Figuration of the Folk:
The Nature and Use of a Universal Linguistic Category

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy

Chapel Hill
2010

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Abstract:

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(Under the direction of Dr. William Lycan)

If Sally knows Sid to be a hard worker, she might make the point by asserting, "Sid is a hard worker." Or she might say, "Sid is a Sherman tank." We all recognize the first as an instance of literal language and the second as an instance of figurative language, specifically, a metaphor. This distinction is common even to people remote from us in space and time. But what does this distinction amount to?

Theorists have often tried to explain the distinction in terms of different kinds of meaning or understanding. Davidson claims that metaphors simply mean what they literally mean, but they could have various distinctive effects upon us, and understanding a metaphor consists in being affected in these ways. Grice and Searle claim that literal meanings are somehow composed out of the meanings of the pronounced words, whereas metaphorical meanings are implicatures arising when it would not be rational for the speaker to mean her words literally in the context in which she uttered them. Contextualists, such as Sperber and Wilson, contend that insofar as there is a figurative/literal distinction at all, it consists in the presence of various interpretations for figurative utterances, no one of which is essential for understanding. I argue that attempts to explain the distinction between literal and figurative utterances in terms of distinctive kinds of meaning get the order of explanation backwards. Accounts of metaphorical

meaning and understanding fall out of a prior account of what it is to speak figuratively (in general), and metaphorically (in particular).

By saying, "Sid is a Sherman Tank," Sally may express her belief that Sid is one who cannot be deterred from achieving his goals. She might also amuse her audience with the thought that Sid is an armored assault vehicle. Very roughly, the account I offer holds that if she intends to do both of those things, Sally speaks figuratively. More precisely, I contend that the distinction between figurative and literal utterances can only be explained through recourse to Austin's (1962) fundamental distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. Figurative utterances involve two propositional interpretations. One's aim with one of these interpretations is essentially 'illocutionary'. One aims to make an assertion, or to ask a question, or to pronounce sentence, or to perform some other conventional or psychologically expressive act. But one's aim with the other interpretation is essentially only 'perlocutionary.' With the other interpretation, one aims to affect the psychology of one's hearer—perhaps to frighten her, or to shock her, or to cause her to be entertained. To understand a figurative utterance fully is to grasp both expressed contents, as well as a speaker's intentions in expressing these.

With my account of figurative utterances in place, I can explain the differences between metaphors and other subclasses of figurative utterances using various resources, such as those of classic rhetoric theory. My view suggests a distinctive argumentative function for figuration. Speakers unconsciously use figurative utterances to produce subtle affective reactions in their audiences. These reactions sometimes lead addressees to attribute more credence to what is actually asserted, which suggests a new explanation for a traditional claim about the pernicious effects of figurative language. My view offers a nuanced account of how we understand artistic metaphors, such as those appearing in poetry, as well as the more pedestrian metaphors appearing often in ordinary conversation. The order in which we grasp the illocuting and perlocuting contents reverses, depending on speakers' and hearers' distinctive goals in these distinct kinds of cases. My view also suggests a continuous account for certain non-verbal actions which are similar to figurative utterances.

Dedication

To my dear friends, who each make my life immeasurably richer. And especially to Amy and Audrey. For me, better friends are inconceivable.

Acknowledgements

Many, many people contributed to this document and, more generally, to my long trip through graduate school to professional philosophy—nine years, including two in the master's program at the University of Utah, to dig myself out of the hole of a wholly insignificant undergraduate philosophy program! I cannot name everyone in this short document. Indeed, many of these people such as conference questioners who alerted me to important issues with my research, remain unnamed to me. The following people, however, deserve special mention.

I have learned a lot from Jesse Prinz. After I came to UNC, I spent a semester (along with Eric Mandelbaum) carefully reading his book on concepts, *Furnishing the Mind*. Jesse met with us once a week at Café Driade to discuss his arguments and views. Since then Jesse has always read and offered insightful comments on my work, including the present document. I took a class from Dorit Bar-On my first year at UNC, but got to know her well only during the summer between my fourth and fifth years in the program, when she was tasked to give a faculty review of Anne Bezuidenhout. I joined her (for my independent research) in reading all of Professor Bezuidenhout's works. Dorit taught me a lot about Davidson, Grice, meaningfulness in language and communication, and the problems of linguistic contextualism during that summer. Since then, I have often enjoyed arguing and talking philosophy with Dorit. My thesis director, Bill Lycan, has long been a personal and intellectual inspiration to me. When I was deciding which of several graduate programs to attend for my PhD, I visited UNC. I mentioned my writing sample to Bill; it touched on his work. He hadn't read it, since he was not on the admissions committee. But he did so right then. That afternoon we spent several hours discussing that paper and other aspects of his and my work. Bill was a major factor in my decision to come to UNC. Some of my favorite memories of graduate school are of talking with Bill amongst the musty piles of books and papers in his office in the west wing of Caldwell Hall. Over the past two summers, I have had the opportunity to spend more personal time with Bill, since, ironically, his wife Mary bought a vacation home in the same small Connecticut town in which we now live. Bill remains for me a model of personal and professional grace.

Two of my academic advisors deserve special mention for their continuing support. I would not be the scholar I am today without their help, and I doubt I would be personally solvent. Joshua Knobe has been the greatest advocate any academic could hope for. Since I met him four years ago (when he was hired by UNC), Josh has read any serious work I have produced and offered insanely careful and insightful comments. I deeply owe my first three publications to his advice and encouragement. When my first run at the job market, amid an economic collapse, produced only one, undesirable job prospect, Josh arranged for a visiting faculty lecturer position for me at Yale University, where he had recently been hired. Teaching at Yale and benefitting from the resources and academics housed at this university, has been a huge benefit to my intellectual growth. I cannot thank Josh enough. I continually feel that I fail to live up to his expectations. But I consider myself lucky to have met such a daring intellectual, and to consider him my friend. Finally, amongst my academic advisors, I want to acknowledge Ram Neta. Ram is

the first true professional philosopher I ever met. The first time we spoke, I was a prospective graduate student at the University of Utah. Ram was driving across the Nevada desert to attend a Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, and I was in Kumamoto, Japan, nearing the end of my second year as a conversational English teacher. Since my Utah days, Ram has been an unwavering proponent of my research and my career. I'm certain Ram played a role in getting me into UNC, even if it was nothing more than the fact that he was willing to write a letter for me, which, as a new professor in the department, they took very seriously. (As Josh moved to Yale a year before me, so Ram moved to UNC.) Ram has read numerous of my papers, and we have collaborated on work together. With Josh, there is no one who's advice I would rather have on my work. In the past few years, Ram and I have both had children. It has been a delight for me to see our daughters play together and to experience the pleasures of fatherhood with Ram.

Numerous friends helped me develop my ideas and maintain my sanity as I made my way through graduate school. Four people deserve special mention. Eric Mandelbaum has become one of my dearest friends over the past several years. We don't always talk shop with one another (in fact, now we have so many other touchstones of our friendship that it may somewhat rarely come up when we're spending time together), but I trust Eric's academic advise as much as his personal opinions, which I hold in high esteem. Eric advised me to go for the early date in completing this dissertation, saying, "The less time you give yourself, the less time you'll spend on it." That advice in particular is much appreciated! When my daughter was seriously ill, Eric and his partner, Molly Balikov, were irreplaceable parts of our support system. I love both of them like family. Hagop

Sarkissian, my co-author, has been and remains a brother-in-arms. I am so pleased to have my first two publications with Hagop. We work well as a team, and I hope we will do so again in the future. It is a great joy of mine that, with my relocation to the northeast, I now get to see Hagop again on a regular basis. Among my friends, the present document has been influenced most through my discussions with David Ripley. His probing questions lead me to modify my positions in numerous ways. I am inclined to forgive Dave his eliminativist outlook on figurative language, since it has certainly strengthened my defense of figurative realism. Finally, I want to thank Mark Warren, the first serious philosopher I had as a friend. Through the years in Japan, Mark was my only outlet for philosophy. We read and discussed works together, and Mark helped me craft the writing sample which got me into Utah and started this whole ball rolling. I hope I was able to repay the favor in some small part when Mark himself applied to graduate school and was accepted to the University of Miami. I expect wonderful things from Mark Warren, and like all four of these men, I am proud to call him my friend.

Finally, I want to thank my family for their unwavering support through trying times. I'm not sure my parents understand why I pursued a PhD in philosophy, or even really what that consists in. Nonetheless, they have always been a source of comfort and support for me. I love them and am sorry that I live so far away from home. My daughter, Audrey, is the light in my life. She was born with a heart defect that required three corrective surgeries while she was still a baby. Those were trying times for Amy, me, and our families. But Audrey's resilience was incredible. I am glad those days are behind us and delighted to see the intelligent, beautiful girl Audrey has grown into. She owns my heart and I am looking forward to her bright future. Finally, my beloved wife and greatest

friend, Amy, deserves special acknowledgement. Her sense of humor, intellectual interest, and understanding of others make my life incalculably better. She is the most thoughtful person I know, but, thankfully, not at all saccharin. Her support for me, in particular, should earn her some national award. Without Amy, I’d probably be living in some halfway house. I don’t know why I have been blessed with such a wonderful partner on this journey. But I know there is no one with whom I would rather enjoy the trip.

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Chapter 1

The Universality of Figurative Language

The topic of this study is the universal linguistic distinction between figurative and literal language. This could be construed as a folk distinction (or a common-sense conceptual framework). Folk distinctions are familiar from the philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, cognitive science, and a variety of other fields of research, though they are a rare topic within the philosophy of language. In other fields, the notion of a folk theory has sometimes been equated with a naive, ultimately false theory. But not always. Churchland (1981) does not assume the falsity of what he considers the folk framework of propositional attitude psychology (though he argues for it). Recently, a surprisingly diverse group of cognitive scientists, psychologists, and philosophers have begun theorizing about the folk metaphysics of mind without any extended consideration of whether these ordinary perspectives are accurate or not.[1] But even when folk theories in other fields have been assumed or argued to be false, they have rarely been considered pernicious on independent grounds. In the few instances in which common-sense linguistics has been explicitly discussed, however, a central theme has been the bad consequences of folk ideas about language. Jackendoff (web), for instance, emphasizes the role folk linguistics has played in discriminatory pedagogical practices and policies. And it has been pointed out that linguistic purism is a common accompaniment to racial

[1] See, for instance, Bloom and Veres (1999), Robbins and Jack (2006), Gray, Gray and Wegner (2007), Knobe and Prinz (2008), Huebner, Bruno and Sarkissian (2010), and Arico (2010).

purism.[2] Although these examples of folk theories are instructive, we may not want to equate the ordinary linguistic distinction between the figurative and the literal with a full blown folk theory. In any case and as I will discuss, it is an entirely ordinary linguistic distinction that arises everywhere there is language.

In this work I will defend a particular account of the tacit theory people use to distinguish figurative utterances from literal utterances. What is more, I will argue that this theory tracks a real distinction amongst different kinds of utterances. And I will contend that this is an important and useful distinction to make. An understanding of the structure of figurative language will reveal similarities between verbal and non-verbal behavior. Attention to the features of figurative utterances can guard us from certain mistakes of reasoning. And there are other benefits of this investigation as well—or so I will argue.

While theories of the folk distinction between literal and figurative language are certainly rare, theories of figurative language—or metaphor, in the broad use of that term—are plentiful. In the next four chapters of this dissertation I discuss four classes of these theories. In the next chapter (chapter two) I introduce the distinction between these four classes and introduce and discuss a non-cognitivist account of figurative language. In the third chapter I argue against a common assumption of those who discuss figurative language, that paraphrases of figurative utterances are inadequate. The denial of this assumption proves the nail in the coffin of non-cognitivist views, but it will also be important to the discussion to follow. In chapter four I discuss and ultimately reject implication views of figurative language. In the fifth chapter I discuss views which identify metaphorical meanings with sentence meanings and what I will call utterance

[2] See *Linguistic Purism in the Germanic Languages*, Langer and Davies (2005).

meanings (which are not implications of sentences). Though I conclude that metaphorical meanings are utterance meanings, I argue against the reductive view of figurative language that is common to contextualist accounts of utterance meaning. In chapter six I introduce my account of figurative language, which consciously respects the folk status of figurative language. And, in the final chapter, I discuss some of the important implications and payoffs of my view. In the remainder of this chapter I will briefly survey some of the background assumption on which this dissertation is premised.

1. There is an Ordinary Concept of Figurative Language

Obviously, a key assumption of this thesis is that there exists a folk notion of figurative language. But do ordinary people really distinguish figurative utterances from literal utterances? Do they actually think of some sentences as figurative sentences? Clearly, the term "figurative utterance" does not enjoy widespread, ordinary language application. But that does not defeat the assumption. The common term for figurative language is "metaphorical language". People quite often speak of "metaphorical language", and when they do, they mean to refer to a broad category of figurative language, not the narrow category of a specific figurative trope. Ordinary Americans are not picking out a specific figurative trope when they continually argue over whether Jesus' parables are literal or metaphorical. (Clearly they are not referring merely to Jesus' comparative statements.) In a recent New York Post interview, the co-host of Bravo's *Top Chef*, Padma Lakshmi, discussing her recent pregnancy and an associated delay in filming, claimed, "My perspective has shifted, and I'm not as hungry anymore because my priorities have changed." Asked to clarify, Lakshmi made clear that she was speaking metaphorically of her professional ambition, stating, "I'm literally hungry. I'm more hungry than ever." As I write this, a debate is raging in the political blogosphere over whether certain of Nevada Senate candidate Sharron Angle's statements about a violent struggle against the United States government are metaphorical or literal. Numerous other examples of such ordinary usage are ready to hand. But these are sufficient to show that ordinary Americans distinguish between literal and figurative language, and that they use the term "metaphor" to do it.

But does this show that the distinction is a *folk* distinction? Americans are among the most highly educated people on the planet. According to the United States Department of Education, 85% of adult Americans hold a high school diploma. The literacy rate for Americans over the age of 15 is 98%. Perhaps the tendency among Americans to identify certain utterances as figurative is due not to the existence of an ordinary concept but rather to our internalization of a culturally specific, theoretical term-of-art. We can answer this objection to the folk notion assumption by considering the tendency of people far removed from us in time and space to identify as figurative certain sentences or utterances that we today would also consider figurative. For example, within the category of *metaphora*, Aristotle (in his *Poetics*) places not only figurative classifications, which would satisfy the narrow conception of metaphors, but also, as Rapp (2010) points out, examples that, "would fall under the headings of metonomy or synecdoche." Of course, Aristotle's place of prominence in Western intellectual heritage renders him a less than ideal candidate to overcome the cultural particularism objection. We should put more weight on the Chinese literary tradition. In the "Great Preface" to the *Book of Songs*, which reached its extant form by the first century C.E., a category corresponding to the folk notion of figurative language is identified. Discussing the text, Stephen Owen writes of two key terms:

> *Fu*, "exposition," is any unfigured sequence. If in the *fu* mode a speaker describes a swiftly flowing stream, that stream is taken to be present in the scene, perhaps one that the speaker of the poem must cross. *Fu* encompasses direct description, narration, and explanation of what is on the speaker's mind. *Pi*, "comparison," means that the central images of the poem are simile or metaphor; the reader anticipates figuration (46).

Writing in the 5th century, several years after the "Great Preface," Liu Hsieh in his work of literary criticism *Wen-hsin tiao-lung*, or *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, offered a tentative theory of *pi*:

> What do we really mean by *pi*? A description of things used to stand for ideas, and the use of figures of speech to intimate the nature of certain facts. Thus gold and pewter are used to stand for illustrious virtue, a jade tally signifies an outstanding man, a caterpillar means education, cicadas and grasshoppers denote howling and shouting, washing clothes symbolizes sadness of heart, and the rolling up of a mat is used as a figure for firmness or will: these illustrate the meaning of the *pi*. As to lines such as, "Your hemp robe is like snow," "The two outside horses go as if they were dancing," they all belong to the *pi* category (196).

Pi, in Liu Hsieh's use, also denotes figurative language in general, not any particular trope, as is demonstrated by inclusion under the category of both simile:

> Delicately fashioned is my lord,
> As a thing of bronze, of white metal,
> As a scepter of jade, a disc of jade (47).

And metaphor (in the narrow sense):

> My heart is not a mat;
> It cannot be folded away (71).

The references of this section reveal that people of diverse backgrounds, removed from one another in space and time, have identified the figurative as a distinct category of language from literal description. But the works of remote periods that I have referred to are scholarly texts. Why should we accept then that in remote times and places *ordinary* *people* also distinguished between figurative and literal language? Sadly, we do not have weblogs from the Han to scour for references to our distinction. But some evidence for the universality of a *folk* distinction can come from the fact that not only the scholars, but also the poets of ancient China seemed to have recognized this distinction. In one of the unattributed poems in the *Book of Songs*, which collects poems written primarily between 800 and 600 BCE, we find the following verse:

> Shu is away in the hunting-fields,
> There is no one living in our lane.
> Of course there *are* people living in our lane;
> But they are not like Shu,
> So beautiful, so good (39).

Here the poet herself identifies and explains what she means by her own figurative utterance, “there is no one living in our lane.” The idea of a person here refers metaphorically to a very beautiful and good person, and that is what there is none of in the poet’s lane.

These quotes provide good initial evidence for the claim that there exists a culturally universal folk notion of the figurative, picked out in English by the word “metaphor,” but broader than any single figurative trope. Of course, the case for this folk concept depends in part on whether an account of what the folk are tracking can be offered. It is my goal in this thesis to offer an account of the folk distinction.

2. Ordinary Concept vs. Theorist’s Concept

In the previous section I offered evidence in favor of a folk notion of the figurative that is not equivalent to any single figurative trope. Figurative tropes such as similes, metonymies, and metaphors are a rhetoricians theoretical categories. In this section I want to defend another key assumption of the present text: that the folk notion of a metaphor is not equivalent to the philosophers' and linguists' broad notion of figurative language as encompassing any utterance involving loose—or non-lexical—use of terms.

According to this theoretical specification of figurative language, utterances such as the following all involve metaphorical use (of the italicized terms):[3]

(1) The stock market *collapsed* in the 1920's.
(2) I've got to *grab* a cab.
(3) He was upset, but he wasn't *upset*.[4] (Uttered by Kato, of O.J. Simpson.)
(4) They played a game of *basketball*. (When it was a three-on-three, half-court game.)
(5) Put the noodles on *the table*. (When in the woods with only a big, flat rock nearby.)

But ordinary people do not endorse this notion of figurative language as language involving loose use, as three pieces of evidence demonstrate.

I. Intuitively, people would not generally regard the above utterances as figurative utterances. Do the interviewers at the New York Post call Padma Lakshmi out for claiming that her perspective *has shifted*? No, because, though loose, that does not fit the ordinary language conception of metaphor. Of course, sometimes one comes across people who are, in ordinary language contexts, sticklers for lexical use. These Ne'er-do-well Extremist Reactionaries for the Dictionary, or NERDs, cast a false veneer of counterexample to the non-loose-use hypothesis. But if we look closely, I suspect we will find within each NERD a starved humanities pedant yearning to breathe free. If you really listen to a NERD, you will quickly discover that even he is

[3] At least, they all do on one or another conception of semantic meaning. Griceans will maintain that 4 and 5, in particular, are not loose, that they express propositional sentence meaning that it would not be rational for a speaker to express in any salient context, and that they thus lead the hearer to infer distinct speaker meaning. I will discuss different conceptions of semantic meaning in later chapters of the dissertation.

[4] If the utterance does not express a contradiction, at least one instance of "upset" must be understood non-lexically.

not consistent in his doctrinaire tendencies. He could not be. Loose use is thoroughly ubiquitous.

II. Not only do intuitive assessments and ordinary-language case studies (such as the Padma Lakshmi example above) support the conclusion that the folk notion of figurative language is not the philosopher's notion of figurative language, experimental results from the laboratory also favor this conclusion. Researchers at the Arizona Experimental Philosophy Laboratory, for example, found that subjects, after being given an example of the figurative/literal distinction, rated utterances such as, "Einstein was an egghead," as figuratively true, and utterances such as, "George W. Bush is President of the United State," as literally true. Importantly, although it involves loose use, the utterance, "The stock market *collapsed* in the 1920's," was generally judged to be literally true, suggesting that the folk concept of the figurative involves something other than loose use.

III. Finally, we should accept that the folk linguistic notion of the metaphorical is not equivalent to the philosopher's notion of the metaphorical as linguistic loose use because the extension of the folk notion is not limited to the linguistic. A quick Google news search reveals that many ordinary uses of the construction "is a metaphor" are applied not to sentences but to images, items, and events. On the first page of a search conducted on June 22nd, 2010, a drawing of a veil, the walking of a labyrinth, and the BP oil spill are all (along with various linguistic constructions) identified as metaphors. But veils, labyrinths, and oil spills are not instances of loose use—the technical category does not apply to non-linguistic items. Thus, the ordinary notion of a metaphor is not equivalent to loose use. (Ordinary language applications of the concept "metaphor" to the non-linguistic are important. Any account of the folk concept must explain these. I will attempt to do so in the seventh chapter of this dissertation.)

The considerations of this section support the conclusion that the folk notion of a metaphor intersects but is not equivalent to the philosophers' and linguists' broad notion of figurative language as loose use. In arguing for this conclusion, I have relied on ordinary reports as to whether or not utterances are metaphorical. But are such ordinary reports to be trusted? In the next section I will explain how they are not always to be trusted, as well as the upshots of this conclusion for our present discussion.

3. Performance vs. Competence (and the Adequacy of Linguistic Theories)

On March 25th, 2010, during a House Armed Services Committee hearing on military installments on Guam, Georgia Representative Hank Johnson quizzed U.S. Navy Pacific Commander, Admiral Robert Willard, about the size of the island territory. He then explained his questions, saying, "My fear is that the whole island will become so overly populated that it will tip over and capsize." Many people took Johnson to be voicing an actual fear that the island would sink. Video of his interrogation of the Admiral became something of an internet sensation, prompting Johnson to issue a statement claiming that, "The subtle humor of this obviously metaphorical reference to a ship capsizing illustrated my concern about the impact of the planned military buildup on this small tropical island." The incident illustrates an important point: People routinely disagree about whether a particular utterance is literal or metaphorical. How then are we to proceed in our investigation of folk figuration?

The theory of figuration I intend to give is of an underlying psychological competence to recognize a distinction in communication and (derivatively) linguistic forms. Thus, I am in a similar position as Chomsky's (1965) linguist, who is using the data of linguistic performance to investigate a speaker-listener's tacit knowledge of the language. Like Chomsky's theory of generative grammar, my theory of figuration is:

> ...concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogenous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (3).

As we shall ultimately see in chapter six, my theory of figuration attributes to the speaker-listener tacit psycho-linguistic knowledge; so a speaker-listener's competence with the figurative-linguistic distinction involves more than just her knowledge of language. It also involves her competency at interpreting other language users' psychological states and motives. My theory, then, is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener who is unaffected by the factors Chomsky identifies as well as other psychological biases which impede the accurate attribution of psychological states to conspecifics.

As Chomsky writes, theorizing about such tacit knowledge requires the theorist to draw, "...a fundamental distinction between *competence* (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations)." As we shall see later on, failure to keep the performance/competence distinction in mind has been an impetus in favor of eliminativist views of metaphor. But this distinction also presents a problem for any theorist of linguistic phenomena:

> The problem for the linguist...is to determine from the data of performance the underlying system of rules that has been mastered by the speaker-hearer and that he

> puts to use in actual performance...Observed use of language or hypothesized dispositions to respond, habits, and so on, may provide evidence as to the nature of this mental reality, but surely cannot constitute the actual subject matter of linguistics (4).

If actual performance is subject to the problems discussed above, on what basis are we to determine whether or not a theory of figurative language is adequate?

Here are three suggestions drawn from Chomsky (the first and the third may be considered criteria):

I. A theory of figurative language (like a generative grammar), "is *descriptively adequate* to the extent that it correctly describes the intrinsic competence of the idealized native speaker" (24). It must, "correspond to the linguistic intuition of the native speaker...in a substantial and significant class of crucial cases" (24). Further, though this criterion of adequacy does not presuppose perfect agreement between theory and intuition, I would add that a theory is further adequate to the extent that it offers a non *ad hoc* explanation of such disagreements as may arise.

