sense of other figurative tropes. To see how this applies to irony, see Garmendia (2011).

have argued that metaphorical meaning is a pragmatic phenomenon through and through, and distinct in its own right. However, the opportunity to explore figurative language was not always available. The philosophical view of metaphor is best captured by Davidson's non-cognitivism that dismisses the uniqueness of metaphor outright. This analytic suspicion comes to us from an ancient source. George Berkeley described language as the 'mist and veil of words'. This theme is found even further back in the history of philosophy. Confucius held that when we get our words wrong, there is no limit to what else fails with them. For this reason, he pessimistically insisted that everything was at stake: the very utility of using words to express ideas and acquiring knowledge is called into question.

This pessimism has led to one of the greatest accomplishments of analytic philosophy. This outlook inspired numerous linguists and philosophers to construct an ideal language, one that is logically transparent. The rigour employed by analytic philosophers to apply a rational method to represent thought and the formal movement between them culminated in the development of modern mathematical logic.

The pursuit of the ideal language, stripped away of its essentially human qualities, is captured by Frege's insistence that philosophy is concerned with human psychology only insofar as it helps to determine the laws of pure reason—laws which determine how we ought to think. Following Frege, the picture of the philosophy of language we get at the turn of the twentieth century is one that rejects how we actually think, and the language we use that is inherently ambiguous and difficult to capture in a formal way. Because of these assumptions, many philosophers have tended to downplay the role of

figurative speech. The philosophical neglect of figurative speech brings to mind the riddle: Until I'm measured I am not known, yet how you miss me when I have flown.

The pioneering work in ordinary language by Austin and Grice significantly challenged these beliefs. In particular, Grice has been influential in thinking about language use as a rational enterprise. And he provided a new wave of philosophers with a philosophically rigorous framework for pragmatics. In so doing, he enriched and expanded our understanding of the philosophy of language.

Taking Grice as their point of departure, many recent philosophers and linguists have become inspired to pay more attention to the figurative features of our language. In particular, philosophers such as Grassi, Richards, Black, Searle, Stern, and Carston have all offered compelling accounts. Yet, there are still a great number of theorists outside of 'metaphor studies' that haven't paid any sustained attention to their work.

Our historically tumultuous relationship with metaphor is best captured by Aristotle's *Poetic* and *Rhetoric*: For a philosopher who condemned all metaphor as obscure—and one who is extraordinarily liberal with his implicit and explicit use of comparisons—it is curious thing that he remarks: 'The greatest thing by far, is to have a command of metaphor...this alone cannot be imparted to another: it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblance'. It is unclear how seriously he intended his audience to take this statement.

Throughout the last ten chapters, my implicit objective was to show that neglecting metaphor was a spectacular failure of analytic philosophy, and that the study of metaphor is worthy of philosophical attention. As Henry James once observed: 'All life therefore comes back to the question of speech, the medium through which we

communicate with each other: for all life comes back to the question of our relations with one another'. Metaphor plays a vital role in our communicative exchanges, and for that reason, it is only a matter of time before our interest in metaphor and other figures is renewed.

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