II. Even in the case of an idealized language user, "it may be necessary to guide and draw out the speaker's intuition in perhaps fairly subtle ways before we can determine what is the actual character of his knowledge of his language or of anything else" (24). In the case of figurative language, we may need to draw the language user's attention to features of context or to the speaker's psychological state, in addition to the subtle structural features that Chomsky discusses, in order to uncover his actual knowledge. As Chomsky points out, this lesson "is as old as Plato's *Meno*" (24).

III. Finally, Chomsky maintains that a linguistic theory is successful to the extent that it explains the child's acquisition of a descriptively adequate grammar from primary linguistic data. Thus, a linguistic theory "can be falsified (all to easily, in actual fact) by showing that it fails to provide a descriptively adequate grammar for primary linguistic data from some other language" (26). Applying this to a theory of figurative language, we get something like the following criterion: A theory of figurative language is adequate to the extent that it provides the resources to explain linguistic and cultural variation in metaphor use.

4. Utterance, Sentence, Proposition

It has often been noted that figurative language—and, indeed, whether a particular item is regarded as figurative or not—is context sensitive. Notoriously, confusions between the notions of "sentence," "utterance," and "proposition" arise in discussions of contextually sensitive linguistic items. Thus, let me offer a minimal gloss of how I intend to use these terms:

Utterance: An utterance is a linguistic particular produced by a "speaker" at a particular time. Utterances can be produced verbally, graphically, or according to other methods of symbolization. An utterance is associated with at least one context ("at least one" to leave open the possibility that distinct contexts may be associated with distinct conversational participants). Utterances are always intentional in at least the following sense: A speaker intends to express at least one proposition with an utterance. A hearer interprets an utterance relative to an associated context, and, because such interpretation is non-deductive and inferential, may understand an utterance to express a proposition other than that the speaker intends to express in speaking. A *primary utterance proposition* (or just a primary proposition) is a proposition which contributes to implicature calculation and is derivable from an utterance via lexical decoding, lexically mandated disambiguation and indexical saturation, composition, and primary pragmatic processes (to be discussed more fully in latter chapters).

Sentence: A sentence is a linguistic universal composed of words, which are linguistic universals individuated by their reference classes. Sentence instances are produced by speakers and are the linguistic forms of utterances. Sentences may, but need not, express propositions. For purposes of this dissertation, I will group well-formed sentences, ill-formed sentences, incomplete sentences (that is, strings of words that lack a noun or verb phrase), and other possible strings of words (including individual words themselves) under the general category of sentences. This is likely to offend many philosophers, but is a matter of convenience. Well-formed sentences will be most important to what follows.

Proposition: Whatever else they may be, for our purposes, it is enough to say that propositions are truth-evaluable and that some propositions are the contents of some thoughts, sentences, and utterances. Though we need not endorse it, the standard view, whereby propositions are functions from possible worlds to truth-values, accords with this dissertation.

5. Why Figurative Language?

The above constitutes my defense and/or statement of initial assumptions. Now let me offer a brief advertisement both of where we will go and what it will get us. The basics of my positive view are this: I contend that there exists a folk linguistic distinction between figurative and literal language, which I claim is rooted in an implicit, meta-cognitive understanding of the distinct uses to which speakers unconsciously put their utterances in conversational contexts. More precisely, I contend that the distinction between figurative and literal utterances can only be explained through recourse to Austin's (1962) fundamental distinction between illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. Figurative utterances involve two propositional contents. One's aim with one of these contents is essentially 'illocutionary'. One aims to make an assertion, or to ask a question, or to pronounce sentence, or to perform some other conventional or psychologically expressive act. But one's aim with the other content is essentially only 'perlocutionary.' With the other content, one aims to affect the psychology of one's hearer—perhaps to frighten her, or to shock her, or to cause her to be entertained.

There are a number of upshots of this view. For one thing, it suggests a distinctive argumentative function for figuration. Though they may not realize it, speakers use figurative utterances to produce subtle affective reactions in their audiences. Such reactions sometimes lead addressees to attribute more credence to what is actually asserted. This is a positive consequence from the point of view of the arguer, but it can have negative results for the hearer, and for epistemic practice in general. My view thus also offers a distinctive grounding for the claim that metaphors are pernicious. They are pernicious not because they are loose, since, as I maintain, all language is use. Figurative language is pernicious (in so far as it is pernicious) for essentially the same reason that Plato recognized when he banned poetry from the republic. Figurative language is the poison pill with the candy coating. Aside from this consequence for reasoning, my view also offers a nuanced account of how we understand artistic metaphors, such as those appearing in poetry, as well as the more pedestrian metaphors appearing often in ordinary conversation. The order in which we grasp the illocuting and perlocuting contents reverses, depending on speakers' and hearers' distinctive goals in these distinct kinds of cases. Finally, though it has its home in linguistic theory, the view is more flexible than other views of figuration, and can be modified to offer an account of figurative images and actions.

6. Three Final Remarks

In this chapter I have tried to specify my first principles and to interest my readers in the project at hand. However, three related idiosyncrasies of my style are worth mentioning, though they did not fit well in any of the previous sections. Here they are:

I. I use the terms "metaphor" and "figurative utterance" interchangeably in most of what follows. There is a brief section in chapter 6 where this is not the case, but that section will be well flagged. There are several reasons why I do this: I am interested in something broader than the rhetorician's trope of metaphor, so "figurative language," but I am interested in a folk notion of figurative language that is picked out by "metaphor"; I am commenting on a variety of theories of metaphor or figurative language, each with its own pattern of usage and (generally tacit) specification of the target subject (as between figurative language in general or metaphorical trope); each of the following chapters is based at least in part on pre-existing papers of mine, in each of these I was interested in figurative language in general, though in many I made different concessions to use.

II. I interpret all of the theories I will discuss later as theories of figurative language in general, not of the trope. Often, scholars have not been clear as to whether or not they meant to be offering a theory of the trope or a theory of figurative language in general. But even if they alluded to one topic or the other, I have treated each theory as though it were a theory of figurative language in general. This is okay because in each case there is at least an analogue of the theory that could apply to figurative language in general and I have never attacked a theory for failing to supply an account of the trope.

III. I have also treated each theory as though it was a theory of a folk notion of figurative language. And I have attacked theories for failing to adequately explain that notion, in particular, for gross failure to map the intuitive distinction between literal and figurative utterances. This is perhaps the most suspect of my “idiosyncrasies”, but I think it is warranted. First of all, I don’t recall any theorist (except for Recanati, 2004, and possibly some of the Relevance Theorists) being explicit on the point of whether or not he was intending to offer an account of the folk distinction. But almost all of the theorists appeal rather uncritically to our intuitive assessments of metaphors and metaphorical meanings. And each of the theories has the feel of a descriptive account. In any case, if my arguments against these theorists fail on this point, then I am happy for my arguments to be read as addressing analogous theories of the folk distinction. For in each case such a theory would have been available, so I should address it.

Okay then, let us begin.

Chapter 2

The Non-Cognitivist Perspective on Figurative Language

Accounts of figurative language divide into two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive groups based on how they respond to a single question: Does understanding a metaphorical utterance *metaphorically* consist in grasping a particular proposition distinct from whatever proposition is required to understand the metaphorical utterance literally? If one responds ‘no’ to this question, one is a non-cognitivist about figurative language. If one responds ‘yes,’ then one must decide between three other theories of figurative language. In that case, either one equates metaphorical meanings with sentence meanings, utterance meanings, or the implications of sentences or utterances. In this and the next chapter, I will argue in favor of an affirmative answer to the question.

Before attempting an answer, however, we should clarify some of the concepts this question invokes. There is, first of all, the notion of a *proposition*. As I discussed in the first chapter, whatever else they may be, propositions are truth-evaluable and some propositions are the contents of some thoughts, sentences, and utterances. (What I will say in this dissertation is, again, consistent with the view of propositions as functions from possible worlds to truth-values.) To *grasp a proposition* is to have it as a content of thought. If one’s understanding of an utterance *consists in* the grasping of a proposition, then, I presume, the relevant utterance causes one to have the relevant proposition as the content of thought via ordinary, psycho-linguistic processes, and one would not have understood the utterance (in the relevant way) if this were not the case. According to most views of literal communication, understanding an utterance literally consists in grasping a particular proposition (or one of a particular set of propositions). The key question, then, is whether understanding an utterance figuratively also consists in the grasping of a particular proposition, distinct from whatever proposition is required to understand that utterance (or the sentence which is its linguistic form) literally.

Grasping a proposition in thought has been identified with having a cognitive state. Then, following the usual terminology within the literature, we can call those who deny that understanding a metaphor consists in having a cognitive state with a specific propositional content distinct from that expressed by the metaphorical utterance understood literally, *non-cognitivists*. According to this specification, Donald Davidson (1978), Marga Reimer (2001), and Richard Rorty (1987), among others, are non-cognitivists. C*ognitivists*, such as Max Black (1954), Paul Grice (1989), John Searle (1979a), and Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1995), are those who claim that understanding a metaphor consists in having a cognitive state with a propositional content distinct from that expressed by the metaphorical utterance understood literally.[5]

We might further elucidate the two positions by way of an example. A cognitivist would claim that understanding the metaphor, "Jonah is Napoleon Bonaparte," consists at least in part in grasping a particular proposition distinct from that literally expressed by the utterance. Perhaps it consists in grasping the proposition that, 'Jonah is a brilliant strategist who achieves his objectives efficiently.' On the other hand, while a non-cognitivist might claim cognitive states are required in or antecedent to the process of

[5] In the case of Relevance Theorists, such as Sperber and Wilson, the metaphorical and literal interpretation of an utterance are not synchronically available. In an instance of understanding, one grasps only the metaphorical interpretation. Nonetheless, we can understand this as distinct from what would ordinarily be classed a literal interpretation, derivable from the uttered sentence in distinct contexts.

understanding a figurative utterance, she would nonetheless deny that understanding an utterance figuratively *consists in* the having of a cognitive state with a specific content distinct from that expressed by the metaphor understood literally. Instead, a non-cognitivist *might* hold that you come to understand the metaphor about Jonah when you come to “see”—in a way not equivalent to grasping some proposition—his relation to his goals as you “see” Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt.

The non-cognitivist thesis has its classic defense in what is perhaps the most-read paper on metaphor, Davidson’s “What Metaphors Mean”. Rorty elaborated the picture in, “Unfamiliar Noises: Hesse and Davidson on Metaphor”. But key arguments in favor of the view have faced serious criticism. Recently, the non-cognitivist position has been powerfully defended by Marga Reimer in “Davidson on Metaphor.” In this chapter I will respond to Reimer’s resuscitation of the key arguments in favor of non-cognitivism. I will argue, contra Reimer, that cognitivism about metaphor, the thesis that metaphorical utterances essentially express special cognitive contents, is true.

1. *Is Metaphor Non-Cognitive?*

The non-cognitivist denies that understanding a metaphor consists in grasping a cognitive content distinct from that expressed by the sentence (or utterance) understood literally. But what then can the non-cognitivist appeal to in explaining what is distinctive about understanding a figurative utterance? Or must the non-cognitivist simply equate understanding a figurative utterance figuratively with understanding a patently false literal utterance? Non-cognitivists do not equate understanding figurative utterances to understanding patently false literal utterances. Instead, they appeal to other, non-cognitive mental processes to account for the distinctively figurative understanding of language. Davidson, for instance, offers a causal/psychological account of the figurative: "A metaphor makes us *attend to* some likeness, often a novel or surprising likeness, between two or more things" (247, emphasis mine).

If for the non-cognitivist understanding figurative language does not consist in propositional psychological states or processes, in what psychological states or processes does it consist? Davidson appeals to a non-propositional state akin to the perceptual state of seeing as:

> What we notice or see is not, in general, propositional in character. Of course it *may* be, and when it is, it usually may be stated in fairly plain words. But if I show you Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit, and I say, 'It's a duck', then with luck you see it as a duck; if I say, 'It's a rabbit', 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. Seeing as is not seeing that. Metaphor makes us see one thing as another by making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight. 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 (263).

What we may safely conclude from quotes such as this is that Davidson (and other non-cognitivists) wants to characterize the essential features of non-cognitivist, metaphorical understanding non-propositionally. This does not entail that the features Davidson takes to be essential to the understanding of a metaphor are non-conceptual or purely phenomenal. Perhaps Davidson means to pick out a sense of 'seeing as'—referring perhaps only to instances of aspect perception—which arguably depends on the deployment of concepts, but still falls short of 'seeing that', construed strictly propositionally. In most of what follows I will thus construe the non-cognitivist position as a denial of propositional content to instances of metaphor understanding.[6] I will treat as non-cognitive those mental events which are non-conceptual/phenomenal as well as

[6] Though questions about the non-cognitive psychological features Nxxxxon-cognitivists take to be involved in metaphor understanding will again come up.

those which are conceptual/non-propositional. All the non-cognitivist cannot appeal to in defense of her position are psychological events involving propositional content.

None of what I have so far written entails that the non-cognitivist position on metaphor forswears propositional cognitive results. According to the non-cognitivist, metaphors may quite generally result in fully propositional beliefs. It would not serve as a disproof of the theory if even novel metaphors systematically resulted in the same belief for the great majority of people. For example, by e. e. cummings' poetic metaphor, "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls/are unbeautiful and have comfortable minds," every reader may be made to think *that the Cambridge ladies are inculcated by the status quo and not aware of the atrocities of the day*, and this would be no direct evidence of the falsity of the non-cognitivist position. The non-cognitivist point is simply that no reader *need think any particular proposition* in order to understand a metaphor. To return to the cummings' example, to be made to notice something about the Cambridge ladies is to understand the metaphor, and a similar statement is true of other metaphors. An analogy with perception may prove useful. Just as every (cognitively astute) perceiver may be made to entertain a certain propositional thought by a certain experience of a scene, every reader may be made to entertain a certain propositional thought because she is first made to notice some similarity by a certain metaphorical line of text. To the non-cognitivist, understanding of a metaphor is on par with the non-cognitive processes of perception. Whatever cognitive features these non-cognitive processes give rise to, they are not necessary for the success of the processes.

2. Arguments for Non-cognitivism

Should we accept that metaphor—and figurative language in general—does not essentially express a special cognitive content, a propositional content other than the literal content in which understanding the metaphor consists?[7] Reimer offers a particularly clear statement of the major arguments in favor of non-cognitivism, as well as several arguments against the view. In this chapter, I will introduce and discuss each of those arguments.

2.1 Dead Metaphor Arguments

Non-cognitivists and cognitivists alike have thought the case of dead metaphors helped each of their causes.[8] Reimer actually produces two different arguments in favor of non-cognitivism from the example of dead metaphors. The first is one she shares with Davidson, and is, like the paraphrase argument, presented as a modus tollens:

> If metaphors involved "second meanings," these would be the literal meanings acquired by metaphors upon their death. They are not. So, metaphors do not have second meanings (149).

The argument is valid, so Reimer need only defend each of the premises. However, her defense of each premise is unsuccessful. I will restate each and show why it fails before I move on to Reimer's second argument from dead metaphor.

To defend the first premise, Reimer envisions how an opponent of non-cognitivism might respond, "…that only the purely *cognitive* aspect of a living metaphor will emerge as the literal meaning of the dead metaphor" (149-150). This assumes that there is a non-cognitive aspect to a living metaphor, thus playing into the non-cognitivist's hands. It

[7] As follows from what has already been said, it is open to the non-cognitivist to maintain, nonetheless, that only concept users (or thinkers) can understand metaphors. A non-cognitivist might maintain that one has to grasp the literal meaning of the metaphorical sentence in order to have the experience which is the essential feature in understanding a metaphor.

[8] On the cognitivist perspective, see Moran (1989, 1996), Reimer (1996), Lycan (2000). For the non-cognitivist position, see the Reimer and Davidson currently under discussion.

posits a non-cognitive aspect of metaphor, but if those aspects are what is lost in the transition from living to dead metaphor, then the non-cognitive may claim that those non-cognitive aspects, not the cognitive element, are the essential features in which understanding a metaphor metaphorically consists. But this is not the only response available to the cognitivist. Another plausible way in which the cognitivist might resist the first premise is by developing an account of the transition from living to dead metaphor according to which a living metaphor expresses a rich disjunction of propositional content (each disjunct of which is in principle cognitively available to a hearer, perhaps only in specific, associated contexts), which is gradually winnowed down to the expression of a single proposition. Thus the relation between the special cognitive content of a live metaphor and the content of its corpse would be the whole-part relation, rather than that of identity. A cognitivist can thus maintain that understanding a metaphor consists in grasping a proposition—one of a set of available metaphor meanings—and still reject the first premise of the Davidson-Reimer argument from dead metaphor.

Of course, the cognitivist can maintain without slipping into non-cognitivism that there are non-cognitive aspects to certain metaphors, which are lost in the transition to dead metaphor. Then he can counter the Davidson-Reimer dead metaphor argument by offering a response Reimer considers on his behalf:

> …the literal meaning of the dead metaphor is indeed the 'second meaning' of the living metaphor. What distinguishes the living metaphor from the dead is that the former has *non-semantic* (perhaps imagistic) components not possessed by the latter (150).

Reimer thinks that if the cognitivist attempts this response, he will be giving up the game. She thinks that the objection implies:

> …that there is an important difference *in kind* between the literal meaning that a metaphor acquires upon its death and the "intimation" of a living metaphor (150).

For Reimer, an "intimation," though similar to a meaning, is special in that it relates to the understanding of a metaphor and not to a literal sentence, and that the "…distinction is rooted in the fact that metaphors are *not* amenable to literal paraphrase." If we impute intimation to metaphors, in the place of propositional metaphorical meanings (as so far described) we will beg the question against cognitivists who maintain that metaphors are amenable to literal paraphrase (a topic we will take up in the next chapter).[9] I will thus interpret the notion of intimation more broadly as the thing which is grasped when one understands a metaphor—that in which understanding a metaphor consists. That thing may be strictly cognitive, strictly non-cognitive, or a little of both.

Assume that, as Reimer alleges, the intimation of a live metaphor is different in kind from the literal meaning of a dead metaphor. And assume that the literal meaning of a dead metaphor is purely cognitive. Then, so far as the positions we have on the table go, the intimation of a live metaphor is either purely non-cognitive or partially non-cognitive and partially cognitive. Now the cognitivist about metaphor will obviously contend at this point that the intimation is partially cognitive and partially non-cognitive. What are lost in the transition from live to dead metaphor, the cognitivist will contend, are the non-cognitive aspects of the intimation. But all that the cognitivist, who has agreed to the first premise of the Davidson-Reimer dead metaphor argument, has agreed to is that if metaphors involved *special cognitive contents* these would be the literal meanings acquired by metaphors upon their deaths. He has not agreed to the premise that if metaphors involved *intimations* these would be the literal meanings acquired by

[9] If an intimation is meant to be purely non-cognitive, then the notion begs the question against both the literal and the figurative cognitivist.

metaphors upon their deaths. So the cognitivist can allege, contrary to the second premise of the dead-metaphor argument, that the cognitive contents metaphors acquire at their deaths are the special cognitive contents they had during life (though not the intimations) and thus avoid the argument for non-cognitivism from dead metaphor.

In fact, the cognitivist need not concede even this much. Reimer equates the idea that, "…what distinguishes the living metaphor from the dead is that the former has *non-semantic* (perhaps imagistic) components not possessed by the latter…" (150), with the idea that, "…there is an important difference *in kind* between the literal meaning that a metaphor acquires upon its death and the 'intimation' of a living metaphor" (150). But given the notion of intimation—the thing which is grasped when one understands a metaphor—that identification fails to follow. It is open to the cognitivist about metaphor to hold that there are non-semantic components present in a living metaphor that are lost in the transition to a dead metaphor and yet that these components are completely inessential in the grasping of a metaphor—that they are not a part of its intimation.

So much for the Davidson-Reimer argument from dead metaphor for NCT. What about Reimer's own, new argument from non-cognitivism? Reimer writes:

> …consider those countless metaphors *not* destined to die. Why don't *these* metaphors die? The Non-cognitivist has a response: Such metaphors do not die because they *cannot* die; and they cannot die because they are not used to communicate *anything* propositional. They are thus constitutionally incapable of dying. Thus, while some metaphors (those destined to die) might well be used to communicate something *partly* propositional, the same cannot be claimed for *all* metaphors (153).

The reasoning seems to be as follows:

> If a theory of metaphor is successful, it will be able to explain why some metaphors die whereas others keep on living. Davidson's causal theory is able to explain why some metaphors die whereas others keep living and the cognitivist is unable to explain why some metaphors die whereas others keep living. Thus, Davidson's is a successful theory of metaphor, cognitivist theories are not.

But I think the cognitivist's position is not so hopeless. The cognitivist about metaphor may imbed his explanation of why some metaphors die and others keep on living within the broad theory of convention. Perhaps dead metaphors are simply those which have a conventional use, and thus a semantic meaning, whereas living metaphors are not conventional and convey their cognitive contents pragmatically. The metaphors that die are those that enter common usage to such an extent that people begin to remember the contextualized meanings of their past uses, and they gradually attain a conventional meaning. What explains why others keep living is that fickle human linguistic-usage never allowed these to catch on.

Having responded to Reimer's arguments from dead metaphors, let's turn out attention to the simile argument for non-cogntivism.

2.2 *The Simile Argument*

This argument rests on an analogy between metaphor and another figurative trope, simile. Since we are examining the notion of figurative language in general, it thus fails to fit entirely with our preconceived categories. Nonetheless, the argument is instructive as it raises the possibility that there is not a unified concept of figurative language. Reimer states the argument as a modus ponens:

> If similes don't have "special cognitive contents," then neither do metaphors. Similes don't have "special cognitive contents," so neither do metaphors (147).

But it is also instructive to look at Davidson's intuition here:

> In general, critics do not suggest that a simile says one thing and means another— they do not suppose it means anything but what lies on the surface of the words. It may make us think deep thoughts, just as a metaphor does; how come, then, no one appeals to the "special cognitive content" of the simile? (260-61)[10]

[10] Lycan (unpublished) finds the simile argument entirely unconvincing. But I think this is because he focuses on Davidson's version of it, not Reimer's. Davidson's argument seems to rest on the way critics

Reimer spends significant space defending the first premise of the simile argument. But, since I am primarily interested in the general category of figurative language, I am happy to accept this premise. Instead I will develop objections to the second premise of the argument, *similes don't have "special cognitive contents"*.

Some arguments in favor of the conclusion that metaphors (considered here as a specific figurative trope) have special cognitive contents (which we will come to shortly) can be modified in favor of the conclusion that simile's do as well. A hearer may agree or disagree with the figurative content of a simile in a way not equivalent to agreeing or disagreeing with its literal content. Suppose we are reading a story in which context has determined that we are dealing with a character (Lucy) with a particularly sweet disposition who has just met an old friend she was very excited to see. We would find the simile, 'Lucy was like a warm furnace to her friend,' more apt than the simile, 'Lucy was like Rongbuk Glacier to her friend.' If everything is, as Davidson claims, "…like everything, and in endless ways" (254), then it is hard to see why we should find one simile more apt than the other. Both are equally meaningful, so far as their non-special, literal meanings go. A non-cognitivist about simile might try to explain aptness by appeal to properties of the experiences one is made to have by each simile. But how would one formulate such a proposal? It cannot rest on the simple idea that one simile makes one

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talk. It can thus be explained away by explaining that critics have not had much occasion to say that similes have special cognitive contents, because, unlike with metaphors, the speaker generally means what the simile says (in addition to, perhaps, other things.) Reimer's argument, however, makes a claim about the existence of special simile contents themselves, and doesn't infer the existence of these contents from critical practice. It can be true of a metaphor (as a non-cognitivist about simile contends is true of most similes) that a speaker means it both literally and figuratively. A thoroughly disappointed hunter may use the metaphor, 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' both literally and figuratively to his friend who bagged a single pheasant. So the mere fact that a speaker means what he expresses by a figurative trope cannot decide the matter of whether that kind of trope has a special cognitive content or not, though it can explain why critics have found less occasion to speak of special simile contents than those purported to exist in the case of metaphor.

have an experience and the other does not. It's no more difficult to experience Lucy as resembling a warm furnace as to experience her as resembling Rongbuk Glacier—unless one's imagination is awed by the vastness of that Himalayan ice-sheet. In that case, let the second simile be, 'Lucy was like a block of ice to her friend[11].'

Another argument for the special content of similes rests on the distinction we are inclined to draw between similes and mere comparisons. We want to say that Robert Burns' stanza, "O, my luve's like a red, red rose/That's newly sprung in June/ O, my luve is like the melody/That's sweetly played in tune," accomplishes something different than the sentence, "the 3/8ths wrench is just like the ½ inch, but smaller." Non-cognitivists may attempt to explain this difference by alleging that the former causes the hearer to have some non-cognitive experience whereas the latter does not. But they would require a plausible account of how this works, and here, I think, the cards are stacked against them. For, in the first place, it seems no easier to experience Burns' love as resembling a red, red rose than to experience a wrench that resembles the ½ inch wrench except for being smaller. And in the second place, why should having a certain experience, as of the ½ inch wrench but smaller, prove any less important or more theoretically otiose than having the experience as of Burns' love resembling a red, red rose? The wrench case seems one in which imagistic experience might prove particularly useful, as the addressee can now compare his imagistic experience to the wrenches in the tool chest to help select the appropriate one.

[11] The non-cognitivist may assert in this case that the aptness of the one simile and ineptness of the other is explained by contextually indicated features. Context has determined that Lucy would be more like a furnace in this situation. Such a strategy might explain why we find some similes better than other, obviously incongruous ones in some situations, and I have here used diametrically opposed similes which might succumb to this strategy. Nonetheless there may be other pairs of similes for which context underdetermines which of the two is apt, and yet we find one more apt than the other. To stick close to our example case, we might suppose it more apt to say Lucy was like a warm furnace for her friend than to say Lucy was like a lighter for her friend, though both give of light and warmth.

This problem is compounded by a consideration I will develop more fully as a positive argument for figurative meanings in a few sections: the possibility that there is an experiential dearth for some similes. If the non-cognitivist about simile wants to explain the difference between similes and mere comparisons by appeal to experience, then he had better hope that all similes are accompanied by experiential, psychological effects. This is plausible with "my love is like a red, red rose," or with J. D. Salinger's character, Holden Caulfield's, description of a classmate, "…as sensitive as a goddamn toilet seat," but it seems less so with those similes which incorporate lofty ideas. What sorts of experiences could allow the average reader to have the 'seeing as' the non-cognitivist requires for understanding the sentence, "living with my girlfriend is like living in a totalitarian regime," as a simile? What kind of experience will the non-cognitivist allege attends an understanding of the simile, "Claire moved through her workday like an electron in a vacuum tube?" The cognitivist about simile faces no such burdens. When asked to explain the difference between a simile and a mere comparison, she simply asserts that the former has a special cognitive content, which the latter lacks.

2.3 The Paraphrase Argument

This argument stems from the widely accepted assumption that purported paraphrases of the non-literal contents of figurative utterances are always inadequate. Reimer restates Davidson's argument (Davidson, 260-263) in the form of a modus tollens:

> If a metaphor had a "special cognitive content," then it would be possible to give literal expression to this (putative) content; it is not possible to do this; so a metaphor has no special cognitive content (145).

The argument is, as Reimer points out, deductively valid. The only defense it could require, then, is of its premises, which Reimer goes on to offer. As I mentioned, the second premise is widely accepted—in fact, it is something of a dogma of metaphor. It has been taken as an important point to be explained by all theories of figurative language. It has been of such central importance to theorizing about figurative language that the next chapter will be devoted to an independent examination of the inadequacy of figurative utterance paraphrases. Here, I will simply discuss Reimer's defense of the first premise.

Reimer begins her defense of the first premise—if a metaphor had a "special cognitive content," then it would be possible to give literal expression to this (putative) content—by considering an explicit challenge to it. The challenge, from Richard Moran, asks, "Why construe 'cognitive contents'—or 'propositions'—as *sentential*, as the sorts of things that can invariably be given literal expression" (Reimer, 145)?[12] Moran proposes that we drop the construal and accept Stalnaker's picture (1972), which identifies anything that represents the world as being a certain way (a picture, a map) as propositional. As Reimer writes, according to this proposal, "…the putative fact that a metaphor cannot be given an adequate literal paraphrase would not entail that it lacks a special (propositional) 'cognitive content'" (146).

Reimer thinks that to accept Stalnaker's conception of a proposition, as Moran recommends, threatens an important distinction. This is the (purported) distinction between what is grasped when one grasps the point of the paraphrase and what is grasped when one grasps the point of the poem's metaphorical first line. According to the Stalnaker proposal, Reimer alleges, whatever is grasped in the metaphorical instance will be identical in kind to what is grasped in the instance of the literal paraphrase. So Reimer

[12] The question is voiced by Moran in his 1996, at 257-258. Moran's response was prefigured by Bergmann in his 1982, on 233.

thinks that Stalnaker's conception of a proposition, and with it Moran's reply to the paraphrase argument, should be rejected.

I think this criticism of Moran's strategy fails. Let us assume, along with Reimer, that there is an important distinction between what one grasps when one grasps the metaphorical line and what one grasps when one grasps the literal paraphrase. (As we shall see later, I think this is not, in fact, the case—though I maintain that there is an important distinction between the literal and the figurative.) Though in accepting Stalnaker's conception of "cognitive content" or "proposition" we would be placing these two things within the same big tent, that tent can house factions. It is not as though under Stalnaker's conception there can be no differences between propositional maps and propositional sentences. The difference just is that the latter and not the former are expressible in literal language. So I do not think that by accepting Moran's strategy towards Davidson's paraphrase argument we threaten to undermine any important distinction between the figurative and the literal. We can construe both as propositional but as different propositional sorts.

The cognitivist is not threatened by the paraphrase argument because there is insufficient reason to accept its first premise. Nonetheless, the second premise, regarding the purported inadequacy of metaphor paraphrases, is an important point to consider in its own right, as I will do in the next chapter. In the remainder of this chapter I will consider arguments for cognitivism, which Reimer discusses and rejects. I will argue that each of these arguments can meet Reimer's challenges, and that these in fact constitute good reasons to accept cognitivism about figurative language.

3. *Arguments for Cognitivism*

We have now considered the three main arguments in favor of non-cognitivism, which Reimer (2001) discusses. In each case we have found some faults in the reasoning which resulted in a failure to establish non-cognitivism, the thesis that figurative language understanding consists in grasping a distinctive propositional content (a content other than that grasped in a literal understanding of the sentence or utterance). The cognitivist, however, must show us not only that arguments for non-cognitivism fail, but also that there are good arguments for cognitivism, the claim that metaphors essentially express special cognitive contents in which understanding these figurative utterances consists. I now consider some arguments which, while not individually deductively conclusive, do when taken together lend strong support to cognitivism.[13]

3.1 Understanding Metaphors

One oft cited reason for accepting cognitivism stems from the apparent capacity of a hearer to understand or misunderstand a metaphor.[14] Lycan, for example, writes that:

> …if Davidson is right, one can never misinterpret a metaphor. If in response to Romeo's utterance [of "Juliet is the sun"], some eavesdropper had chirped, "I get it!—Juliet depresses him because she's so stupid and she smells horrible," on the Causal Theory this would not have been an incorrect account of Romeo's metaphorical utterance, but only evidence that the eavesdropper's mental architecture was causally different from Romeo's and from ours (2000, 212).

The argument from understanding metaphor thus alleges that, if non-cognitivism is correct, there is no room for a notion of understanding or misunderstanding a metaphor.[15]

[13] From the discussion to follow I have omitted certain arguments for cognitivism about which I felt I had nothing new and interesting to say. These include often cited arguments such as the previously mentioned one from dead metaphors as well as less generally cited arguments such as Richard Moran's charge that experience is a poor picture for what metaphor accomplishes (1989). Good overviews of many arguments for cognitivism are available in Camp and Reimer (***,) Lycan (2000, unpublished,) and Moran (1997.)

[14] Cited in Moran (1996) on 260, Lycan (2000) on 212, and Camp and Reimer (forthcoming) on 17.

But we clearly think we understand and misunderstand metaphors. Therefore, cognitivism must be correct.

In "Davidson on Metaphor," however, Reimer offers a plausible response to arguments from understanding on behalf of the non-cognitivist. She carves out a non-cognitivist account of metaphor misunderstanding that conforms to our desire to, for example, claim Romeo's eavesdropper is wrong. Reimer admits that our tendency to say, in cases such as the eavesdropper, that hearers can misinterpret a metaphor, suggests, "…that there is something that can be understood or misunderstood" (151). But she contends that:

> …there is no reason to suppose that this "something" is the special "cognitive content" of the metaphor. For what might be understood or misunderstood is arguably the *point* of the metaphor—what the metaphor maker wants the interpreter to notice, to see (151).

So the non-cognitivist might contend that what Lycan's eavesdropper says is evidence of something more than just different mental architecture. The eavesdropper's statement—like the earnest statement from someone staring at the Pacific Ocean that there's not a drop of water in sight—might be evidence of a failure to have an appropriate non-cognitive experience, eventuating in appropriate, associated beliefs. The eavesdropper fails to see the point of the metaphor, and thus fails to form the beliefs associated with it.

The non-cognitivist can explain our capacity to misunderstand or misinterpret a metaphor. But there are other arguments for cognitivism.

3.2 Disagreeing with Metaphors

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[15] This, of course, abstracts away from the capacity for a hearer to fail to cognitively grasp the literal meaning of the metaphorical sentence, which could be a criteria for understanding a non-cognitivist condition for understanding a metaphor.

In addition to our capacity to understand or misunderstand metaphors, we can agree or disagree with metaphors. Reimer points out that Donne's metaphorical statement that, "no man is an island," was contradicted by Matthew Arnold, when he wrote that, "…in this sea of life enisled,…/We mortal millions live alone" (152). And Lycan (ms) adds that the sentiment Donne metaphorically expressed was directly (and metaphorically) rejected by Hugh Grant's character, Will, in "About a Boy," when he said, "I am bloody Ibiza!" (3) The argument for cognitivism from agreeing with metaphors thus contends that we could only agree or disagree with a metaphor if it expressed a special propositional content. We can agree or disagree with a metaphor, defenders of cognitivism allege, so a metaphor expresses a special cognitive content.

Our capacity to agree or disagree with a metaphor is a less tractable problem for non-cognitivists than was our capacity to understand or misunderstand a metaphor. First of all, notice that our disagreement with a metaphor takes the form of disputation about the truth of the metaphorical utterance.[16] Disagreeing with a speaker's metaphor is, then, an instance of epistemic criticism, and accordingly involves our cognitive capacities. When one criticizes a speaker for uttering a metaphorical statement, one criticizes the speaker for holding some belief, which one deems false. Reimer concedes this, but nonetheless disputes the first premise of the argument for cognitivism from agreeing with metaphors by contending that the truth-conditional proposition one deems false in one's rejection of a metaphorical statement is not expressed by the metaphorical statement itself—it is not the point of the metaphor. Rather it is only a proposition which it is obvious the metaphor

[16] The purported special content of the metaphor, that is, not the literal content of the sentence—for hearers often agree with metaphors that taken literally are obviously false.

speaker believes from his statement of this metaphor. Regarding Arnold's metaphorical statement, she writes:

> Arnold (in contrast to Donne) no doubt wanted to draw attention to man's alienation from his fellow man. And, in drawing attention to this state of affairs, Arnold may well have succeeded in conveying (to his audience) that he himself *believed* that we are alienated from one another. But…it would be a mistake to take this as implying that the metaphor itself—or even its author—"means" that this is so (152).

But if we accept Reimer's rejection of the first premise of this argument for cognitivism from agreeing with metaphors, then we are left with a very anomalous account of agreement and disagreement when it comes to metaphor. For one thing, a speaker may succeed in conveying that he believes any number of things by a statement. By my statement that "Alexa saw Tom steal the cantaloupe," I may convey a belief that Alexa is trustworthy. But if Alexa is not trustworthy it would nonetheless be incorrect to disagree with my statement if, in this instance, she is telling the truth. It would be incorrect because that wasn't what I meant by the statement, it was merely something implied. Why does a similar situation not apply to figurative language? If, as Reimer suggests, the point of Arnold's statement isn't that we are alienated, then why is our situation in disagreeing with his metaphor so different from every other (non-metaphorical) situation in which we disagree with someone's statement?

Additionally, if one may legitimately agree or disagree with something because of the thoughts it merely conveys, then why are agreement and disagreement not more widespread? Based on his painting, *Guernica*, one may reasonably conclude that Picasso felt that the bombing of Basque villages during the Spanish Revolution was barbaric. It seems that this is a belief Picasso successfully conveyed in that work of art. But why, then, does it ring so unnatural to say that one *agrees* with *Guernica*? Orson Welles succeeded in conveying with *Citizen Kane* his belief that money and success do not guarantee happiness, and yet no one says they agree with *Citizen Kane*, regardless of how quick many would be to assent to that sentiment. If it is acceptable to agree with something because of the ideas it merely implies, then why do we not agree with things other than metaphors which merely imply, and do not express, ideas?

The non-cognitivist challenge to the first premise of the argument from disagreement with metaphors fails. And with that premise in place, the argument goes through. The argument from agreeing with metaphors thus lends support to cognitivism and raises serious questions for the non-cognitivist. Issues close to this topic will be brought up again in 3.4. But first I will develop another family of arguments which will also benefit from the discussion to unfold there.

3.3 Gap Arguments

By discussing this family of arguments I mean to sharpen a widely noticed problem with non-cognitivism into a class of arguments for cognitivism.[17] The problem becomes apparent when we consider the cognitive exercise of argumentation. Let us assume, as we typically do, that argumentative force is conveyed cognitively. By this I mean that, for an example, when Reimer attempts to convince us of non-cognitivism with the paraphrase argument, she attempts to make us judge that *if a metaphor had a "special cognitive content," then it would be possible to give literal expression to this (putative) content*, and that *it is not possible to do this*, and she expects us to come to judge, via our acceptance of modus tollens and these premises, that *a metaphor has no special cognitive content*.

[17] Noticed, for instance, by Moran, briefly, in his 1996 (260); and by Lycan, also briefly, in his 2000 (212).

Now Reimer attempts to make us judge each of the premises of her argument to be the case through a literal use of the English language. But the argument for cognitivism from the argumentative gap points out that some argumentative texts contain no literal, but only metaphorical, linguistic resources to deliver the premises we must judge to be the case in order to reach the theorist's desired conclusion. If a particular proposition is not deployed at a particular point in the argument, the sought conclusion will not be justifiably reached. Yet, for many arguments, no literal statement of the requisite proposition is made at the appropriate place in a statement of the argument. Rather a figurative utterance alone is supplied, which, if understood literally, would provide a wildly inappropriate proposition, one which could not serve to justifiably deliver the sought conclusion. For example, a philosopher might contend that if tying one's shoes is reasonably regarded as a complex behavior, then it must be conceivably decomposable into certain sub-functions. She might then claim that it makes sense to conceive of tying one's shoes as being accomplished by a team of little men who live in one's head, not by a single little man.[18] And she might thereby conclude that tying one's shoes is decomposable into certain sub-functions. It's debatable whether the conclusion of this argument is justifiably reached. However, this would not be even debatable if the second premise of this argument were not understood figuratively. Cognitivists need make no additional assumptions in order to explain the potentially effective nature of this and other arguments that involve metaphors. They can contend that the truth-evaluable, linguistically expressible proposition in which understanding the metaphor consists is the relevant premise in this potentially effective argument. Thus, cognitivism allows for a

[18] Fodor (1968) uses this metaphor for different, though related, argumentative ends.

parsimonious explanation of how metaphors are deployed in arguments and lets us avoid gaps in argumentative reasoning.

Gap arguments do not only apply to argumentative texts. There are other gap arguments, which we can discover by noticing the special roles—in close conjunction with generally supposed cognitive elements—metaphors play in a variety of texts. Though metaphors may be used to supply important premises in arguments, they also seem to be used to convey essential ideas in other contexts. Within philosophy it would be myopic to assert that metaphors are not commonplace, though they do not always contribute directly to arguments. Regarding philosophy of mind, Elisabeth Camp, in "Metaphor and That Certain 'Je ne sais quoi,'" has already suggested an important metaphorical sense of 'the mind is a computer' (16). We may add to this Descartes' characterization of the special relation between thinking and extended substance in his Sixth Meditation as 'not like a sailor to a ship'. Ryle criticized the idea that the mind and the body were separate by calling it, "the dogma of the ghost in the machine" (18). In epistemology we have, 'the web of belief;' in metaphysics, the idea of universals as 'the one running through the many.' The practice of couching important ideas in metaphorical terms spreads beyond philosophy as well. In cognitive science, for one example, debates about modularity sometimes take the form of debates over whether 'the mind is a Swiss army knife or a filing cabinet.'

If we take our observations further afield, to literature, we see that metaphors are often mixed with non-metaphorical statements. In Cormac McCarthy's, *Blood Meridian*, for example, in the midst of a critically important scene consisting largely of non-metaphorical descriptive sentences, the following metaphorically rich dialogue occurs:

> A man's at odds to know his mind cause his mind is aught he has to know it with. He can know his heart, but he don't want to. Rightly so. Best not to look in there. It ain't the heart of a creature that is bound in the way that God has set for it. You can find meanness in the least of creatures, but when God made man the devil was at his elbow. A creature that can do anything. Make a machine. And a machine to make the machine. And evil that can run itself a thousand years, no need to tend it (19).

If we think story-telling is a cognitive exercise with a natural progression, how does metaphor break with the cognitivism while still contributing to the progression?

The problem propagates if we admit, as Lycan has urged (2000, 209),[19] that metaphors appear everywhere. If we also accept that language is primarily a cognitive exercise, we then have the argument from the conversational gap. As some sentences divide into metaphorical and literal portions, we also have the argument from the incomplete sentence.

Each gap argument derives from a linguistic exercise which is typically thought to be cognitive and to progress to some cognitive goal. It points out that metaphors seem to bridge some gap that would otherwise impede the progression to the goal. And it alleges that if we think of the exercise as cognitive generally, then the most straightforward way to explain the gap-bridging effect of some metaphors is to suppose that they have some cognitive effects. Of course, it is still open to the non-cognitivist to assert that the cognitive effects which play these important roles are merely ancillary to the point of the metaphor, which is purely non-cognitive. On the one hand, this proposal faces criticisms about its abnormality similar to those developed in 3.2. On the other, it is subject to a more general criticism, as is the non-cognitivist's proposal regarding agreeing and disagreeing with metaphors. This criticism will be developed in the next section.

3.4 Formulating Non-cognitivism and the Problem of the Experiential Dearth

[19] And Lakoff and Johnson, 1980.

Throughout this chapter I have treated the non-cognitivist position as a denial of special propositional contents to metaphors, but I have said very little about the positive account of what understanding a metaphor amounts to for a non-cognitivist. From our previous, limited discussion we know that the features involved in an instance of metaphor understanding are, for a non-cognitivist, psychological, though not propositional. I concessively suggested that the non-cognitivist might appeal not only to phenomenal/non-conceptual features to explain metaphor understanding, but also to conceptual/non-propositional features. In this section, however, I want to raise questions about the non-cognitivist's capacity, given these features, to make sense of metaphor understanding without invoking propositional content.

Both Reimer and Davidson conceive of understanding a metaphor as consisting in noticing a similarity between two things. Thus the non-cognitive account invokes the similarity relation and so involves two relata. Given that the similarity is a noticed one, each relatum and the similarity between them must be represented in the mind of the subject who understands the metaphor. So in formulating her account of metaphor understanding, the non-cognitivist must appeal to mental representations. Given the features her account of metaphor understanding admits, the non-cognitivist can cash out the noticing as involving only conceptual/non-propositional representations, only phenomenal/non-conceptual representations, or conceptual/non-propositional and phenomenal/non-conceptual representation.

Suppose that the non-cognitivist suggests that the features involved in understanding a metaphor are only conceptual/non-propositional features, and that phenomenal features are not involved at all. The non-cognitivist that denies phenomenal aspects to an account of metaphor understanding can presumably cash out the noticed similarity merely in terms of a similarity among categories. For example, such a non-cognitivist might contend that someone who understands the metaphor, ‘the sun is lucky,’ notices some resemblance between the category of things including the sun and only the sun and the category of lucky things. But if this noticing is to consist in purely conceptual/non-phenomenal psychological features, then it seems that the noticing consists in a propositional content. The representation in which the noticing consists will be complex, consisting of more than one conceptual representation. What’s more, the representation will have a truth value. (If, as Davidson suggests, everything resembles everything, the truth value of the special content in which understanding a metaphor consists for a non-cognitivist will always be true.) Given these characteristics of the mental representation which the understanding of a metaphor consists in for a non-cognitivist who wishes to eschew non-conceptual/phenomenal features, the representation will not differ at all from a propositional representation. The non-cognitivist who incorporates only conceptual/non-phenomenal features in an account of metaphor understanding would thus reject the central tenet of non-cognitivistism, that a metaphor accomplishes what it accomplishes without employing special propositional contents.

But if the non-cognitivist cannot, without invoking propositions, make sense of the noticed similarity using merely conceptual, psychological elements, then she must appeal to phenomenal/non-conceptual features. This looks like an improvement for the non-cognitivist. The thesis can now avoid propositions by suggesting that noticing a similarity consists in noticing that one concept applies to some mental image or that some mental image is like another in certain relevant respects. It is at this point that the argument for cognitivism from the experiential dearth arises. We have already briefly encountered the argument from the experiential dearth during our discussion of the simile argument for non-cognitivism (2.2). There I suggested that the distinction between an apt and inapt simile could be explained by a cognitivist, who would admit special cognitive contents for similes, and that the difficulty for a non-cognitivist to offer an explanation was compounded, if such a theorist attempted to enlist the aid of experiential features involved in grasping the metaphor, by the possibility that some similes seem to lie beyond the realm of experience. A similar criticism is available to the cognitivist in the case of figurative language in general.

With metaphors the issue can be identified in the example of the non-cognitivist's proposed explanation of our capacity to agree and disagree with metaphors. In 3.2, I raised some difficulties for that proposal, which alleges that agreement with metaphors is not agreement with special cognitive contents essentially expressed by the metaphor, but rather with cognitive contents merely implied by non-cognitive features, the having of which is the essential element of metaphor comprehension. But let us suppose that the problems I raised there can be successfully met by the non-cognitivist and that the notion of agreement with contents merely implied by the experiential point of the metaphor can be made sense of. Then the problem of the experiential dearth arises. For if our capacity to agree with a metaphor depends on our capacity to grasp certain contents implied by a partially phenomenal experience, then, for any generally accepted or disputed metaphor, if people do not generally have the requisite phenomenal experience we will be left with no explanation of how people generally agree or disagree with the metaphor. The non-cognitivist must maintain that for every metaphor with which most people can agree or disagree, most people have a phenomenal experience adequate to imply contents with which they can agree or disagree. The problem also arises in connection with gap arguments. There the non-cognitivist's claim is that for every metaphor which bears weight in some cognitive activity, people generally have a phenomenal experience adequate to imply the content which actually bears the cognitive weight. The argument from the experiential dearth alleges that what people are made to experience is not common enough or not specific enough to ensure that the particular contents which play a role in the cognitive exercise are implied.

Some metaphors are certainly related to phenomenal experiences general enough that most people have had them. Experiences with lemons and lemonade are common enough in our society that a theorist may plausibly maintain that anyone who understands the metaphor, "when life gives you lemons, make lemonade," is made to phenomenally experience life in the relevant way by the metaphor. Likewise, when someone disagrees with the metaphor, 'Western Philosophy is a footnote to Plato," by asserting that "Plato is the preface to Western Philosophy," we assume that people may be made to recall like enough experiences with footnotes and prefaces such that very similar special cognitive contents are often implied. People may be agreeing or disagreeing with something that is merely implied by the common phenomenal experience—a cognitive content that can be fairly well captured by the paraphrase that *Western Philosophy merely makes explicit the issues already brought forth in Plato's dialogues*. But with other metaphors it seems far less likely that many people could be made to have phenomenal experiences alike enough to imply the ideas which are explicitly disagreed with, which bear weight in the ways the cognitive exercises of which they are a part demand, or which they generally capture in a paraphrase.

Consider, for example, the metaphor Tolstoy uses to describe the romantic relationship of the title character and his wife, Praskovya Fyodorovna, in "The Death of Ivan Ilyich":

> All they had left were the rare periods of amorousness that came over them, but these did not last long. They were merely little islands at which the couple anchored for a while before setting out again on a sea of veiled hostility, which took the form of estrangement from one another (59).

One could, and many likely would, deny that this was an adequate description of the romantic relationship of one and one's significant other. The cognitivist maintains that the thing one would be saying is false, the thing one could paraphrase if asked, and the thing to which one takes offence in these instances is a special cognitive content. Reimer will say there is a special content too, and that this is what one says is false when one disagrees with this description of one's relationship. But she will say this content is merely implied by the point of the metaphor. To understand the metaphor, the non-cognitivist we are now considering,[20] contends that it is sufficient that one have a certain phenomenal experience, an experience, in this case, of one's physical encounters with one's partner as little islands in a sea of veiled hostility. But what could it be like to experience a sea of veiled hostility? Certainly there may be many things individuals each experience as a sea of veiled hostility. Perhaps some have an experience as of a solution of sludge-like hate bubbling beneath a thin veneer of water, while others experience the

[20] From personal correspondence, I know that Reimer is such a non-cognitivist. But the fact also comes out in her article on Davidson's view. In her statement of the paraphrase argument, for example, Reimer writes that what is missing from a paraphrase is, "…something that might be supplied by a number of images…" (147). In characterizing the difference between a living and a dead metaphor, she writes that a living metaphor, "…is associated with *imagery* of some sort—imagery that is constitutionally incapable of literal paraphrase…" (150).

audience at a Yo La Tengo concert.[21] The argument from the experiential dearth suggests that these will not all be alike enough to imply the cognitive content (or the range of cognitive contents) we take to be a false account of our love life. If these experiences are not alike enough, then we have a special content we generally agree or disagree with without an experience general enough to imply the content with which we are disagreeing.

The success of the argument from the experiential dearth rests on the formulation of cases—such as, 'writing my book was giving birth to a child' (voiced, perhaps, by a male author,) and, 'atomic representations are the rock on which the church of mental content is built'—in which a large number of people are able to agree or disagree with a figurative utterance, but it is unlikely that they are made to have sufficiently similar phenomenal experiences or similar phenomenal experiences sufficient to imply the content with which they take themselves to be agreeing or disagreeing. The cognitivist need not maintain that experiential features are not common results of metaphors. She merely contends that these experiences are too diverse or incomplete to constitute a plausible route to the contents which are generally apprehended.[22]

Once again, the argument for cognitivism from the experiential dearth is not conclusive, but together with the previous arguments it serves to constitute an argument to the best explanation for cognitivism. If we reject arguments in favor of non-cognitivism, these arguments should be sufficient reason to accept cognitivism.

4. Conclusion

[21] Thanks to Eric Mandelbaum for this colorful suggestion.

[22] What does the cognitivist suggest is common and complete enough to constitute a plausible route to the generally apprehended contents? One answer is that given by Josef Stern (2001): cognitive character (deriving from the metaphor taken in isolation from its literary context) and the literary context in which the metaphor is imbedded.

Sometimes defenders of the non-cognitivist line on metaphor write as though they are merely defending the position that non-propositional elements, along with propositional cognitive elements, help to constitute the point of a metaphor. I have not been concerned to argue against that claim here. It has been my goal in this chapter to critique a recent resuscitation of a classic position on metaphor, the non-cognitivist position that none of the features essential to metaphorical understanding are cognitive. My arguments have, I trust, rendered that position less tenable than Reimer's recent defense might have made it appear. In the next chapter I will argue against what may be taken to be the greatest piece of evidence in favor of non-cognitivism: the purported inadequacy of figurative utterance paraphrases.

Chapter 3:

The Inadequacy of Paraphrase is the Dogma of Metaphor

How would you paraphrase the metaphor, "Music is the universal language?" Does it suggest *that music is understood by everyone*, or just *almost everyone*? Maybe it "means" *that enough speakers of music reside amongst each group to facilitate its use as a conduit across cultural barriers*. Does it invoke resemblances between musical and linguistic meter, or between melody and intonation? A moment's reflection suggests that, to fully understand even such a relatively simple metaphor, one might need to work through numerous such obvious resemblances. However, analogous questions arise when we reflect on how we would paraphrase similar literal utterances, such as, "French is the language of Quebec?" Does it convey *that everyone in Quebec understands French*, or just *almost everyone*? Does it impart a certain official standing to the language?

In the last chapter, I discussed arguments in favor of non-cognitivism. As I mentioned, non-cognitivists have claimed that the difficulty of paraphrasing metaphors suggests and is explained by the absence of "metaphorical meanings." One cannot write a sentence that means the same thing as a metaphor metaphorically means if a metaphor lacks metaphorical meaning.[23] As we shall see the inadequacy of figurative paraphrase has been a touchstone in debates over figurative language. Non-cognitivists have rallied around it and cognitivists have seen fit to explain it. In this chapter, I will critically

[23] This is emphatically not a technical point about the appropriate bounds of the concept of "meaning". As I will discuss later, I am using "metaphorical meaning" in an intuitive way here. I mean to be picking out a common sense notion of 'meaning' that is not equivalent to sentence meaning.

examine the claim. I contend that the inadequacy of metaphor paraphrases should bear on debates over figurative language meaning only insofar as the purported inadequacy is a comparative one. We should not draw specific conclusions about metaphors from the general inadequacy of paraphrases. I then attempt to show by experimental means that paraphrases of metaphors and literal utterances are equally inadequate.[24]

Though centered in the theory of metaphor, the present discussion of paraphrasability is likely to be of relatively broad interest. I defend the relevance of experimental evidence to at least one philosophical topic (metaphorical meaning). And reflection on the present assessment of paraphrases of figurative and literal utterances is also likely to have implications beyond the theory of metaphor, for the theory of meaning and philosophy of language generally. I will briefly consider some such implications at the end of this chapter.

1. *Introducing the 'Inadequacy Assumption'*

It is often assumed that paraphrases of metaphorical utterances are inadequate. Among the theorists who have endorsed this 'Inadequacy Assumption' (*IA*), in one form or another, are Max Black (1954), Donald Davidson (1978), John Searle (1979a), Merrie Bergmann (1982), Richard Moran (1989), Marga Reimer (2001), and Samuel Guttenplan (2005). In this section I will attempt to explain why *IA* matters. That explanation turns on a distinction between two general types of views about metaphor and the different considerations that favor each view over the other.

As discussed in the last chapter, there are several reasons to prefer cognitivist accounts of metaphor. In the first place, we often seem to disagree about the truth or

[24] As I made clear in chapter one, I am construing "metaphor" broadly, to include intuitively clear instances of figurative utterances, such as similes and figurative metonymies.

falsity of metaphorical utterances when the literal truth or falsity of the utterance is beyond dispute. You call Roscoe, the bouncer at our favorite bar, a pit bulldog. I counter, “You lie. He’s a pussycat!” Or, for another example, consider that epistemologists disagree as to whether the justificatory structure of belief is a web or a building. Cognitivism is well placed to make sense of such disputes as to the truth or falsity of the non-literal meaning of a metaphor: These are disputes over the truth-evaluable contents in which metaphor understanding consists.[25]

Another reason to prefer cognitivism has to do with the role of metaphors in cognitive exercises. For exercises involving the manipulation of propositional contents, such as constructing and following an argument, the propositional content employed at any stage matters. If a particular proposition is not deployed at a particular point in the argument, the sought conclusion will not be justifiably reached. Yet, for many arguments, no literal statement of the requisite proposition is made at the appropriate place in a statement of the argument. Rather a figurative utterance alone is supplied, which, if understood literally, would provide a wildly inappropriate proposition, one which could not serve to justifiably deliver the sought conclusion. Cognitivists need make no additional assumptions in order to explain the potentially effective nature of arguments that involve metaphors. They can contend that the truth-evaluable, linguistically expressible proposition in which understanding the figurative utterance consists is the relevant premise in this potentially effective argument.

[25] Reimer (2001) has suggested that the proposition one deems false when one disagrees with a metaphorical statement is simply a proposition that the maker of the metaphorical utterance accepts, one which it is made obvious she accepts by her making that very metaphorical statement. But Reimer has to explain why the Spanish Nationalist finds it so unnatural to say he disagrees with *Guernica*, though that painting makes it obvious that Picasso accepts *that the bombing of the Basque village was a terrible thing*. Why, if we can agree or disagree with something because of the ideas it merely implies, do we not agree with things other than metaphors, which merely imply, and do not essentially express, ideas?

In fact, the previous consideration suggests another reason to prefer cognitivism about metaphors: the theory is better integrated with theories about surrounding matters than is non-cognitivism. Not only constructing and understanding arguments, but expressing and comprehending linguistic phenomena in general are explained in terms of grasping truth-evaluable content. A theory which conceives of metaphor understanding as consisting in the grasping of propositional contents is better integrated with these theories of related linguistic phenomena than is a theory that suggests understanding a metaphor consists in non-cognitive seeing-as.

Although these reasons tell in favor of a cognitivist account of metaphor, some philosophers have held that such a theory also comes with certain explanatory burdens. Many of these burdens were discussed and dispatched in the last chapter. What remains is the purported requirement for any cognitivist theory to explain the inadequacy of metaphorical paraphrases. Non-cognitivists appear to have the upper hand in explaining this purported inadequacy: Truth-evaluable, linguistic expressions that are meant to convey metaphorical significance fail because that significance is not essentially truth-evaluable. Some non-cognitivists have built an argument against cognitivism from this purported inadequacy (see Davidson 1978, Reimer 2001). They have argued that if metaphors had propositional, non-literal meanings which we grasped in understanding these metaphorically, then we would be able to paraphrase those meanings.[26] We are not able to paraphrase such purported meanings, these non-cognitivists have claimed—though we may perhaps gesture vaguely, or articulate some limited set of things the metaphor has made us notice. They have concluded that metaphors do not have

[26] It has also been suggested that we would be able to offer adequate *literal* paraphrases of these metaphorical contents. I will address that stronger claim in the next section.

propositional meanings other than their literal meanings. That is, they have concluded that non-cognitivism is correct. So one reason *IA* is important is that it figures in a prominent argument for non-cognitivism about metaphor. As I discussed briefly in the introduction to this chapter, I think there are other reasons why *IA* is an important topic of research. I will touch on some of these briefly in the last section of this chapter. But my main aim is to defend cognitivist accounts of metaphorical meaning against non-cognitivist arguments from *IA*, by showing that the case for *IA* is flawed, and that we have good reason to suppose that paraphrases of metaphors are not (in the relevant way) inadequate.[27]

Within the theory of figurative language *IA* is primarily important because of the role it plays in the just discussed argument for non-cognitivism. But support for *IA* is surprisingly not unique to non-cognitivists. Cognitivists, too, have accepted the assumption, and felt it was something that required an explanation. What specifically have theorists of both camps meant by the inadequacy claim? And why have they endorsed it? A discussion of the former will occupy the next section. The latter will be the focus of the section after next.

2. The Inadequacy Assumption Specified

Like the question about metaphor understanding discussed in the last chapter, *IA* calls for specification. Two questions are of central importance: What is a paraphrase? And what is it for one to be adequate? I think a fairly intuitive notion of paraphrase has been assumed by proponents of *IA*, though it is not fully elucidated by the common adage, 'a paraphrase says the same thing a different way' (see, for example, Camp, 2006). How

[27] Non-cognitivists have sometimes argued from the absence of metaphorical paraphrases, not from the inadequacy of metaphorical paraphrases. But the absence claim is stronger. If metaphors admit of paraphrases that are not (in the relevant way) inadequate, then ipso facto they admit of paraphrases.

similar is similar enough for two linguistic expressions (e.g. sentence instances or utterances) to count as saying the same thing? I take it that they need not have identical content for the one to count as a paraphrase of the other; they simply need to say much the same thing.[28] Identity of content could only obtain between an expression, itself, and other expressions involving substituted synonymous terms. But we accept as paraphrases expressions which do not arguably contain only synonymous terms. Furthermore, as Quine (1951) argued, the assumed possibility of synonymy may itself be nothing more than an indefensible dogma. Thus, while a fully adequate paraphrase may be one which says *exactly* the same thing as its target, many paraphrases—perhaps all actual ones—are not *fully* adequate.

Another issue that is likely to arise when we entertain the possibility of assessing the adequacy of figurative utterance paraphrases is what can be the target of a paraphrase. If paraphrases were construed stringently as *sentences* with *sentence meanings* very similar to those of other target *sentences*, it would make little sense to speak of a paraphrase of a metaphor, since a metaphor's metaphorical content is presumably not sentence meaning. The discussion of utterance meanings, from the last chapter, tells against such a construal. But there are additional reasons for supposing that, in assessing the inadequacy assumption, theorists have not been imposing this stringent conception of paraphrase. Indeed, the conclusion that paraphrases are inadequate is supposed to lead us to draw conclusions regarding the nature of metaphorical meanings—conclusions about what we were attempting to capture with our purportedly inadequate paraphrases of metaphors.

[28] Again, as discussed above, I assume that propositions are the truth-evaluable contents of some thoughts, sentences and utterances. Thus, I cash identity of content for two utterances or sentences as identity of the propositions they have as their contents. Two utterances, for example, say the same thing if they have the same propositional contents. As to whether propositions are best conceived as mind-dependent or independent—thus, as to whether type or token identity is required—as well as to other issues regarding propositions, I will remain non-committal.

The argumentative role of *IA* thus requires that we not rule out as a matter of definition the possibility of paraphrasing something other than a sentence. What we are trying to capture with a paraphrase of a metaphor is a truth-evaluable content which is the intuitive meaning of the metaphorical utterance. Our success or failure at capturing such a thing is supposed to reveal whether such a thing exists.

Though not generally explicit about it, many philosophers who endorse *IA* may also assume that a paraphrase must be fully literal. One motivation for this literality constraint may come from a desire to construe paraphrases strictly (where this is distinct from the "stringent" construal of the last paragraph)—as *sentences* with *sentence meanings* very similar to the meanings of particular target utterances. However, some theorists, such as Recanati (2004), have argued that literal meaning *is not necessarily* sentence meaning. Others, such as Stern (2000) have argued that metaphorical meaning *is* sentence meaning. If either party is right, then this motivation for the literality constraint is undermined. Furthermore, it is clear that when we assess the adequacy of a paraphrase in the manner in which proponents of *IA* ask us to (which I will discuss in the next section), we are not simply assessing the meaning of the metaphorical utterance, we are assessing the similarity between that metaphorical meaning and the meaning of the purported paraphrase *as we intuitively understand it.* But few conceptions construe sentence meanings expansively, as the meanings intuitively understood by hearers. Theorists as diverse as Searle (1978), Bach (1994), Sperber and Wilson (1995) and Recanati (2004) have raised objections to such expansive conceptions of sentence meaning. So it is not clear that in assessing *IA* we should adopt a strict construal of paraphrase, and it is far from certain that the literality constraint could achieve such a construal anyway.

Therefore, I reject the literality constraint on paraphrases, and I will not endorse the strict construal of paraphrases.[29] I construe paraphrases non-committally, simply as utterances that capture target utterance meanings.

Finally, given our specific purposes in assessing *IA*, we must also maintain that two utterances that merely vary from one another in terms of the syntax of the uttered sentences cannot count as paraphrases of one another. If they did, the question of whether or not it is more difficult to paraphrase a figurative or a literal utterance would admit of an obvious answer: neither. To see this, consider that we can capture what is significant about the metaphor, 'God is my witness,' by writing, 'my witness is God,' in salient contexts of utterance. This is no more or less difficult than it is to capture what is significant about, 'Hank is my witness,' by writing, 'my witness is Hank'. So, let's characterize a paraphrase as an utterance (fully literal or not) that mostly captures the intuitive point of another utterance, where the uttered sentence is not merely a syntactic variant of the other uttered sentence.

I turn now to the question of what it is for a paraphrase to be adequate. Fortunately, cognitivists and non-cognitivists have been rather explicit about what they mean when they say metaphor paraphrases are inadequate—as we can see by reading their statements on the topic. For instance, of metaphor/paraphrase pairs, such as 'Richard is a gorilla'/'Richard is fierce, nasty, and prone to violence', cognitivists such as Searle (1979a) write, "Notice that in each case we feel that the paraphrase is somehow inadequate, that something is lost" (82). Black (1954), likewise, endorses this inadequacy interpretation, writing that in a paraphrase:

> …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

[29] Some may think that a non-circularity requirement constitutes an additional reason for the literality assumption. But no one would regard a literal paraphrase of a literal utterance as circular. Given the emergence of positions which construe literal and metaphorical meanings as of a kind, this circularity requirement for metaphorical utterances is suspect.

> explicitly as though having equal weight. The literal paraphrase inevitably says too much—and with the wrong emphasis (46).

In a similar vein, non-cognitivists such as Davidson (1978) claim that, "when we try to say what a metaphor 'means', we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention" (263). Reimer (2001) alleges that, "even literal paraphrases of those metaphors arguably used to make assertions—metaphors like 'No man is an island' or 'Every dog has its day'—*invariably* fail to capture something *essential* to any metaphor that is not completely dead" (147). Clearly, many prominent philosophers who have written on the topic of metaphorical meaning agree that, even if a metaphor and its purported paraphrase have *somewhat* overlapping content, the latter often leaves out some essential idea or expresses some content very different from the content of the target metaphor, and can therefore not be considered an adequate paraphrase.

The inadequacy assumption that has been central to debates concerning figurative language meaning and understanding is the claim that, although a figurative utterance and its purported paraphrase may have somewhat overlapping content, the paraphrasing utterance generally expresses content that leaves out some important idea present in, or adds in an important idea absent from, the content of the target figurative utterance. Because of this, purported paraphrases of metaphors inadequately paraphrase their target metaphors. At the beginning of the next section, I will argue that philosophers concerned with metaphorical meaning are committed to one important modification of *IA*: They must construe *IA* as a comparative claim. I will then examine previous philosophical assessments of *IA*.

3. Existing Assessments of the Inadequacy Assumption

According to *IA*, purported paraphrases of figurative utterances are often too different from the target utterances to constitute adequate paraphrases. How should we evaluate *IA*? Typically, philosophers have invited their readers to assess the adequacy of choice figurative utterance/paraphrase pairs, then, after suggesting particular ideas the paraphrases leave out or add in, they have concluded that *IA* is correct. But several chronic problems plague existing philosophical assessments of *IA*. In this section I discuss three such problems that threaten the success of any attempted assessment of *IA*. My experimental evidence against *IA*, presented in the next section, avoids the difficulties I'll outline here.

Each of the problems I will discuss relates to a certain re-conceptualization of *IA*. This re-conceptualization is non-optional to those who endorse *IA* and maintain its relevance to discussions of figurative utterance meaning. If it is to bear any weight in debates concerning metaphorical meaning, *IA* must be understood as the comparative claim that paraphrases of metaphors are inadequate *compared to paraphrases of other (specifically, literal) utterances*—not as the claim that paraphrases of metaphors are inadequate (full stop). If the absolute claim were what some theorists meant by *IA*, it would not be of much interest to the metaphor debate. So what if metaphors are difficult to paraphrase? Perhaps (as the study I will describe in the next section suggests) all utterances are difficult to paraphrase. In that case, the difficulty presumably has to do with paraphrase itself and is not of central importance to an account of figurative language. To put this point another way, if we do not know the baseline of paraphrase adequacy, how can we know that paraphrases *of metaphors* are inadequate? Inadequacy presupposes a standard of adequacy. If paraphrases are *generally* inadequate, the inadequacy of paraphrases of figurative utterances does not warrant a special explanation.

In response to this argument for the comparative nature of *IA*, Reimer suggests that non-cognitivists may be assuming that understanding literal utterances consists in having cognitive states. So even if literal utterance paraphrases are inadequate, literal non-cognitivism could not explain that fact. On the other hand, the inadequacy of figurative utterance paraphrases may be explained by the non-cognitive nature of figurative utterances (personal communication). It is widely held that understanding literal utterances consists in having cognitive states, so Reimer's is a salient way to deny the comparative version of *IA*. Nonetheless, to conclude that the two inadequacies admit of different explanations constitutes an extravagant flouting of parsimony! If paraphrases of figurative and literal utterances are equally inadequate, we should first investigate a single explanation to do with paraphrase in general before positing one explanation for figurative utterances and another where literal utterances are concerned.

With the recognition of *IA*'s comparative nature comes the first problem I will discuss for previous assessments. Often in philosophical assessments of *IA* evidence for the inadequacy of paraphrasing figurative utterances is presented independently of evidence for the ease of paraphrasing other utterances. Reimer (2001), for example, points out the failings of a number of paraphrases of metaphors without arguing that literal utterances are easy to paraphrase. Such one-sided arguments fail to establish *IA*. For though many theorists who engage in such arguments may take the ease of literal paraphrase for granted, it is far from obvious that literal utterances are in fact easy to paraphrase—at least, it is not obvious that they are easy to paraphrase *in the same way metaphors are* *purportedly difficult to paraphrase*. Existing assessments of *IA* present us with figurative utterances removed from related contexts.[30] If they show us anything it is that figurative utterances are difficult to paraphrase independent of context. But Searle (1978), Travis (1989), and Recanati (2004), among others, do a good job of pointing out just how hard it is to specify what exactly *literal utterances* mean independent of a related context. Thus it is a substantive point whether literal utterances are easy to paraphrase in the way proponents of *IA* typically attempt to show metaphorical utterances difficult to paraphrase—that is, *independent of a related context*. Evidence for *IA* must demonstrate both sides of the comparative claim; it must demonstrate that paraphrases of figurative utterances are inadequate in the same way that paraphrases of literal utterances are adequate.

The second problem also relates to the comparative nature of *IA*. In arguing for *IA* (and in discussions of figurative language more generally), some theorists rely on obscure, complex, or artistic metaphors to the exclusion of the full array of metaphorical speech. Cooper (1986) argues in favor of using metaphors such as, "Eliot's 'I will show you fear in a handful of dust', Hofmannstahl's [*sic*] 'dovecot' metaphor, and Nietzsche's 'Truth is a woman'" (70), as the primary touchstones for a theory of metaphor. In her argument for *IA*, Reimer asks us to consider Auden's line, 'The hourglass whispers to the lion's paw' (146). On the other hand, the most salient philosophical examples of literal utterances are all patently simple: 'The table is covered with books,' 'The cat is on the mat,' 'Snow is white'! When a philosopher uses an abstruse metaphor in putting forward *IA*, and fails to argue the relative ease of literal paraphrase, she invites her audience to compare the adequacy of paraphrases for the metaphorical example with the adequacy of

[30] See Davidson (1978), Searle (1979a), and Reimer (2001), for example.

paraphrases for whatever literal utterances the audience finds salient. The contrast cases that naturally come to philosophical minds are cases of simple literal utterances. Next to those literal utterances, the target figurative utterances may well seem difficult to paraphrase. Less common is the case where a philosopher blatantly compares the task of paraphrasing a difficult metaphor with that of paraphrasing a simple literal utterance. But in either case the effect is the same: an illegitimate assessment of *IA*. Considerations of the comparative complexity of the utterances (even implicitly) contrasted is essential to a successful assessment of *IA*.

Of course, utterances may vary in complexity across a number of distinct dimensions. I will argue that we need not guard against incongruous complexity across some of these. First, an utterance may be more *syntactically complex* than another if the sentence that is its linguistic form contains more syntactic constituents. So, 'Sally went to the bridge before she went to the beach,' is more syntactically complex than, 'Sally went to the bridge.' Secondly, an utterance may be more *lexically complex* than another. The lexical meaning of a term is its standard public or idiolectic meaning. A term is more lexically complex insofar as its lexical meaning decomposes into more (or more complex) concepts. One utterance will be more lexically complex than another (even of equal syntactic complexity) insofar as the words that constituent the sentence that is its linguistic form have more aggregate lexical complexity. If one holds that each word's lexical meaning is simple—never a composite of other concepts—one will hold that no utterance is more lexically complex than another without also being more syntactically complex. But one might also hold that utterances identical in syntactic complexity can vary in lexical complexity. For instance, one would contend that, 'A bachelor is a mammal,’ is more lexically complex than, ‘A man is a mammal,’ if one held that the lexical meaning of ‘man’ is simple, whereas the lexical meaning of ‘bachelor’ is complex.

In addition to syntactic and lexical complexity, utterances may vary in complexity along other dimensions. For instance, understanding an utterance may require us to understand an uttered term in a non-standard (non-lexicalized) way. As Recanati (2004) writes, “If we take it as axiomatic that only sounds can be heard, then, in ‘I hear the piano’, either the sense of ‘hear’ or that of ‘the piano’ must be modulated for the sentence to make sense” (138). Although ‘I hear the piano,’ may be no more lexically nor syntactically complex than ‘Man is a mammal,’ understanding the former may require us to modulate the lexically encoded meaning of some term, whereas no additional process of modulation may be required to understand the latter. In that case, ‘I hear the piano,’ is more *procedurally complex* than, ‘man is a mammal.’ The more modulation of terms an utterance requires, the more procedurally complex it is. Furthermore, the modulated meaning arrived at in an instance of understanding some utterance may itself involve simple or complex concepts. So, even though each of two utterances may not be more syntactically, lexically, or procedurally complex than the other, one might have greater *derived complexity* than the other, if the concepts its modulated meaning consists in have more aggregate complexity.

I take it as a non-controversial upshot of the comparative nature of *IA* that a legitimate assessment should compare metaphors and literal utterances of similar syntactic and lexical complexity. In this respect, previous assessments have failed. But it may be that metaphors are quite generally more procedurally complex than literal utterances.[31] Establishing a general difference in procedural complexity would reveal an interesting contrast between metaphors and literal utterances—and is not as entirely unlikely as establishing a general difference between the two in lexical or syntactic complexity. We should thus not exclude this possibility from the outset. The lesson I draw from the second problem with previous assessments of *IA* is the following: In assessing the relative adequacy of figurative utterance paraphrases we must compare literal and figurative utterances of similar syntactic and lexical complexity.

The third problem with many existing assessments of *IA* has to do with the philosophical method of analysis itself. Typically, in arguing for *IA*, a theorist will cite a sample metaphor and ask us to reflect on all the ideas it might be taken to express. "How," it is asked, "could a single paraphrase capture all of that?" Here theorists often take themselves to be appealing to the purported 'open-endedness' of metaphor interpretation. The relation between paraphrase adequacy and the open-endedness of metaphorical meanings is not obvious (see Cooper, 70-71). Many of the ideas theorists identify as being expressed by a metaphor may best be construed as implications of the metaphor's meaning, rather than as constituents of that meaning (in which case they are not ideas a successful paraphrase need capture). In other instances, these ideas may legitimately be construed as competing interpretations of a metaphor (considered independently of context). But as previously mentioned, philosophical analyses of literal utterances reveal similar (context-independent) indeterminacies of interpretation. As Camp (2006) writes, "much ordinary talk — let alone literary writing — is loose and/or

[31] Indeed, as mentioned in chapter 1, the technical notion of "metaphor" from philosophy and linguistics equates the metaphorical with the procedurally complex. But I am concerned here (as philosophers have been in the past) with using data about paraphrasability to draw conclusions about a non-technical notion of metaphor—a folk-linguistic concept. It may nonetheless turn out that this folk notion of metaphor encompasses only utterances that require modulation.

evocative in just this way, *despite* being literal" (7). For a simple example, take a literal comparison between two things: 'a chimpanzee is like an orangutan.' This utterance is perfectly literal, yet loose and open to a variety of interpretations. How are the two similar? Is it that they are both apes, or mammals, or hair-covered? Is it that they have mass?[32] In any case, dwelling on metaphors as philosophical analyses of *IA* ask us to is likely to distort our perception of their open-endedness. As Bergmann (1982) has noted, "Dwell on a metaphor long enough, even a relatively uninteresting one, and numerous and various interpretations come to mind" (231). Adequate evidence for (or against) *IA* should involve equal consideration of literal and metaphorical utterances (and paraphrases of those utterances). If it does not, the result may be biased by unequal consideration.

In the next section I discuss an experiment designed to assess the comparative adequacy of paraphrases of figurative utterances that avoids the problems just introduced. As with previous philosophical investigations, I do not impose specific criteria of adequacy for paraphrase assessment. Different accounts of the criteria of paraphrase adequacy might be given. But it is tough to imagine how we could judge the adequacy of purported criteria if not by appeal to pre-theoretic assessments of paraphrase adequacy. Indeed, as Chomsky (1965) has noted, "there is no reason to expect that reliable operational criteria for the deeper and more important theoretical notions of linguistics (such as "grammaticalness" and "paraphrase") will ever be forthcoming" (19). Thus, I side with those who have previously assessed *IA* in holding that we need not determine what specific criteria are correct in order to ascertain if *IA* is true or not. Together we

[32] If comparisons are thought not to be the best examples, given the potential semantic context-sensitivity of "like," consider any other example from the contextualism?xxxx literature: "Steel isn't strong enough," (strong enough for what?); "Peter is finished," (finished with what?); etc.

presume that speakers of English are qualified to assess whether an English paraphrase of an English utterance is adequate, independent of specific, operational criteria of assessment.

4. Are Paraphrases of Metaphors Inadequate?

To legitimately demonstrate *IA*, one would need to show that paraphrases of figurative utterances are inadequate compared to paraphrases of literal utterances when the target utterances are of similar syntactic and lexical complexity, and to do this by subjecting each kind of utterance/paraphrase pair to similar scrutiny. Previous philosophical analyses have failed to do this. Experimental analysis might fairly adjudicate the *IA* debate. Due to the nature of experimental research, participants would give roughly equal consideration to metaphors and literal utterances. One conducting such a survey could include literal and figurative utterances of similar complexity, and design studies and prompts intended to examine the same kind of inadequacy. I designed a study intended to meet these desiderata.

To guard against researcher bias, I did not—as certain philosophers have done when asserting *IA*[33]—generate my own paraphrases for metaphorical and literal utterances. Rather, in an initial phase of my study, I had University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill undergraduates (*N*=14) generate paraphrases for particular target utterances. Each participant was asked, for each of four utterances, "to write another utterance of your own which means the same thing." The target utterances made up four pairs of one literal and

[33] See, for example, Searle (1979a), Reimer (2001).

one metaphorical utterance of similar grammatical structure, lexical complexity, and theme:[34]

Theme:	**Metaphor:**	**Literal Utterance:**
Language	Music is the universal language.	French is the language of Quebec.
Advice	Never give your heart away.	Always count your change.
Copilots	God is my copilot.	Bill Thompson is my copilot.
Cars	My other car is a Boeing 747.	My other car is a Hyundai Elantra.

After participants generated lists of paraphrases for target sentences, the best paraphrase for each target was selected. To again avoid researcher bias, UNC undergraduates (*N*=56) were asked to choose the paraphrase "…which you think most nearly means the same thing as…" the target utterance, and write its letter in the blank. Each participant was asked to select the best paraphrase for four of the eight target utterances above. For each utterance, four paraphrases generated in phase one of the study were possible choices as the best paraphrase.[35] Conditions were randomized and no ordering-effects emerged. For each utterance, a 'best paraphrase' was selected on the basis of participants' answers:

[34] In this, as in other phases of the studies I discuss, no participant was assigned more than one utterance from any single metaphor/literal pair.

[35] The paraphrases were culled on the basis of plausibility as a successful paraphrase and similarity to other potential paraphrases chosen for inclusion in phase two. For example, the potential paraphrases, "I know it doesn't look like I am stylish or rich, but I do own some stylish, fancy-looking things like my Hyundai Elantra," and "In Quebec, they speak French," were rejected for these reasons, respectively. One may worry that such culling reintroduces the problem of researcher bias. But this worry needs to be weighed against a concern for survey fatigue. Furthermore, it is intuitively very unlikely that many participants would have selected implausible paraphrases such as that mentioned above, and including paraphrase analogues threatened to split the vote between equally good, similar paraphrases.

Theme:	Target Utterance:	Best Paraphrase (% selecting):
Language	Music is the universal language.	Music connects people across language and cultural barriers. (77%)
Language	French is the language of Quebec.	The people of Quebec primarily speak French. (50%)
Advice	Never give your heart away.	Do not ever fall too deeply in love. (62%)
Advice	Always count your change.	Make it a habit to check that you've received correct change. (55%)
Copilots	God is my copilot.	God is helping me to get where I want to go. (47%)
Copilots	Bill Thompson is my copilot.	I have a copilot named Bill Thompson. (58%)
Cars	My other car is a Boeing 747.	I also have a Boeing 747. (43%)
Cars	My other car is a Hyundai Elantra.	In addition to this car, I have a Hyundai Elantra. (42%)

In the third phase of the study participants evaluated the adequacy of the best paraphrases. In the interest of finding any significant difference that might exist between assessments of paraphrases, it was important to have larger numbers of participants in this final phase. Thus, I trimmed the four pairs to be analyzed to two pairs. The pairs selected were those in which the best paraphrases generated the largest total percentage of votes. On this basis, the 'Language' and 'Advice' metaphor/literal utterance pairs were selected.

In order to test paraphrase adequacy, I presented each undergraduate (*N*=108) with two utterances and their best paraphrases.[36] Participants were asked several questions

[36] Assignment to conditions was randomized. Roughly one third of participants received two metaphors and their paraphrases, while another third received two literal utterances and their paraphrases, and the last third received a metaphor and a literal utterance, together with their paraphrases. The study was conducted in

about each utterance and its paraphrase (target utterances were labeled *A*; paraphrases were labeled *B*):

1. How similar is the meaning of B to A? (This was judged on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 representing, ‘not at all similar,’ and 7 representing, ‘exactly the same’.)
2. Does either utterance leave some idea out that the other includes? (This was a forced, yes/no choice.)
3. If so, which utterance, and what does it leave out?

How did participants evaluate the paraphrases? Was the inadequacy assumption borne out? As this chapter’s title suggests, participants did not judge paraphrases of metaphors to be less adequate than paraphrases of literal utterances. Statistically speaking, the mean-similarity scores for the utterance pairs mentioned above were not significantly different:[37]

	Metaphorical	Literal
Language	5.07	4.73
Advice	4.23	4.44

There was also no statistically significant difference between participants’ assessments of whether or not paraphrases of metaphorical or literal utterances in general left anything

this way to see if evaluating one kind of utterance first affected the evaluation of the other. This was not the case.

[37] A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare similarity assessments for paraphrases of literal and metaphorical utterances in general, but these were not significantly different: $F(1, 212) = .018$, $p = .892$. Assessments of paraphrases for individual pairs were also compared, using independent sample T-tests. But in neither pair were the paraphrases of metaphorical or literal utterances significantly more similar: Language, $t(105) = 1.382$, $p = .17$; Advice, $t(105) = -.778$, $p = .439$. (One survey was discarded from these and the immediately following analyses because it was incomplete.)

out, nor between such assessments regarding paraphrases of the metaphorical or literal utterance in the Advice pair.[38] However, significantly fewer participants felt that the paraphrase of the *metaphorical utterance* left something out in the language pair.[39] So the paraphrase of the metaphorical utterance in this pair was thought to be more adequate. The percentages of people who felt something was left out were as follows:

	Metaphorical	Literal
Language	65.5%	84.6%
Advice	82.3%	82.2%

So far as these examples are concerned, the best paraphrases of metaphors and literal utterances seem to be equally inadequate. If anything, this study suggests that metaphors may be *slightly more paraphrasable*, for the most adequate paraphrase was judged to be of a metaphorical utterance, and the paraphrase of this utterance was significantly less often judged to have left anything out.[40]

[38] In general: X^2 (1, N = 214) = 2.629, p = .105; Advice pair: X^2 (1, N = 107) < .001, p = .996

[39] X^2 (1, N = 107) = 5.201, p = .023

[40] The structure of this study had two primary sources: consideration of previous experimental work on utterance interpretation and a strong desire to avoid researcher bias. In previous experimental work (Yoon, 1994; Geurts, 2002), researchers asked subjects whether specific 'donkey sentences' correctly described different reported or pictured situations. Considered independently, this approach is preferable to the one taken by Gibbs and Moise (1997), who asked subjects what they thought was said by particular sentences. As Recanati (2004) points out, the latter approach presupposes, "the ability to *report* what is said" (14). However, given my desire to avoid researcher bias, it struck me that the best approach to assessing participant's intuitions about utterance meaning was not to adopt one of these methods independent of the other, but to instead devise a hybrid model. My model avoids researcher bias by allowing participants to generate and select the best paraphrases. But it also avoids putting heavy weight on participants' abilities to report what is said. The phase in which participants select from generated paraphrases constitutes an

One might object that this evidence is too slight to constitute a refutation of *IA*. But previous philosophical discussions of *IA* turned on only a few examples. So if a limited sample class is a problem for my argument, it is a problem for my opponents' arguments as well. Nonetheless, to bolster my case against *IA*, I repeated essentially the same test, but modified it to allow for more data. Instead of asking participants in the third phase three questions about each utterance/paraphrase pair, I asked only one: How similar is the meaning of *A* to *B*? This allowed me to fit six pairs of utterances onto each survey, greatly increasing the data generated. And since participants were more likely to say some idea was left out when they felt a paraphrase and its target utterance had dissimilar meanings, asking only the similarity of meaning question still suggests how answers to the leaving-out question would turn out for various utterances and their paraphrases.

In phase one of the test, paraphrases were generated for twelve pairs of figurative and literal utterances of similar syntactic and lexical complexity, and theme. After phase two, these were whittled down to eight pairs of utterances, on the basis of the lack, in one utterance or another, of a clear 'best paraphrase'. 140 UNC undergraduates participated in the third phase of the study. Each participant was randomly assigned six utterances and their paraphrases. Participants were randomly assigned two, three, or four of each kind of utterance (i.e., metaphorical/literal). Two pairs of utterances were cycled in, so that all eight utterances were ranked. Two of the surveys were incomplete, and so were not included in the analysis. This left 138 surveys, or 828 separate rankings of closeness of meaning for 16 utterances (eight metaphorical, eight literal) and their paraphrases.

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independent check on inept reports. And, in the final phase, as in the work by Yoons and Geurts, participants judge the similarity of utterance meanings.

Comparing the average ‘similarity of meaning’ ranking for each figurative utterance and its paraphrase to the ranking for the analogous literal utterance and its paraphrase, we get the following results (mean similarity ratings on the right):

	TARGET UTTERANCE:	**PARAPHRASE:**	**AVG:**
M	Some jobs are prisons.[41]	Some jobs are tedious and personally confining.	3.59
L	Some jobs are promotions.	Some jobs are a reward for doing well in previous jobs.	4.63
M	Power is in the hands of the king.	The king is in charge.	4.86
L	A sword is in the hands of the king.	The king presently holds a sword.	5.17
M	Many people never live for fear of dying.	A lot of individuals don’t live life to the fullest for fear of dying.	5.07
L	Many people never fly for fear of dying.	Many people choose not to fly because they’re afraid of dying on an airplane.	5.28
M	A good friend is worth more than an excellent stock portfolio.	Friendship is more valuable than wealth.	4.79
L	A good savings account is worth more than an excellent stock portfolio.	Having money in the bank is safer than *maybe* having more money later.	3.63
M	Some wives are worse than rashes.	Some wives cause more pain and suffering than rashes.	4.93
L	Some wives are worse than girlfriends.	Sometimes having a wife is worse than having a girlfriend.	3.79

[41] This example is modified from a timing study by Glucksberg et al (1997).

M	Capitalism is the religion of our country.	Most people in our country live according to, or endorse, capitalist principles.	3.62
L	Christianity is the religion of our country.	The United States practices mostly Christianity.	3.54
M	He divorced himself from the American Civil Liberties Union.	He left and has nothing more to do with the ACLU.	5.14
L	He revoked his membership in the American Civil Liberties Union.	He used to be a member of the ACLU, but withdrew his membership.	5.89
M	Butchering is the business of a Russian foot soldier.	A Russian soldier's job is to kill things.	4.18
L	Butchering is the business of a meat packing plant.	Butchering is part of the industry of meat packing plants.	4.54

So it seems that sometimes paraphrases of metaphors are more adequate; and sometimes paraphrases of literal utterances are. However, no clear trend towards the comparative adequacy of paraphrases of literal utterances emerged.

In addition to comparing the results for different pairs of literal and figurative utterances, we can compare the paraphrase adequacy for literal and figurative utterances in general. To this end, a 'metaphorical score' and a 'literal score' was generated for each participant, by averaging his or her rankings of the similarity of meaning between each metaphorical utterance and its paraphrase, on the one hand, and each literal utterance and its paraphrase, on the other. I then averaged these metaphorical and literal scores across all participants. There was no significant difference between the mean 'metaphorical score' (4.45) and the mean 'literal score' (4.54).[42]

[42] $t(137)=.84$, $p=.40$

My assessments avoid the previously discussed problems of other assessments. And they suggest that paraphrases of metaphors are not inadequate compared to paraphrases of literal utterances. If there are not other problems unique to my experimental assessments, then these present a reason to conclude that cognitivism about metaphor faces no pressure from the claim of inadequacy. Together with the theory's other strengths, we would have good reason to concede that some version of the view is probably correct. I cannot show there are *no* shortcomings of my assessments which previous assessments avoid. It is clearly the burden of the proponent of IA to show if there are some. Nonetheless, I will defend my assessments against some of the more obvious potential challenges in the next section.

5. *Objections Considered*

One might object to my experimental analyses by making the strong claim that theoretically sophisticated judgments are the only ones relevant to assessments of paraphrase adequacy. But what theoretical sophistication is purportedly at issue? Two of the more obvious suggestions are seriously problematic. Sophistication with the theory of metaphor cannot be what is at issue, since, as previously mentioned, *IA* plays a major role in *establishing* figurative utterance theory. To require a sophisticated theory of figurative language as a qualification for assessing *IA* would rob the assumption of significance. One might instead suggest that sophistication with the distinction between what is meant by a sentence and what is meant by a speaker is at issue—for how can participants accurately judge the similarity of sentence meanings without knowing what constitutes sentence meaning, as opposed to what a speaker might mean in uttering a particular sentence? But the discussion of section two reveals that this suggestion is also misguided.

In assessing paraphrase adequacy we are assessing how well an utterance captures the metaphorical meaning of another utterance, not necessarily how similar are the meanings of two sentences. It is tough to see what particular theoretical sophistication might matter to assessments of paraphrase adequacy. It is perhaps tougher to see how theoretical sophistication could possibly make the difference between relevant and irrelevant assessments of paraphrase adequacy. The obvious criteria for whether an assessment is relevant is whether that assessment is competent, and assessments might be competently made without the benefit of theory or incompetently made with it. Furthermore, as I will presently discuss, there is good evidence to suggest the assessments made by participants in my studies are competent.

Paraphrase assessments are relevant to *IA* insofar as they are issued by attentive, astute, and otherwise competent judges. Are my ordinary participants competent judges? Participants' answers to the third question in the rating phase of the first study suggest that they are. Participants' assessments of what was left out were generally thoughtful and on target. For example, a number of people pointed out that, 'never give your heart away,' seemed to constitute a total ban, while 'do not ever fall too deeply in love,' seemed only a restriction of degree. And 'French is the language of Quebec,' was often thought to be a less than perfect match for, 'The people of Quebec primarily speak French,' both because the latter includes a restriction of generality, while the former says nothing about the universality of the language, and because the former carries a certain 'officialness', which is not replicated in the latter. Apart from any specific reason to doubt the competency of my subjects in judging a good paraphrase then, their answers to the question regarding what was left out seem to support it. Furthermore, the conclusion suggested by my studies is not that paraphrases of metaphors are adequate, it is that paraphrases of metaphors are not inadequate compared to paraphrases of literal utterances. Or, more accurately, it is that paraphrases in general are equally inadequate. If my participants held that paraphrases of figurative and literal utterances were universally wonderful, it might be reasonable to suppose that they had missed differences between target utterances and their paraphrases. Instead, participants judged both sets of paraphrases to be lacking, and their answers to the third question suggest they were cognizant of real differences between targets and paraphrases.

Instead of contending that my participants are bad *judges* of the adequacy of paraphrases, a proponent of *IA* might contend that they are bad *paraphrasers*. Someone who was more highly skilled at the nuanced use of language than a public university undergraduate might be a better paraphraser, and the paraphrases generated by a better paraphraser might reveal the purported inadequacy. This is possible, of course, but to have any relevance here, a proponent of *IA* would have to make the further claim that professional philosophers *are* such better paraphrasers. Otherwise this would not be a way in which my assessment is deficient compared to previous purely philosophical assessments. Why might one suppose that philosophers are better paraphrasers than undergraduates? Clearly many professional philosophers write and read much more than most undergraduates. They are also professionally trained at assessing certain aspects of language (though arguably not those essential to the skill of paraphrase). This greater experience with language might make one more sensitive to similarities and differences of meaning, and to that degree able to generate better paraphrases. But it must also be conceded that professional philosophers are very much more accustomed to dealing with literal language than they are to dealing with figurative utterances. This acuity with literal language, rather than a unique inadequacy in metaphor paraphrases, could explain why literal utterances strike philosophers as comparatively amenable to paraphrase. If we wanted the universally best paraphrasers, we should perhaps look to English or literature departments.

One might accept that ordinary, pretheoretic intuitions about paraphrases are relevant to *IA*, and that, in fact, paraphrases of the figurative and literal utterances that constitute the target utterances of my study are equally inadequate, but point out that there are more complex utterances and contend that the results received here would not be replicated if the study were conducted using such utterances. It might be the case, for example, that it is harder to paraphrase a relatively simple literal utterance than a more complex literal utterance precisely because the idea expressed by the simple utterance is so simple! How many ways are there of saying, 'snow is white,' after all? But with metaphors, simple lexical meanings do not equal simple metaphorical meanings. A relatively simple utterance might have juicy metaphorical significance—significance which admits of a variety of linguistic expressions. When we come to utterances that express more complex ideas, the objection runs, we will see the adequacy gap emerge between paraphrases of literal and figurative utterances. And this is a reason why existing assessments are to be preferred—in those assessments theorists examine more complex utterances, where the inadequacy gap is likely to emerge.

According to this purported deficiency in my method of assessment, the simplicity of the target literal utterances explains why the paraphrases of those utterances were inadequate, but it does not explain why paraphrases of figurative utterances were inadequate. But in that case there must be some different explanation for why participants' judged figurative utterance paraphrases inadequate to the degree that they did. But the degree to which participants judged paraphrases of figurative utterances inadequate was just the degree to which they judged paraphrases of literal utterances inadequate. Clearly it is more parsimonious to suppose that statistically identical assessments of adequacy admit of the same explanation than to suppose that they admit of completely different explanations.

Alternatively, one may object to my experimental assessment of paraphrase adequacy by suggesting that the metaphors I consider are fairly familiar, and thus more amenable to paraphrase than more novel metaphors would be. But are more familiar metaphors easier to paraphrase, as this objection suggests? We can gain some insight into this question by examining the inadequacy of paraphrases for various individual metaphors considered in my studies. Perhaps none of those I consider are amongst the most novel metaphors; but certain of these are clearly more novel than others. By comparing the adequacy of paraphrases of the more novel metaphors to the adequacy of the more familiar ones, we can gain some insight into whether familiarity breeds paraphrasability, as the present objection suggests. The utterances, 'Never give your heart away,' and, 'Power is in the hands of the king," are intuitively much more familiar than the utterances, 'Many people never live for fear of dying,' and, 'Some wives are worse than rashes.'[43] Yet paraphrases of the latter pair of utterances were judged better than paraphrases of the former pair.

[43] These intuitions regarding familiarity were born out by a Google search of the online corpus. I attempted to search for minimal figurative strings included in these utterances, so as not to overlook any similar, though not identical, figurative expressions. A search of "give your heart away" returned about 38,000 hits, whereas "power is in the hands" returned about 386,000 hits, the most of any clearly figurative string from the studies. On the other hand, "people never live" returned about 7,250 hits—but some of these were literal constructions, such as, "Did the Founding Fathers intend that poor people never live past their 40's?" Likewise, "wives are worse than," returned about 2,440 hits, but, again, some of these—such as, "some [men] feel their wives are worse than they are"—were clearly literal.

This suggests that comparatively familiar utterances do not admit of more adequate paraphrases.

One might persist that paraphrases of *truly* novel metaphors—metaphors such as the aforementioned, 'I will show you fear in a handful of dust,' or, 'Truth is a woman,' for example—would be inadequate compared to paraphrases of correspondent literal utterances. This is not something existing analyses attempt to show, so it is not a deficiency my analysis suffers from and existing analyses do not. Furthermore, it is not obvious to me that, 'I will show you dust mites in a handful of dust,' or, 'Truth is what obtains,' would be more adequately paraphrasable. But I concede that my experiments do not fully resolve the issue of comparative paraphrasability. What I have done in the present experiments is to try and resolve some of the problems in existing analyses of *IA*. Those analyses support judgments about paraphrasability on the basis of context-independent consideration of utterances and their paraphrases. I have preserved this context independence in the present study, and this study suggests that even simple and familiar figurative *and* literal utterances are not adequately paraphrasable independent of context. I have offered reasons for thinking that this mutual inadequacy would not disappear if the utterances were simply more complex or less familiar. But I suspect that paraphrasability, like processing time, might improve were we to embed utterances in related contexts.[44] Nor does this discussion rule out the possibility that embedded literal utterances are more paraphrasable than embedded metaphorical ones. But I do not suspect, nor is there a clear reason to suppose, that this is the case.

6. Conclusion

[44] See Ortony et al (1978). Camp (2006) provides a useful summary of work from psychology and cognitive science on metaphor. See also, Glucksberg (2001).

The assumption that communication-relevant, propositional meaning is derivable and assessable independent of context has been a common-place in the philosophy of language. As I have just pointed out, it is one that the present studies and previous assessments trade on. But this assumption has (as discussed above) been challenged. Let the empirically-revealed inadequacy of figurative *and* literal utterance paraphrases proffered and considered independent of context remind us of the important role context plays in the derivation of communication-relevant propositions, even for literal utterances. Continued research into the role of context in such derivation is essential. A complementary, methodological implication is also warranted by these considerations: To draw solid conclusions about general theses concerning linguistic phenomena such as paraphrasability and meaning, we need to consider sentences within explicit contexts of utterance, as well as independent of these. In future experimental work I hope to examine simple and complex utterances embedded in related contexts in order to draw less restricted conclusions concerning paraphrase.

In any case, we can now dismiss the paraphrase argument in favor of non-cognitivism. Above I tentatively argued that the best evidence concerning the matter—the evidence considered in this chapter—reveals that paraphrases of figurative utterances are not inadequate compared to paraphrases of literal utterances. Subsequent potential challenges have not impugned this conclusion, though they have led us to emphasize the restricted nature of this evidence. At this point, we have better reason to conclude that cognitivist accounts of metaphor are not threatened by the non-cognitivist's argument from the inadequacy of paraphrase than to accept the alternative. Given the other explanatory benefits of cognitivism, we are also now in a position to accept that some version of cognitivism is correct.[45] Finally, we might hope that, after considering the argument of this chapter, theorists of figurative language would refrain from appeals to the obviousness of *IA* in the future. For now it appears that is merely the dogma of metaphor. While not all dogmas are ill founded, this one appears to be.

[45] In particular, the results of this chapter—which suggest no significant difference between the adequacy of figurative and literal utterance paraphrases—are particularly salutary to cognitive accounts of a deflationary variety, which deny a real distinction between the figurative and the literal. I will consider such accounts in chapter 5 and conclude, ultimately, that these are unsatisfying for different reasons.

Chapter 4:

Implication Views of Figurative Meaning

In the last two chapters I argued that understanding a metaphor consists in having cognitive states with propositional contents distinct from those expressed by the metaphorical utterance understood literally. In other words, we concluded that there are propositional—that is, truth-evaluable—metaphorical meanings.

Naturally, concluding that metaphorical meanings are propositional raises other questions. One such question divides cognitivists about metaphor into further camps: At what level of communication are propositional, metaphorical meanings expressed? We might identify three potential vehicles of propositional communication: sentences, utterances, and implications (broadly construed to include, for example, entailments, presuppositions, and conversational implicatures, among others).

I will discuss views that locate metaphorical meanings at the sentence and utterance levels in the next chapter. Here I will focus on views that identify metaphorical meanings as implications of sentences or utterances. In this chapter, my aim is to argue against implication views *(IVs*) by way of arguing against their best developed instances. Such arguments cannot, of course, prove absolutely decisive against implication views in general. But then again the notion of implication is notoriously vexed, depending in part on one's views on inference and the semantics/pragmatics distinction. I will not take on the burden of arguing against all logically possible implication views, but hope that my arguments against the actually articulated implication views will convince my audience that such views are unpromising, particularly if a sufficiently unproblematic, distinct view of metaphorical meanings can be found.

1. Implications

Often the hearer of an utterance is justified in inferring propositional information that is not the meaning of the sentence expressed by the speaker, nor a primary proposition the speaker intends to convey with his utterance, nor what the hearer understands to be a primary proposition conveyed by the utterance. A sentence meaning is composed from the semantics of its constituent words (disambiguated and indexically saturated) in their syntactic relations to one another. Utterance meanings are primary propositions meant by speakers or grasped by hearers. They often go beyond sentence meanings in requiring primary pragmatic enrichment—specifically, the inferential, context-sensitive processes of addition and adjustment are required by hearers to derive utterance meanings (insofar as these differ from sentence meanings).[46] But a hearer is often also licensed to infer still further propositional content from an utterance in context. In such cases, utterances *imply* further propositional information—such further propositional information constitutes the class of implications

Implications come in several varieties distinguishable according to how one is licensed to infer the relevant proposition. I will offer a partial tour. Let *p* be the sentence or utterance meaning that serves (along with relevant background information) as the inference base for *q*, the implication. In the case of entailment, one is licensed to infer *q* because if *p* is true then *q* must be true. *Ella is president and Sal is Prime Minister*, entails *Ella is president*. In the case of presupposition, one is licensed to infer *q* because,

[46] The conversational apparatus I am alluding to here will be discussed in more detail in the next several chapters.

p—the (necessarily) truth-evaluable proposition—would lack truth value (so, not exist as a proposition) if *q* were false. To put things differently, the relevant sentence or utterance would be meaningless if *q* were false. The most famous example of a presupposed proposition is, *the present King of France exists*, which is presupposed by, "The present king of France is bald".[47] Two other classes of implications are licensed, not because of logical relations they bear to the propositions expressed by sentences and utterances, but rather because it would not be rational for the speaker to say what she says unless she believes the implicated proposition. In the case of conventional and conversational implicatures, on the assumption that the speaker is abiding by the cooperative principle, the hearer is licensed to infer that the speaker believes *q* because she expresses *p*. A hearer can infer a conventional implicature on the basis of what the speaker says itself, independent of important contributions from context. *Russ is a Republican Congressman, but he's not a closeted homosexual*, conventionally implicates, *most Republican Congressmen are closeted homosexuals*. A conversational implicature, on the other hand, can be inferred from what the speaker says on the basis of context. If we're discussing what movie to go see and you say, "*The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* is supposed to be good," I can infer, *that you're suggesting we see The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Conventional implicatures are sometimes claimed to be inferred fairly automatically, without the explicit reasoning Grice thought was indicative of

[47] The existence of presupposition is controversial. For some history of the debate, see Strawson (1950), Kartunnen (1973), and Lycan (1984: Chapter 4).

conversational implicatures.[48] Conversational implicatures are also thought to be cancellable. Conventional implicatures are not.

Many implication accounts of metaphorical meanings have focused on the class of conversational implicatures, as that notion is articulated by Grice (1989). These views will constitute my target in the next section.

2. Gricean Implicature Views of Metaphorical Meanings

Many cognitivists about metaphor have equated metaphorical meanings with conversational implicatures as understood according to Grice's (1989) seminal framework. I will call these *Gricean Implicature Views* (*GIV*s). *GIV*s hold that metaphorical meanings are truth-evaluable, conversational implicatures. Such implicatures are generated in order to make someone's utterance consistent with the cooperative principle. As Grice writes:

> A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, provided that (1) he is presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the Cooperative Principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in *those* terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) is required (30-31).

When someone who is supposed not to be opting out of the communication exchange utters a sentence, and the meaning of the sentence or the primary proposition expressed by the utterance is obviously false, uninformative, or otherwise seems to violate one of Grice's maxims of communication (or the Cooperative Principle itself), then the supposition that he believes the implicated proposition is required to make his speaking

[48] See Lycan (2000: Chapter 13); but also see Saul (2002), who discusses the need to regard even the reasoning involved in the derivation of conversational implicatures as not actual reasoning, but a rational reconstruction of possible routes to an implicature.

as he does consistent with the supposition that he is not opting out of the communication exchange. In such an instance, the implicated proposition constitutes a conversational implicature. Metaphorical meanings are one class of conversational implicatures according to the *GIV*.

Although literal utterance and sentence meanings and metaphorical meanings are both propositional according to *GIV*s, these views also draw a natural distinction between metaphorical meanings and the other two sorts of linguistic meanings. Literal meanings, they claim, are composed from the meanings of actually pronounced words, adjusted (so far as necessary) according to primary pragmatic processes that do not involve deductive calculation from truth-evaluable propositions, while metaphorical meanings are inferentially grounded—deduced from literal sentence meanings and background knowledge, including maxims of communication and features of the conversational context.

*GIV*s find support in the fact that the literal meaning of many a metaphorical utterance is wildly false or plainly obvious—thereby violating Grices maxims of quantity and quality. One says, “Waiting for the printer is twenty to life!” Well, clearly it is not. Assuming one is not opting out of the communication exchange, it’s natural to suppose that one means to imply something else by one’s utterance. We all seem to have the same intuitive understanding of what’s implied here, though we may offer distinct interpretations of it.[49] “Manhattan is an island,” is plainly obvious to the Manhattanite who says it and the one who hears it. Assuming the utterance makes a contribution, one

[49] Ordinary language users (and some philosophers, such as Searle, 1977) might contend that something like, “Waiting for the printer is tedious and of indeterminate length,” is implied by the utterance. Some, such as perhaps Aristotle, suggested that what is meant here is best captured by a literal comparison, “Waiting for this printer is *like* twenty-to-life.” Fogelin (1988) would offer a figurative simile, “Waiting for this printer is *like* twenty-to-life,” so, not dissolving the problem of figurative meaning, but reducing the problems of metaphor and simile to a single problem of figuration.

assumes the speaker means to imply *that Manhattan is a place of emotional isolation*, perhaps, or *that Manhattan is significantly different from the rest of the country*, or something else, depending on context.

But while the sentence or utterance meanings of many metaphors are obviously false, uninformative, or otherwise raise flags so far as the Cooperative Principle is concerned, not all do. What is essential to a *GIV* view is that, for any metaphor, a literal understanding of the utterance fails, on its own, to satisfy certain principles of communication setting us off in search of a metaphorical meaning—an implication—that puts the utterance right, relative to those principles. But there are metaphorical speech acts for which the sentence or utterance meaning itself, independent of posited implicatures, conforms to Grice's maxims of conversation. Consider the following story, based on part of *The Blue Cliff Record*, a fundamental text for Zen Kōan study, compiled in 1125 AD:[50]

> The head monk, known for his mystical, affectless remarks, met the Zen master, Tokusan, when he came to the meditation hall with his mat. Tokusan held his mat before him in a ceremonial fashion. But, when the head monk turned to pick up his ceremonial whisk, Tokusan shouted, "None, none!" and, flourishing his sleeves, went out. He turned his back on the meditation hall, put on his straw sandals and left. Later that evening, Isan asked the head monk, "Where is the newcomer who was here a while ago?" The head monk responded flatly, "He soon turned his back on the Dharma hall, put on his straw sandals and went away. One day he will build a grass hut upon a lonely peak and scold the buddhas and abuse the patriarchs."

In this story, the head monk may mean, and Isan may understand the monk to mean, both of his uttered sentences figuratively. Let's consider the first clause of the head monk's utterance, "He soon turned his back on the Dharma hall." Isan may understand what the head monk intended him to metaphorically understand, which we could (at least roughly) signify with, *Tokusan chose to ignore organized spirituality.* But the utterance—

[50] See http://perso.ens-lyon.fr/eric.boix/Koan/Hekiganroku/index.html.

understood literally—is true. Tokusan did turn his back on the Dharma hall, put on his straw sandals, and go away. The head monk knows this. Isan has no reason to believe it is not actually the case. So the literal meaning neither violates nor appears to violate a maxim of quality. The literal interpretation of this utterance would also be informative, since Isan does not know where Tokusan actually went, or that he left, and it does not seem too informative—so maxims of quantity are not violated. Given Isan's question, which we can suppose was intended literally, the literal interpretation of the head monk's utterance would also have been relevant, so it would not violate a maxim of relation. Nor was the head monk's utterance unduly prolix, ambiguous or obscure. The head monk's utterance, we may suppose, did not include a special emphasis or cue—so the literal utterance has no issues, so far as the maxims of manner are concerned. A literal understanding of the head monk's utterance does not appear to violate any conversational maxim, yet it is still meant and Isan is still inclined to take it metaphorically. Similar comments could be made about the remainder of the head monk's remarks. These are metaphorical utterances that one cannot accommodate without abandoning the central feature of the *GIV*, that literally understood metaphorical utterances are implicatures arising from a desire to maintain an utterance's consistency with the Cooperative Principle and Grice's conversational maxims.

Of course, one might contend that it's just natural, makes the most sense, or is most salient, given background information, to eschew the literal meaning of the utterance and take the head monk metaphorically, as meaning *that Tokusan chose to ignore organized spirituality.* Searle (1977) endorses just such a move when he writes, "when reading Romantic poets, we are on the lookout for metaphors, and some people we know are simply more prone to metaphorical utterances than others" (105). Searle thinks that most metaphors violate Grice's maxims, but he admits that not all of them do. I believe this emendation is warranted, but it raises fundamental problems for understanding metaphorical meanings as *Gricean* conversational implicatures. It is of the essence of such implicatures that they are occasioned when the literal meaning of the sentence is false, uninformative, or otherwise strains Grice's maxims of communication.[51] Searle's emendation makes his view more plausible, but it also removes it from the strict category of Gricean Implicature Accounts. Nonetheless, I will raise independent issues for Searle's implication account in the next section.

3. Searle's Implication Account of Metaphorical Meanings:

According to Searle's view, which I will non-commitally refer to as a general *Implication View* (IV), metaphorical meanings are speaker meanings generated by performance of the relevant speech act in its context. My central challenge to Searle's account is the following: Even if it is true, it does not constitute an answer to the central question of this dissertation. Searle's view fails to explain how figurative utterances are distinct from literal utterances (or, at least, how people distinguish them). It does not identify the feature or group of features in virtue of which an utterance is figurative (in the folk-linguistic sense) rather than literal. This problem will be central to the next few chapters, so it will help to have a specific name for it. I will call it:

> *The Differentiation Problem*: The problem from which a theory of figurative language suffers when it fails to identify features in virtue of which a speech act, utterance, sentence or other linguistic item is figurative rather than literal.

[51] See also Davis (1998), who develops a devastating attack on the Gricean view in general, not as it specifically relates to figurative language.

As an instance of the problem consider *GIV*s again, specified as those theories that identify metaphors as instances of communication in which a conversational implicature is inferentially grounded in literal sentence or utterance meaning, maxims of communication, and context. Such views fail to distinguish metaphors from non-figurative instances of communication, since non-figurative instances of implicature calculation rely on the same resources *GIV*s identify. Suppose, for example, that Tess says, “The chest of drawers has come,” in response to Tim’s question , “Has the bedroom set arrived?” Taken by itself, her response is not sufficiently informative by Grice’s standards. As a result, it gives rise to the inference *that, of the bedroom set they ordered, only the chest of drawers has come*. But this is the same explanation *GIV*s offer of a metaphorical speech act such as an assertion of “Al-Zarqawi is an animal.” If we understand this speech act to assert simply the content that is determined compositionally from the meanings of the words pronounced, we will regard it as uninformative. Thus we infer the intended implicature *that al-Zarqawi is a brute, incapable of human emotion*. *GIV*s offer no theoretical distinction between these two instances of communication and so succumb to the differentiation problem.

Generally speaking, *GIV*s do not directly address the differentiation problem; so they don’t try to identify distinctive features of metaphorical, as opposed to literal, speech acts. But particular implicature views have included features that purport to allow for a metaphorical/literal distinction. Searle (1979), for example, locates the distinction in what the hearer needs in order to understand each kind of utterance:

> In order to understand the [literal] utterance, the hearer does not require any extra knowledge beyond his knowledge of the rules of language, his awareness of the conditions of utterance, and a set of shared background assumptions…In order to understand the metaphorical utterance, the hearer requires something more than [this].

> He must have some other principles, or some other factual information, or some combination of principles and information that enables him to figure out that when the speaker says, "*S* is *P*," he means "*S* is *R*" (84-85).

In fact, Searle thinks that the hearer needs a combination of additional principles and information to figure out metaphorical meanings.

Searle divides the task of understanding a figurative utterance into three distinct stages. First, we see that we need to give a figurative interpretation to the utterance. Second, we look for features the two things being compared have in common (*S* and *P*) to generate potential figurative meanings. Third, we narrow down the possible meanings to the likely one, often on the basis of contextual information. I will consider each of these stages of interpretation to see whether any suggests a process distinctive of figurative language interpretation—and conclude that none does.

The first principle clearly fails to identify anything distinctive of figurative language, since Searle is with the *GIV* theorists in maintaining that the primary way by which one recognizes that an utterance requires a figurative interpretation is a way in which one recognizes that speaker meaning differs from sentence meaning in literal instances of communication. He writes:

> Strictly speaking, whenever we talk about the metaphorical meaning of a word, expression, or sentence, we are talking about what a speaker might utter it to mean, in a way that departs from what the word, expression, or sentence actually means (77).

But the primary principle he identifies whereby one concludes that a metaphorical speaker meaning is required—"Where the utterance is defective if taken literally, look for an utterance meaning that differs from sentence meaning" (105)—clearly embraces instances in which a hearer would conclude that a speaker is conversationally implicating a particular proposition, but would not normally consider the speech act figurative. Such instances include Tess's utterance about the chest of drawers above.[52] Therefore, this criteria is not sufficient to distinguish figurative from literal utterances. What's more, it's not even necessary that all metaphorical utterances, when taken literally, be defective, as the example involving Tokusan above demonstrates. So let's move on to the more important second phase of Searle's account.

In the second phase, one identifies potential figurative speaker meanings. Here eight principles for computing potential metaphorical meanings from literal sentences are identified. Searle's evidence for each seems to derive from the fact that it captures a relation between P (a term's standard meaning) and R (its meaning in context) in easily envisioned instances in which the metaphorical meaning of an utterance, "The S is P," is *the S is R*. To see this, consider the second of Searle's principles (reconstructed from discussion on 107-8): Things that are P are contingently, but saliently or well known to be, R. Pigs are not always or by definition filthy, gluttonous, and sloppy (think of a pet potbelly pig). Nonetheless, since the most salient examples of pigs are farm animals, the relation obtains between P and R in the easily envisioned instance Searle mentions, that in which the utterance of, "Sam is a pig…will be taken to mean…*Sam is filthy, gluttonous, and sloppy, etc.*" (107). So, this principle could well be involved in figuring out the meaning of such a metaphor.

The problem is that such evidence also supports the conclusion that this principle is involved in understanding literal utterances, where the *literal* meaning of an utterance of the sentence, "The S is P," is *the S is R*. Consider an example from Searle's own, "Literal Meaning" (1978):

[52] Searle writes, "The defects which cue the hearer may be obvious falsehood, semantic nonsense, violations of the rules of speech acts, or violations of conversational principles of communication" (105).

> …as we are strapped in the seats of our space ship in outer space we see a series of cat-mat pairs floating past our window. Oddly, they come in only two attitudes. From our point of view they are either…[with the cat above the mat or with the mat above the cat.]… "Which is it now?", I ask. "The cat is on the mat," you answer. Have you not said exactly and literally what you meant (123)?

I agree that in this case you have said exactly and literally what you meant. But what is it you have said? It is not *that the cat is gravitationally oriented above the mat*, but rather something to the effect *that the cat is visually oriented above the mat*. But how is it that I am able to figure out that this is what you mean? Searle contends that the meaning in such cases (which he takes to be typical) is determined, "against a background of assumptions" (131). But what particular assumptions does he have in mind? As in the case of the metaphor about pigs, things that are 'on' other things are not by definition visually oriented above those things (I can hang upside down and still see that the cat is on the mat, even though the cat is not visually oriented above the mat, from my point of view). But they are saliently or well known to be so oriented. So it seems that the way I figured out the literal truth conditions of what you said about the cat and the mat may have been—as Searle claims for metaphors—by means of the relevant principle.[53] My point is that there is evidence for assigning a role to this principle of Searle's in literal utterance interpretation that is as compelling as the evidence he cites for assigning it a role in metaphorical interpretation, and no reason for denying it such a role. Hence there's no reason to suppose that it underwrites a distinction between figurative and literal speech acts.

[53]There's a more direct route to the sentence or utterance meaning in this case, through my own experience of the cat, visually oriented above the mat, and some assumptions that you must be having the same experience. But to block this path, we would just have to render me blind. Assuming I still knew we were in outer space, I would still take the purported meaning as the literal meaning, and could well employ the relevant principle in working it out.

This point generalizes to each of the first five principles Searle identifies as, "principles according to which the utterance of *P* can call to mind the meaning *R* in ways that are peculiar to metaphor" (107). I'll offer a counter example to the definitiveness of each of these remaining five in turn:

1. "Things which are *P* are by definition *R*. Usually, if the metaphor works, *R* will be one of the salient defining characteristics of *P*" (107).

   Mr. Jones, secretary to the President at Globotronmegacorp, is being interrogated by an investigator, who's trying to determine whether, Mr. Peters, President of the corporation, is an abusive employer. The investigator is pushing Jones about his impressions of Peters as a boss. Jones is equivocating. Frustrated, the investigator says, "Look, Jones, we're collecting statements from all of Peter's employees. You're his *secretary*." Clearly the investigator means to remind Jones that he is one of Peters' employees. By saying, "You're his secretary," the investigator means, *you're his employee*, and he conveys this in virtue of the fact that being an employee is one of the salient defining characteristics of being a secretary. However, no one would class this as a figurative utterance.

3. (Principle 2 was discussed in detail above.) "Things which are *P* are often said or believed to be *R*, even though hearer and speaker may know that *R* is false of *P*" (108).

   Vinnie and Valerie, two botanists, are at the grocery store with Vern, Valerie's uneducated uncle. They are working to fill a shopping list that specifies (among other things) the following produce: carrots, celery, cucumbers, spinach, tomatoes, and several varieties of peppers. Vinnie says to Valerie and Vern, "Go get the vegetables." In their intersubjective, scientific idiolect, Vinnie and Valerie may never take "vegetable" to refer to any technical fruit, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers. Nonetheless, both know that "vegetable" is often (and particularly by Vern) said and believed to include such items. So, Valerie may interpret Vinnie to mean by, "Go get the vegetables," *go get the edible, savory plants*, though this is not what vegetable means to Valerie and Vinnie. Nonetheless neither, nor anyone else, would ordinarily regard this as a figurative utterance.

4. "Things which are *P* are not *R*, nor are they like *R* things, nor are they believed to be *R*; nonetheless, it is a fact about our sensibility, whether culturally or naturally determined, that we just do perceive a connection, so that *P* is associated in our mind with *R* properties" (108).

   Nel and Nancy are two neurologists trying to treat a brain disorder in their patient, Paul. Nel tells Nancy about the man's condition, saying, "His main problem is the persistent pain in his leg." Now, Nel and Nancy both understand that pains are not *really* located in legs, nor are pains like things in legs, so, clearly, Nel and Nancy don't believe pains to be in legs. Nonetheless, Nel and Nancy, for whatever cultural/natural reason both associate Paul's experiencing his leg painfully with things located in legs. Thus, Nancy understands Nel to mean, *His main problem is that he persistently experiences his leg painfully*, when she says, "His main problem is the persistent pain in his leg." This is intuitively not a figurative utterance.

5. "*P* things are not like *R* things, and are not believed to be like *R* things; nonetheless the condition of being *P* is like the condition of being *R*" (109).

To illustrate this principle, Searle uses the example of someone who has just received a promotion. It would be metaphorical to say of this person (let us call him John), "John is an aristocrat." However, it is not clear that this is a good example to illustrate Searle's principle, or even that such an example—an example of some *P* that is not like *R*, but for which the condition of being *P* is like the condition of being *R*—is possible. If the condition of being an aristocrat is like the condition of being promoted, then an aristocrat is like one who has just been promoted, at least insofar as his situation is similar to that of one who has just been promoted. If Searle wants to maintain that sometimes *P* is not like *R*, even though *P* is like *R* in just those respects that being *P* is like being *R*, then he must think there are other respects in which P is not like R that do not correspond to ways in which being *P* is not like being *R*. But what differences are there between being an aristocrat and being one who has just gotten a promotion that are not differences between the condition of being an aristocrat and the condition of having just been promoted? I can think of none. But recall: Searle's principles are meant to be ways in which we associate the term *P* with the concept *R*. Perhaps then he does not need an example for which, strictly, *P* is not like *R* though the condition of being *P* is like the condition of being *R*. He needs only an example whereby we work out *R* from *P* by thinking of the ways in which being *P* is like being *R*, not the ways in which *P* is like *R*. That seems more tractable, and makes Searle's example more applicable. But it also makes the principle easier to counterexample. Suppose we are driving on the interstate when I suddenly announce, while putting on my blinker and merging with the exit ramp, "We've got to stop here. My gas tank is empty." Then it would be reasonable for you to interpret me as meaning, *My gas tank is almost empty*. And, insofar as you needed to work out what I mean, you would presumably work it out by reflecting, not on the similarities between an empty tank and an almost empty tank, but rather on the similarities between the condition of having an empty tank and the condition of having an almost empty tank, the most salient similarity between the two consisting in their both being instances in which more gas is needed. Nonetheless, though my utterance may be loose it is intuitively non-figurative.

Searle's sixth "principle" does not require a counter-example, because, as I'll explain, it actually fails to have the proper form of a principle according to which the utterance of *P* can call to mind the meaning *R*. It is:

6. "There are cases where *P* and *R* are the same or similar in meaning, but where one, usually *P*, is restricted in its application, and does not literally [i.e. actually] apply to *S*" (109).

   But this just captures a fact about some sentences where *P* is used to mean *R* and could not even potentially be used for working out the meaning *S is R* from "S is *P*," in either literal or figurative instances of conversation. Searle's examples are all ones where either *S is R* would be equivalent to *S is P* (as in, "The souffle is addled") or else ones where what is meant by "S is P" would be worked out according to one of the other principles he mentions (such as by principle 4, in the case of, "His brain is addled").

Searle's seventh and eighth principles also require special treatment. Principle seven provides, "a way of applying principles 1-6 to simple cases which are not of the form '*S* is *P*' but relational metaphors, and metaphors of other syntactical forms such as those involving verbs and predicate adjectives” (109). In fact, Searle only considers the case of relational metaphors such as, “Sam devours books,” or, “The ship ploughs the sea.” In such cases, Searle claims that:

> ...the hearer’s job is to find a relation (or property) that is similar to or otherwise associated with, the relation or property literally expressed by the metaphorical expression *P* [e.g. ‘devours’ or ‘ploughs’]; and the principles function to enable him to select that relation or property by given him a respect in which the *P*-relation [e.g. S devouring S, or S ploughing S] and the *R*-relation might be similar or otherwise associated (110).

Since actual and (this instance of) metaphorical ploughing are related to one another definitionally, in that, “ploughing is by definition partly a matter of moving an object to either side of a pointed object while the object moves forward” (110), in this case principle one gives the hearer the respect in which the *R*-relation is selected. (Though, according to Searle, it does not supply everything the hearer understands the *R*-relation to include; the *R*-relation includes other properties not shared by the *P*-relation.) But the same modification of principle one has application in intuitively non-figurative instances of communication. In Japan, chopsticks, since they are the only traditional dining utensil, have a variety of uses, including separating food items using a scissor-like motion. Suppose Alexa has just moved to the country and sees Tomoki separate a daifuku[54] into two pieces in this manner. Alexa might say, “Tomoki cut the daifuku with his chopsticks,” meaning to express with “cut” an idea that is definitionally related to cutting with scissors, in that it involves separating something in to two or more pieces, but is also somewhat different. Nonetheless this strikes me as a perfectly literal description of what Tomoki did. Searle does not show that this principle can successfully modify all previously principles to formulate principles whereby people might reach metaphorical

[54] A kind of sweet made of mochi filled with red bean paste. The words “dai fuku” translate to “great fortune”.

meanings for instances of all grammatical forms of figurative language. Nor will I show that each potential modification could also be used to deliver a speaker meaning in related instances of literal communication. In each case, I trust it could be done.

Finally, let us briefly consider Searle's eighth principle, which points out that people could also view metonymy and synecdoche as special cases of metaphor that each specify a distinctive principle whereby one comes to interpret an expression "*P*" to mean *R*. In the case of metonymy, the purported principle is, things that are *P* are contiguous or otherwise intimately associated with things that are *R*. So, Gertie may figuratively alert Monica to their teenage daughters' arrival by saying metonymically, "The phone is home from school." But if a stranded motorist asks me, in an urban setting, where a gas station is, I can respond in an intuitively literal way by saying, "that there's one on the other side of this building," meaning to implicate *that there is one in a place contiguous to the other side of this building*. This is a literal instance of communication, though one in which the speaker meaning is worked out according to the principle of metonymy. Synecdoche encompasses several related relationships, but we can focus on one of these relationships and suppose that Searle's principle for this trope would be something like the following: in the case of synecdoche, one comes to interpret an utterance of "*P*" to mean *R* in virtue of the fact that *P* is a part of *R*. But if President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton are speaking on the phone, she can respond literally to his request to let him know the minute the plane lands, by saying, "The landing gear just touched ground." He understands that she means, *the plane landed*, because the landing gear is part of the plane. This is a literal instance of communication.

I trust that the previous discussion adequately demonstrates that the principles Searle isolates for his second stage of metaphor processing will actually not serve to distinguish figurative from literal speech acts. So let us turn finally to stage three. Here, Searle contends, there are certain principles for figuring out which interpretation of, *S is R*, best suits the context once we have generated potential values for R. Searle states only one of these principles explicitly: *Go back to the S term and see which of the many candidates for the values of R are likely or even possible properties of S* (106). But this principle cannot underwrite a distinction between metaphorical implications and literal sentence meanings, since this principle is also used in figuring out certain literal sentence meanings. Suppose you asked what Dave does for a living, and I replied, "Dave is the President of the corporation." If you knew Dave to be my neighbor in the isolated town in which Globotronmegacorp (and no other corporation) is headquartered, you would be able to determine the reference of the indexical term, "the corporation". You would grasp my literal sentence meaning, *that Dave is the President of Globotronmegacorp*. This is literal sentence meaning *even if* you determine the reference of the indexical by going back to the S term ('Dave') and determining which of the many values of R ('Wal-Mart,' 'Pepsico,' 'Globotronmegacorp,') are likely properties of S, given your knowledge of Dave. Thus Searle's stage three principle also fails to distinguish figurative from literal utterances.

None of the principles or information Searle identifies can underwrite a plausible distinction between figurative and literal instances of communication. I have not taken a stance as to whether or not the principles Searle identifies are principles relevant to grasping metaphorical meanings, indeed I am inclined to think that some principles very like these are sometimes relevant. But, unlike Searle, I maintain that the meanings thereby grasped are not *figurative* utterance meanings in virtue of being grasped by means of these principles.

4. Why Use Figurative Language?

I think the previous discussion is sufficient to raise serious doubts about Implication Views (IV) of metaphorical meaning.[55] If another account of figurative language understanding does not face similar serious issues—as I will argue my own view does not—then I think we should abandon *IV*s in favor of that view. Nonetheless, I will briefly discuss another shortcoming of the *IV*, mainly by way of contrasting the Implication Account of Figurative Language with that of Indirect Speech and as a way of raising an issue that I think my own view needs to address in the chapters to follow.

Another theoretical shortcoming of the *IV* is its failure to include a specific account of why we use metaphorical language. If, as Grice supposed, requirements to be relevant and perspicuous follow from the cooperative aims of communication, why in the case of metaphor do we make our conversational partners take the circuitous route that the *IV* contends we make them take to reach the informative, metaphorical message? In the case of indirect speech, for which Searle (1975) also offers an *IV* account, there is a readily available general (though perhaps not universal) account for why we make our conversational partners go through the trouble: It is more polite to do so. In other words, it makes our conversational partners think better of us. So, we do not make them go through the trouble as a bit of altruism—as though they'll get something out of it. Rather,

[55] And there are other challenges for *IA* as well. As Camp (2009) summarizes, metaphorical meanings do not pattern with other implicatures. Bezuidenhout (2001) points out that we can report what is said by the speaker of a metaphor by way of a paraphrase of the metaphorical meaning of his utterance. Hills (1997) and Bezuidenhout (ibid) illustrate that we can explicitly respond to the figurative content of a metaphorical utterance. And Leezenberg (2001) recognizes that many metaphorical meanings are not cancelable.

our aims are self-serving. If Jim commands his partner to *pick up dinner*, not by commanding directly but by asking, “Can you pick up dinner?” what he says is more polite in at least two respects:

> Firstly, *X* does not presume to know about *Y*’s abilities, as he would if he issued an imperative sentence; and, secondly, the form gives—or at least appears to give—*Y* the option of refusing, since a yes-no question allows *no* as a possible answer. Hence, compliance can be made to appear a free act rather than obeying a command (48).

But though the extravagances of indirect speech may in general be warranted by constraints of civility, instances of metaphorical communication seem too motley a crew to admit of an in-general explanation. For example, a proponent of *IV* may attempt to respond that in the case of metaphor we generally put our audience through the trouble of deriving implicated meanings in order to entertain them—to have them consciously ponder the inappropriate, but amusing, beautiful, or shocking literal meanings of our utterance. But if this is right, then for most utterances *IV* theorists would class as figurative, our aim of consciously entertaining our audience is unrealized. Reflect on the many metaphors that appear frequently in formal discussion and casual conversation.[56] In many such cases, the converser does not pause to appreciate the inappropriate, though potentially entertaining, literal meaning. Instead, the metaphorical meaning—which is true and informative—is generally quickly derived and the conversation moves along.

This is only a brief consideration, raised here because of Searle’s on laudable attempt at answering a similar “why” question for indirect speech. I do not think a *general* answer to the “why” question in the case of figurative language will be forthcoming. But I will

[56] Low, Littlemore and Koester (2008, Applied Linguistics) found that lexical items were used metaphorically 10-13 percent of the time in three UK lectures. Low (in press. Metaphor and positioning in academic book reviews. In Zanotto, M., Cameron, L. &; Cavalcanti, M. (eds) *Confronting Metaphor in Use*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.) found that lexical items were used metaphorically 9-15 percent of the time in ten social science book reviews in academic journals.

sketch some explanations for some uses of metaphor in the seventh, and final, chapter of this dissertation.

5. Conclusion:

Once we have accepted cognitivism and moved away from the view that metaphorical meanings are expressed by implications of literally understood sentences or utterances, two options remain. Either metaphorical meanings are expressed by sentences—a Sentence Meaning View (SV)—or they are expressed by utterances—an Utterance Meaning View (UV). In the next chapter, I will discuss these two views. I will conclude that figurative meanings must be utterance meanings. However, those who have embraced an utterance meaning view have often (though not invariably) concluded that there is no significant linguistic category of figurative language. This eliminativism about the figurative is not only inconsistent with the evidence of a culturally universal, folk linguistic concept discussed in the first chapter, I believe it also results mainly from a failure of creativity and commitment to the traditional view that the class of the figurative must be defined by recourse to a special kind of meaning. This, I will argue in chapter 6, is not the case.

Chapter 5:

Sentence Meanings Vs. Utterance Meanings

At this point in our investigation into the folk distinction between figurative and literal language, we have ruled out non-cognitive accounts of metaphor understanding and seen that the best articulated implication views of metaphorical meaning are problematic. In this chapter, we will consider the possibility of equating metaphorical meanings with sentence meanings (the sentence meaning view, or *SV*), before settling on the utterance meaning view (*UV*) of metaphor. Finally, we will examine several accounts of the distinction between figurative and literal language developed by proponents of metaphorical utterance meanings.

1. Three Conceptions of Sentence Meaning

The notion of sentence meaning is vexed. So, to begin our consideration of whether metaphorical meanings could be sentence meanings, it will help to elucidate a few different general conceptions of sentence meanings. In their article, "Semantics, Pragmatics, and the Role of Semantic Content," Jeffrey King and Jason Stanley (2005) nicely distinguish three conceptions of what I am calling sentence meaning, each differentiated in terms of the role it specifies for context in determining sentence meaning. According to one of these conceptions of sentence meaning (drawn from the work of Richard Montague), which I will call the Context Independent Conception (CIC), King and Stanley write that, "semantic properties [sentence meanings] are only properties of expression types; any property that an expression type has only relative to a context (or any property expressed only by expression tokens) is not semantic" (137). For example, according to the CIC, traditional indexicals such as "I" and "tomorrow" do not contribute their referents to sentence meanings (though they may contribute a Kaplanian character, which is context-independent).

Two other accounts of sentence meaning discussed by King and Stanley are more permissive in that context can play some role in determining sentence meaning according to each of these conceptions. One of these conceptions, which I will call the Non-intentional Context Conception (NCC), is based on distinctions drawn in John Perry (2001). It emphasizes that we can distinguish the context sensitivity of expressions (and, thereby, their role in semantic content) in terms of the particular sort of contextual features which help determine their reference in instances of use. The NCC fundamentally distinguishes two kinds of contextual features: contextual features relating to the intentional states of speakers (intentional contextual features) and all other contextual features (non-intentional contextual features). Thus we can distinguish intentional contextual terms and non-intentional contextual terms by way of the kind of contextual features which determine their reference in use. Of course, this view maintains that there are also non-contextual terms, which make the same semantic contribution in each instance of use. According to the NCC, sentence meaning is fully determined by the lexical semantic contributions of a sentence's constituent non-contextual terms, the context-relative semantic contributions of a sentence's constituent non-intentional contextual terms, and the syntactic relations those bear to one another. As King and Stanley point out, this view is still fairly conservative since, aside from a very few expressions such as, perhaps, ‘I’ and ‘tomorrow’, most context sensitive expressions are intentional context sensitive expressions.

The third conception of sentence meaning distinguishes contextual features that contribute to semantic content not in terms of the nature of those features themselves, but rather in terms of the expressions the reference of which such features determine. As King and Stanley (2005) write, according to this view:

> Non-linguistic facts about the context of use are relevant for fixing the referential content of some lexical items, such as pronouns and unpronounced free variables. But the nature of the lexical item dictates what non-linguistic factors are relevant, and constrains the nature of its referential content in a context (139).

On this view, context only contributes to the determination of an expression insofar as the expression is or contains as part of its eternal meaning (or character) a lexical item that specifies the need to consult context to determine reference. Therefore, I will call this view the Lexically-constrained Context Conception of sentence meaning (LCC). The LCC holds that sentence meaning is fully determined by the lexical semantic contributions of a sentence’s constituent non-contextual expressions, the lexically constrained, context-relative semantic contributions of a sentence’s constituent contextual terms, and the syntactic relations those bear to one another. Because the lexical meanings of numerous expressions arguably dictate how and what contextual factors are relevant to determining reference in use, the LCC allows for the possibility that many communicated propositional contents (which are not implicatures) are sentence meanings.[57]

With these three views of sentence meaning on the table, let us return to our target question: Are metaphorical meanings sentence meanings? First consider CIC. This

[57] Jason Stanley (2002, 2004, 2005), among others, has been attempting to steadily expand the domain of lexically specified context sensitivity. Though his efforts have been met with much resistance.

conception of sentence meaning entirely excludes context sensitivity from semantic content, and therefore fails to accommodate metaphorical meaning as semantic content. For, as we will see by way of example (whether necessary or not), figurative meaning is a contextual feature. Suppose S is the sentence, "Truth is a woman." What is the metaphorical meaning of S? Of course, there is the compositional meaning of S. The sentence independent of context determines truth conditions and is, in the actual world at least, evaluable as false. But in context we would ordinarily attribute figurative meaning to an utterance of S that may, in the actual world, be true. Suppose, for example, that S were uttered by a practically minded scientist, whose discoveries have often found industrial application. In that case, one would understand an utterance of S to mean something like, *truth is something that can give rise to (as a woman can give birth to) new industrial methods and resources*. What's more, this would be understood as the figurative meaning of S in such a context and this figurative meaning is arguably true of the actual world. But suppose S were uttered, not by the aforementioned scientist, but by someone dubious of philosophical method, as it actually seems to have been uttered by Nietszche in the introduction to *Beyond Good and Evil*. In that context, one might understand an utterance of S to mean something like, *truth is something (like a woman) that philosophers are generally not very good at getting*. In that case, this would be understood as the figurative meaning of S—a figurative meaning that is also true of the actual world. Clearly, then, the figurative meaning of utterances of S are context sensitive. So, on CIC, figurative meaning cannot be sentence meaning.

These considerations also rule out the thesis that metaphorical meanings are semantic meanings according to the NCC account of sentence meaning. According to that view, only contextual features other than a speaker's intentional states contribute to sentence meaning. But, in these two cases, figurative meaning is determined explicitly by reference to speakers' intentional states. We would not understand what Nietzsche means by this figurative utterance unless we understood something about his perspective on philosophical method—perspective Nietzsche has to spell out in the next few lines of *Beyond Good and Evil*.

These considerations leave us with one viable account whereby figurative meaning may be understood as semantic meaning: LCC, according to which features of their Kaplanian characters determine which expressions are context sensitive. Should we accept, according to this view, that metaphorical meanings are sentence meanings? Well, that depends on whether or not the contextual features which determine an expressions' metaphorical reference are constrained by the metaphorical expression's eternal meanings, a topic I will now take up.

2. LCC and Metaphorical Sentence Meanings

Much recent discussion in philosophy of language has focused on the topic of the boundaries of sentence meaning. As Josef Stern (2009) points out, contextualists, who are generally, proponents of CIC or NCC (but think sentence components must be pragmatically adjusted to supply the propositional contents that are relevant to communication)—such as Bezuidenhout (2001), Carston and Wilson (2006), Sperber and Wilson (1995, 2006), and Recanati (2001, 2004)—have in this context specifically taken up the topic of figurative language, while proponents of LCC have mostly chosen to, "…simply file metaphor away in the waste-basket of pragmatics…" without serious discussion (2). However Stern (1985, 1991, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2009), a proponent of a version of LCC, has over the past twenty years been developing a sentence meaning account of metaphorical meanings, which analogizes metaphors to demonstratives. Of particular relevance here is Stern's assertion that certain tests of lexical constraint on context sensitivity support the conclusion that the context sensitivity of metaphors is lexically constrained, and thus, if one also accepts LCC, the conclusion that metaphorical meanings are—like a large class of non-metaphorical, communicatively significant, non-implications—sentence meanings. I will briefly introduce the two tests Stern (2009) discusses.

A variety of tests have been proposed for semantic context sensitivity. The ones Stern discusses are drawn from Cappelen and Lepore (2005), who embrace a version of LCC, but think that the domain of expressions that exhibit lexically constrained context sensitivity are very few (and thus that relatively few sentence meanings are context sensitive). Cappelen and Lepore offer three necessary and sufficient tests of semantic context sensitivity. Although Cappellen and Lepore do not directly discuss metaphors, Stern considers two of their tests and argues that these support a sentence meaning account of metaphorical meanings. The two tests Stern considers are the Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Report Blocking (ICDIRB) Test and the Collective Description Blocking (CDB) Test. I will consider each of these in turn.

Stern accurately and concisely defines Cappelen and Lepore's notion of an Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Report as follows:

> Take an utterance *u* of a sentence S by speaker A in context C. An Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Report of *u* is an utterance *u'* in a context C' (where C' ≠ C [in relevant respects]) of 'A said that S'(8).

According to Cappelen and Lepore, an expression is semantically context sensitive only if it blocks Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Reports—where a report is 'blocked' if, though formally accurate, the sentence in the relevantly distinct context expresses different semantic content (as revealed, for example, by differences in truth value). Or, as Cappelen and Lepore write:

> ...if *e* [an expression, i.e. a word or sentence] is context sensitive and Rupert uses *e* in context C, and Lepore uses it in context C', and the relevant contextual features change, then it will be just an accident if their uses of *e* end up with the same semantic value (89).

Take, for example, an utterance of the sentence, "Jessica went to the mall yesterday." If Jenny says truthfully on June 4th, "Jessica went to the mall yesterday," and John reports this in a relevantly different context (say, two days later), then John's formally accurate report of Jenny's truthful utterance is false. Clearly the locus of this inter-contextual disquotational trouble is the expression, 'yesterday,' since, if we substitute an appropriate stand in for this expression ('on the third of June, 2010'), we find that Inter-Contextual Disquotational Indirect Reports accurately report what was said. So, 'yesterday' blocks the relevant reports and therefore, according to the ICDIRB test, exhibits semantic context sensitivity.

If one embraces lexicalized constraints on sentence meaning, as Cappelen and Lepore do, this is a test one *might* accept for how to identify particular, sentence meaning constitutive, context sensitive expressions. But, according to Stern (2009), at least some metaphors arguably pass this test, as he attempts to show by way of an example involving Nixon. If in the midst of the Watergate hearings, Tip O'Neill says, "Nixon is a fish," in a context, "in which it is commonly presupposed that fish are slippery, slimy, and hard to catch" (9), then the figurative meaning of Tip's expression will be understood as, *Nixon is hard to catch*. But if an Alaskan fisherman, who understands fish to be, "easy to catch with a little patience and bait" (10), hears Tip's statement and later reports it to a concerned fisher-friend, then, according to Stern, the figurative meaning of the sentence is, *Nixon is easy to catch with a little patience and bait*. But, Stern writes:

> Tip did not say that. Thus expressions interpreted metaphorically also block inter-contextual disquotational indirect reports because they too shift semantic contents between relevantly different contexts of utterance (10).

We have seen how metaphorical expressions arguably pass one of Cappelen and Lepore's tests for contextually-sensitive, lexically constrained expressions. Let us turn now to a second of their tests: the Collective Description Blocking (CDB) Test. Cappelen and Lepore claim that:

> If a verb phrase *v* is context sensitive, then on the basis of merely knowing that there are two contexts of utterance in which 'A *v*-s' and 'B *v*-s' are true respectively, we *cannot* automatically infer that there is a context in which '*v*' can be used to describe what A and B have both done (99). [Cappelen and Lepore point out that parallel claims hold for other expressions that are not verb phrases.]

Accordingly, we can devise a test for context sensitivity. If we know there is a true utterance of, "Ned is a banker," and another true utterance of, "Ted is a banker," then we can automatically infer that there is a context in which "Ned and Ted are both bankers" is true. So, 'is a banker,' is not a context sensitive verb phrase. However, if we know there is a true utterance of, "Laura is my sister," and another true utterance of, "Maura is my sister," we cannot automatically infer that there is a context in which there is a true utterance of "Laura and Maura are my sisters." So, 'is my sister,' is a context sensitive verb phrase. But, Stern claims, metaphors also pass this test for semantic context sensitivity. Suppose I have a fat friend Fred and a slovenly friend Red. Then, even if we know there is a true utterance of, "Fred is a pig," and another true utterance of, "Red is a pig," we cannot clearly automatically infer that there is a true utterance of "Fred and Red are pigs".

What should we conclude from Stern's discussion? First of all, I do not think it is entirely clear that metaphorical expressions do pass each of these two tests. It is pretty obvious that Stern misapplies Cappelen and Lepore's proposed test. Notice, that test is supposed to examine whether different, "uses of *e* end up with the same ***<u>semantic</u>*** value" (89). Thus, the test focuses on *sentence meaning*, but Stern uses a difference in *speaker meaning*—writing, "Tip did not say that"—to conclude that the metaphorical sentence shifts semantic content between the two contexts. So, Stern misapplies the test. For what it's worth, my intuition is that the Alaskan fisherman's use of *e* does have the same semantic value as Tip's (though, given his theoretical commitments, I wouldn't be surprised if Stern's "intuition" about the semantics of this expression in the two contexts differed). Similarly, it's important to note that the relevant base of knowledge on which the second test rests is one in which we know, "that there are two contexts of utterance in which 'A *v*-s' and 'B *v*-s' [that is, the sentences] are true respectively." But to assume that we know *that* in the case of "Fred is a pig" and "Red is a pig" is to beg the question against those who would deny metaphorical sentence meanings! So, I'm not much impressed by Stern's discussion of Cappelen and Lepore's tests.

My and Stern's clash of intuitions in the Nixon case actually brings up a deeper objection to Cappelen and Lepore's (as well as Stern's) preferred method for adjudicating debates over semantic content. According to this method, those of us who are interested in issues of sentence meaning can determine what expressions are semantically context sensitive by applying certain tests. But, Cappelen and Lepore's tests both require us to assess *semantic* differences for expressions between contexts. Thus, Cappelen and Lepore's tests are circular. They are tests of semantic value that appeal to our understanding of semantic value! It is unsurprising then that interested parties have different intuitions about the relevant cases. Stern would intuit that the *semantic* content of Tip's sentence shifts between context. I do not. Cappelen and Lepore intuit that "tall" fails the CDB test (103), though by my lights it doesn't follow that, because, "Mt. Everest is tall," in one context, and, "Michael Jordan is tall," in another, there has to be a single context in which, "Mt. Everest and Michael Jordan are both tall," is true.[58] So, these purported tests for semantic context sensitivity are largely irrelevant.

Now, Stern's entire case for his metaphorical sentence meaning view does not rest on tests for semantic sensitivity (though it does in large part, see his *Metaphors in Context*, 2000, for the most considered case). Camp (2005) offers a more thoroughgoing and very compelling discussion of the shortcomings of Stern's arguments in favor of his view. But, I will not spend more time discussing those arguments here since, even if these fail, that could at most show that there is no positive reason to accept the view. What I want to do instead is offer two reasons to reject the view, which will first require a very short summary of the main feature of the view.

Stern's account of metaphor is equivalent to Kaplan's (1978) account of demonstratives. It is an LCC account of metaphorical sentence meanings which posits a metaphor operator at the level of logical form. When this 'Mthat' operator is attached to any ordinary expression Φ it transforms Φ into a context sensitive expression, according to the following rule:

> For every context *c* and for every expression Φ, an occurrence of 'Mthat [Φ]' in a sentence S (=…Mthat [Φ]…) in *c* (directly) expresses a set of properties P

[58] And see the work of Chris Kennedy (1999), who actually develops a theory of the semantic, context sensitivity of gradable adjectives that appeals to more than just the intuitions of an interested party about a single case.

> presupposed to be m-associated with Φ in c such that the proposition <…P….> is either true or false in the circumstance of c (115).

So, the sentence, "Red is a pig," uttered metaphorically in *c*, has the logical form, Red is Mthat [a pig]. Mthat [a pig] contributes to sentence meaning whatever properties are metaphorically associated with it in this context, such as, for instance, is dirty, smelly, ungroomed, etc.[59] So the meaning of, "Red is a pig," in the relevant context of utterance will amount to, *Red is dirty, smelly, ungroomed, etc.*

Stern's view of metaphorical sentence meaning suffers from at least four problems. First, note that other theories which posit hidden context sensitive arguments, such as Stanley and Szabo's (2000) account of quantifier domain restriction, claim that such arguments are present or absent in the logical form for *every occurrence* of a given sentence. Stern's view of the Mthat operator differs from these other theories in that the operators blink in and out of existence in morphologically equivalent pronouncements depending on the context of use. This has three bad consequences for the view. First, as Camp (2005) has noticed, it posits two logical forms for each sentence, so it semantically extravagant. In fact, since every expression which composes a sentence as well as the sentence as a whole can each be given a figurative interpretation, there are multiple logical forms associated with a single sentence, which is *quite* semantically extravagant. Second, since the Mthat operator is not univocally associated with a given sentence, or even a given part of whatever sentence it happens to be associated with, the presence and position in logical form of an Mthat operator will have to be deduced from reflection on context. And, since context alone cannot determine whether or not a metaphorical

[59] Stern thinks that the conditions for m-association are quite diverse and, unlike Searle (1977), he doesn't think it is the job of the philosopher of language to give necessary and sufficient conditions for m-association.

interpretation is required irrespective of consideration of the specific sentence at hand, reflection on whether or not context designates an Mthat operator will have to be determined through some reflection on the sentence. Thus, Stern's view would seem to necessitate the following sort of interpretive strategy for metaphor:

1. Partially decode the sentence.
2. Compare the partially decoded sentence to context to see if the speaker intends a metaphorical interpretation (and for what expression).
3. Fully decode the logical form of the sentence (with the Mthat operator in place).
4. Consult context to specify the semantic contribution of Mthat [Φ] and thus the sentence meaning.

But this process is more procedurally extravagant than pragmatic accounts—either those which equate metaphorical meaning to implications (since calculation of implications is necessary in either case) or to utterance meanings (since those in effect skip the first two steps, as we shall see directly). Third, while Stern's view does attribute a difference between metaphorical and non-metaphorical sentences in context, and could thus explain the folk capacity to distinguish different utterances in use, people also consider particular sentences figurative or non-figurative independent of an associated context. It is unclear how Stern would explain this capacity. Finally, even if Stern's view could in principle explain the folk capacity to group sentences independently of context, it lacks the resources to explain folk applications of the concept "metaphor" to non-linguistic entities, such as images. For, clearly, these lack a linguistic form in which to embed a logical operator.[60]

[60] Of course, this is a defeasable consideration, since a unified linguistic/non-linguistic account of figuration may ultimately be untenable.

The most well developed account of metaphorical sentence meanings, Stern's account, which embraces the LCC, suffers from serious problems. Given the previous problems with a non-cognitivist account of metaphor understanding and an implication account of metaphorical meaning, our only remaining option would seem to be an utterance meaning view of figurative language. In the remainder of this section, I will discuss such a view. I think this is the most promising view for metaphorical meanings. However, it will not ultimately ground the folk notion of figuration.

3. Utterance Meanings

Let us step back from the notion of figurative language for a moment: In ordinary instances of communication—both figurative and literal—propositional contents are intuitively grasped as the meanings of utterances and contribute to the calculation of conversational implicatures. Often these intuitive utterance meanings differ from contents derivable via composition and linguistically mandated contextual specification of pronounced expressions. There are two primary responses to this divergence between utterance and pronounced expression meanings. *Indexicalists,* such as King and Stanley (2005), Stanley (2002, 2005), and Stanley and Szabo (2000), contend that utterance meanings are compositional from pronounced expressions *and* unpronounced (or covert) variables represented in the logical forms of sentences. According to indexicalists, context is relevant to utterance meaning calculation insofar as it is necessary for disambiguation and specification of pronounced and covert indexical expressions. But *Linguistic Contextualists,* such as Bezuidenhout (2002, 2006), Carston (2002, 2004), Recanati (2004), Sperber (1994), and Sperber and Wilson (1995), deny extensive covert structure, instead holding that utterance meanings are partially determined by pragmatic processes that operate on pronounced expressions, but are not linguistically mandated.[61] Contextualism allows for simpler syntax and semantics. Assuming the principles and processes necessary to calculate utterance meanings are independently necessary for implicature calculation, it delivers simplicity without the burden of additional theoretical posits. And given our discussion so far contextualist utterance meanings would seem to provide the best place to house metaphorical meanings. In this section, I will introduce the contextualist account of utterance meanings in general. In the next section, I will broaden this to figurative utterance meanings and explain how contextualism suffers from the differentiation problem. In the final substantive section, I'll discuss some contextualist responses to the problem.

Here are some utterances (constituted by expressions and the contexts in which they are spoken), followed by intuitive utterance meanings:

(1) a. The furniture set? [Uttered in an interrogative tone as a delivery truck drives away]
b. WAS THE NEW FURNITURE SET JUST DELIVERED?

(2) a. The noodles are on the table. [Spoken deep in a forest, with only a large stone nearby.]
b. THE NOODLES ARE ON THE NEARBY, TABLE-LIKE THING.

(3) a. There is a philosopher. [Said at a crowded APA meeting of a deservedly admired scholar]
b. THERE IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT PHILOSOPHER.

Contextualists contend (and I will assume) that the best characterization of such intuitive utterance meanings is not as sentence meanings or implications. Correspondingly,

[61] I call these theorists "*linguistic* contextualists" (though I will refer to them simply as "contextualists" henceforth) to distinguish them from contextualists within epistemology. Linguistic contextualism concerns the relation between sentence types, contexts, and intuitive meanings, whereas epistemic contextualism constitutes a family of claims concerning the context sensitivity of specific epistemic concepts. Linguistic contextualists defend certain claims about linguistic processing and the nature of sentences, about which epistemic contextualists are largely silent. See DeRose (1992) for a seminal instance of epistemic contextualism.

Contextualists deny (and I will stipulatively deny) that derivation of such meanings is explained in terms of working out covert indexical expressions or in terms of rational implicature calculation.[62] How then *is* derivation of these meanings explained according to contextualists? What processes of modification and principles for constraining utterance interpretation do contextualists propose?

We can draw various distinctions between 1-3. The processes contextualists posit to explain how utterance meanings are derived from expressions and contexts will vary across these distinctions. Utterances such as 1 are what Stainton (2004) calls 'non-sentential speech'—cases in which speakers, "utter things that are, both syntactically and semantically, subsentential, but...nevertheless manage to perform genuine speech acts (e.g. asserting) in so speaking" (284).[63] According to a familiar account of speech acts,[64] illocutionary acts, such as asserting or questioning, when felicitous, consist of propositional content (constituted by a reference and a predication) and illocutionary force. With the propositional content *the furniture set* [reference] *was delivered* [predication], one might perform a speech act with the illocutionary force of an assertion, a question, or so on. But without propositional content, one fails to perform a genuine speech act. In the case of non-sentential speech, speakers succeed in performing genuine speech acts, though the pronounced expressions are insufficient to determine the

[62] Jennifer Saul (2002) argues that, in distinguishing between what is said and what is implicated, Grice was concerned with what rational speakers, grasping conventional meanings and operating according to certain general principles of cooperative behavior, would interpret sentences and speakers to mean. Such rational interpretations, Saul points out, may lack psychological reality. Whether or not such unreal interpretations were Grice's actual target, they are orthogonal to the interpretations of interest to contextualists. Instead, we are here concerned with how utterances are actually interpreted in real instances of human communication.

[63] Given my technical specification of the notion of sentence in chapter 1, incomplete sentence is more appropriate.

[64] See Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Bach and Harnish (1979).

necessary reference or predication. Contextualists allege that such cases involve the non-mandated *Addition* of conceptual material to sub-propositional expression meanings.[65]

Utterances such as 2 and 3 behave differently. Although such pronounced expressions arguably determine a propositional content without modification, the proposition so determined differs from the intuitive utterance meaning. Contextualists treat instances similar to 2 and 3 as instances involving the non-mandated *Adjustment* of encoded meanings. Concepts are decoded, their extensions are pragmatically adjusted, and the adjusted extensions contribute to utterance meanings.[66] We can further distinguish between instances of adjustment like 2 and instances like 3. In 2, we first decode the extension of 'table'—an extension (let's suppose) including all and only pieces of furniture consisting of a flat top and some means of support—and then *Loosen* that extension to include non-furniture that can serve salient table functions. In 3, we decode the extension of 'philosopher'—including all and only those who practice philosophy—then *Tighten* that extension to exclude those not highly skilled in such practice.

Given the powerful resources of addition and adjustment, how do contextualists explain why any particular interpretation—*that the noodles are on the nearby table-like thing*, for instance—is arrived at and constitutes the meaning of the utterance, rather than some other interpretation in which the relevant concepts are either tighter or looser or the

[65] Bach (1994) divides what I am calling addition into two distinct processes. *Completion*, which most closely corresponds to what I have described, is the process whereby one transforms a non-propositional sentence meaning into a propositional utterance meaning via the addition of further conceptual material. *Expansion* is the process whereby one transforms an inaccurate, though propositional, sentence meaning to a more precise utterance meaning through the addition of further conceptual material. I will describe a different process for rendering inaccurate sentence meanings precise through the shaping of lexically encoded extensions, rather than the addition of conceptual material. There is debate over which process best describes what is going on in the case of inaccurate sentence meanings, as there is throughout the contextualist literature about what to call the various processes to which theorists appeal.

[66] I characterize adjustment of conceptual meaning externalistically, as adjustment of a concepts extension. But there is an internalist analogue in terms of adjustment of a concept's prototypical features list.

pronounced contributions are expanded through the addition of more conceptual material?[67] Contextualists constrain non-mandated processes of modification in two different ways. First, they claim these processes are at least logically posterior to the deductive process of decoding a pronounced expression. For instance, contextualists require that utterance meanings respect the syntax of expressions and that modification processes operate only on sub-propositional portions of expression meaning. Second, contextualists constrain utterance meanings by reference to the contexts in which expressions are uttered. As I will explain, they specifically claim that utterance interpretations are contextually constrained relative to general principles of communication and to general beliefs about one's conversational partners.

As an example of a general principle that some contextualists contend constrains interpretation relative to context, consider Sperber and Wilson's (1995) claim that "human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance" (260). Relevance is a property of beliefs—of which utterance meanings are a subset. A belief is relevant to the extent that it yields positive cognitive effects—that is, to the extent it strengthens or defeats existing beliefs or combines with existing beliefs to yield some new implications—and "to the extent that the effort required to achieve these positive cognitive effects is small" (266). According to *Relevance Theory (RT)*, communication is essentially a variety of cognition, so utterance interpretation and meaningful uttering are relevance maximizing.[68] For a basic example of how such relevance maximization serves

[67] The constraints on utterance meaning to be proposed should be understood as explaining not only why certain propositions are arrived at in an instance of interpretation, but also as specifying which of the propositions actually understood as being meant by a speaker is the utterance meaning, as opposed to an implicature, presupposition, or other implication of the utterance.

to constrain utterance interpretation, consider how a hearer, in the context of a crowded session at an APA meeting, interprets 3 above. Such a hearer is disinclined to take the pronounced expression at face value, as *there is someone who practices philosophy*, or to loosen the encoded meanings and interpret the utterance as *there is someone*, because either interpretation would derive the speakers utterance of adequate relevance *in a crowded room of random philosophers.*

Given contextualist principles of communication (such as the maxim of relevance), context can also serve to constrain utterance interpretation relative to general beliefs about one's conversational partners. Communicators will tacitly recognize, for instance, that they are similarly situated and constituted. So assessments of their own beliefs' salience will allow them to make more or less accurate predictions about what beliefs are salient from their communicative partners' points of view. Speakers can exploit such information to produce minimal utterances that convey relevant ideas. Hearers can exploit such information to accurately interpret such minimal utterances. In cases such as 1, in which certain beliefs (*a delivery was just made*) are particularly salient to a speaker, she might minimize effort by pronouncing a non-sentential expression. She can reasonably expect that the belief she finds salient is relatively salient to her similarly-located audience, and that based on the mutually recognized common salience of that belief, the highly relevant interpretation she intends (*Was the new furniture set just delivered?*) will be derived rather than some distinct interpretation (*Did you sell the old furniture set?*), to which the pronouncement might otherwise have been expanded. A

[68] Importantly, in any instance of interpretation RT holds that the utterance meaning one settles on is not necessarily the most relevant belief. Rather, it is a belief that fairly closely matches a presumption of relevance for a given utterance—a presumption conveyed by verbal cues and other aspects of the communicative act.

presumption of shared-belief is, however, defeasible, and the defeaters of that presumption can also inform communication. Even if the hearer in 2 can see what the speaker cannot—an actual picnic table, down a trail visible from just this angle—he will be likely to interpret the speaker as meaning *the noodles are on the nearby table-like thing*, rather than *the noodles are on the actual table*, having constrained his presumption of shared-belief through a recognition that the belief, *there's a table further down the trail*, is available only from his perspective.

Contextualists posit a model according to which linguistic stimuli—sentences, with their correspondent meanings—are unconsciously modified via linguistically mandated processes (such as indexical specification) and non-mandated processes (such as addition and adjustment) to achieve utterance meanings—the first deliverances of the linguistic system consciously available to hearers—which then contribute to the inferential calculation of implicatures.[69] In the next section, I will suggest that these tools for deriving and constraining literal utterance meanings also allow for the derivation of figurative meanings from intuitively figurative utterances. Thus contextualism identifies figurative meanings—in addition to literal meanings—with utterance meanings. But given this identification, how are figurative and literal utterances distinct?

4. Contextualism and the Differentiation Problem:

Here are some utterances, followed by their intuitive, *figurative* meanings in the suggested contexts:[70]

[69] Such a model is not unlike the model of the visual system offered by cognitive scientists. See Recanati (2004).

[70] As I will argue in this section, contextualists should classify such figurative meanings as utterance meanings.

(4) a. Businessmen are ogres. [Having just seen a CEO lay off hundreds of workers for personal gain]
b. BUSINESSMEN ARE CRUEL BEINGS.

(5) a. He is not a tiger. [Said of the crestfallen circus tiger at the end of a rusty chain]
b. HE IS NOT ONE EXHIBITING THE STEREOTYPICAL PROPETIES OF TIGERHOOD.

Unlike 2 and 3 above, 4 and 5 would ordinarily be classed as figurative utterances—or, more commonly (if loosely), as metaphors. Importantly, this is an ordinary classification. As mentioned in chapter 1, Philosophers and linguists sometimes refer to any utterance involving loose use as a figurative utterance. According to that term-of-art, 2-5 all constitute figurative utterances, as would these utterances: "I've got to *catch* a cab. My plane leaves at *five p.m.*" But we wouldn't *intuitively* classify such utterances as figurative utterances. As should be clear now, the criteria the ordinary classification of figurative language rests upon is not obvious. Presently, it is important to note only that there is such a distinction.[71]

Though 4 and 5 are intuitively figurative utterances, like 2 and 3 they are instances in which the predication decoded from the pronounced expressions makes for a proposition different from that grasped by hearers. So 4 and 5 appear to involve adjustment of encoded extensions. Four can be analyzed in terms of loosening. It is plausibly a case in which the extension of 'ogre'—an extension including all and only mythical, cruel, oafish beings (we may suppose)—is decoded, loosened and tightened to include all and only cruel beings. Five is plausibly an instance in which hearers decode the extension of 'tiger'—including all and only black-striped, tawny, large cats whose habitat is the Indian

[71] Further support for an intuitive distinction different from loose use comes from unpublished experimental results by Adam Arico and Shaun Nichols (personal communication), who found that subjects, after being given an example of the figurative/literal distinction, rated utterances such as, "Einstein was an egghead," as figuratively true, but utterances such as, "George W. Bush is President of the United State," as literally true. Importantly, the loose utterance, "The stock market collapsed in the 1920's," was also considered literally true.

jungle—and tighten it to exclude those who are not sufficiently fierce, proud or otherwise tiger-like.

The intuitive meanings of 4 and 5 are derivable via contextualist processes of adjustment. What's more, these figurative meanings do not appear to outrun the bounds of constraint imposed by contextualists. The figurative meanings in 4 and 5 respect syntax and involve adjustment of only sub-propositional contributions of the expressions. Furthermore, these meanings apparently respect considerations of context. The speaker of 4 has good reason to suppose the perceptual evidence regarding businessmen which is salient to her is salient to her similarly located hearer. Because it is salient, the hearer can derive the intended extension without much effort, so relatively effortlessly derive the requisitely relevant interpretation. For the average person, a tiger—even a crestfallen one—is perceptually salient. So the speaker of 5 can reasonably suppose his hearer has noticed the tiger *qua* tiger. The hearer easily interprets 5 as the suitably relevant, *he is not a tiger exhibiting the stereotypical properties of tigerhood*, while the speaker saves himself the effort of saying all that. The contextualist constraints on utterance meaning do not then suggest any reason to rule out these figurative meanings as utterance meanings.

The processes contextualists allege deliver literal utterance meanings, also deliver intuitive figurative meanings. Nor are these figurative meanings beyond the bounds of constraint delineated by contextualists. Therefore figurative meanings apparently assimilate with literal utterance meanings, according to contextualist criteria. But if contextualists assimilate figurative and literal utterance meanings, how do they account for the ordinary distinction between figurative and literal utterances? This is the *Differentiation Problem* for contextualism.

5. Contextualist Responses to the Differentiation Problem

Tacit (if not explicit) recognition of the differentiation problem is discernable in recent contextualist works that take up figurative language. I will discuss some responses to the problem suggested in the work of prominent contextualists.

5.a. Figuration as Multiplicity of Interpretation

In place of a distinction of kind between figurative and literal utterances, Sperber and Wilson (1995) suggest a difference of degree. Recall that the relevance of an interpretation is measured in terms of the beliefs it, in combination with other beliefs, yields, strengthens, or defeats. Roughly, Sperber and Wilson allege that an utterance is figurative insofar as its speaker expects and intends relevance to be achieved through effects on numerous beliefs, following from numerous interpretations, perhaps no one of which is essential. According to this view, 2 is fully literal, because the beliefs which contribute to relevance follow from a single interpretation, *the noodles are on the nearby, table-like thing,* which the speaker strongly anticipates and intends the hearer to grasp. But, Flaubert's comment on the poet Leconte de Lisle, "His ink is pale" (237), which Sperber and Wilson (1995) discuss, achieves relevance because Flaubert weakly expects and intends his audience to fix on a great many interpretations and implications of those interpretations, no one of which may be necessary. Such thoughts might include, "that there is something weak about his poetry, that his writings will not last, that he does not put his whole heart into his work, and so on" (237). The variety of and weak intention behind these interpretations make for a highly figurative utterance, according to Sperber and Wilson's graded view of figuration.

While Sperber and Wilson are right to emphasize both speakers' intentions and that more than one proposition is at play in figurative utterances, their graded account is untenable. Utterance 4 is intuitively as much a figurative utterance as any other. Yet a speaker may intend and anticipate only a single, crucial interpretation of that utterance to yield, strengthen, or defeat various other beliefs. If the conversational partners observing the CEO lay off hundreds of workers were vigilantes with a standing agreement to rob, kill, and redistribute the wealth of anyone either of them deems cruel, then, in saying what she says, the speaker might intend only the grim belief, *that businessmen are cruel beings*, to contribute to the many new beliefs she expects her partner to form—beliefs such as, *if X is a businessman, we will rob X*; *if X is a businessman, we will kill X*; and so on. By speaking figuratively, she intentionally rolls out a gruesome plan with a single, epistemic contribution. She needs, then, no other interpretation to yield, strengthen and defeat other beliefs, in order to achieve relevance. Thus, while Sperber and Wilson's proposal may draw a vague boundary between two classes of utterances, it is not the common boundary between figurative and literal utterances.

5.b. Figuration as Transparent Departure from the Norm

François Recanati (2004) acknowledges two versions of the literal/figurative distinction. One is the technical distinction I attributed to linguists and philosophers at the beginning of section II, according to which any utterance involving loose use is figurative. According to Recanati's account of the ordinary distinction, figurative utterances are those in which utterance interpretation, "involves a form of deviance or departure from the norm; a form...which must be transparent to the language users" (81). Recanati cashes 'the norm' in terms of frequency. Because he views adjustment of concepts as a ubiquitous aspect of utterance interpretation, adjustment is not sufficient for departure from the norm, so not sufficient for figuration.[72] However, Recanati claims that inference from utterance meaning to conversational implicature does involve departure from the norm, since it "takes place only when the speaker conveys something indirectly" (71), which is not always the case. According to Recanati, such inferences constitute *genuine* implicatures only insofar as a hearer recognizes the primary meaning of the utterance and that the implicature follows from it. Therefore, according to Recanati's taxonomy, genuine implicatures are by definition transparent to language users, so they are figurative utterances. But cases involving two-stage processes of interpretation are not the only figurative utterances. Though adjustment in general is ubiquitous, Recanati holds that particular adjustments are significant enough to constitute departures from the norm of interpretation and to be transparent to language users.[73] In such cases, utterances involving only a single stage of interpretation are figurative.

Recanati's account of figuration as transparent departure from the norm faces at least two problems. In the first place, many implicature-conveying utterances are not intuitively figurative utterances. If, in response to the question of whether the furniture set was delivered, one says, "The bedside table arrived," meaning to implicate *that, of the furniture set, only the bedside table was delivered*, one does not, according to the ordinary conception, speak figuratively. This is the case even if the hearer recognizes the speaker's intent, his primary meaning, and that the implicature follows from it—so, even if the departure is transparent to the hearer. In the second place, Recanati's explanation is under-described. Specifically, what makes an adjustment significant enough to be noticed

[72] As I have likewise argued above that adjustment is not sufficient for figuration.
[73] In fact, Recanati characterizes such adjustment as 'sense extension,' not loosening of a concept's reference class. But this is just the internalist analogue of the externalist idea I have presented in the paper.

by language users? Adjustments are purportedly significant insofar as they, “generate a feeling of discrepancy” (77), between the encoded meaning and the adjusted, person-level meaning. But it hardly clarifies matters to say that departures are significant enough to be noticed by language users insofar as they are felt by language users. What’s more, the criterion seems to have the consequence that as one becomes more aware of the discrepancy between the ordinary use of terms and their purported lexical meanings (as one’s training as a philosopher increases, for instance) the ordinary account of figurative language will be subsumed by the technical one. But this is not the case. A philosopher can still recognize that an utterance is not figurative in the ordinary sense of the term, even if the inexact use of language it involves irks her. One might try to defend the proposal by saying an adjustment is significant if it is from a relatively small extension to a relatively large one (or vice versa, in the case of tightening). But if I figuratively utter, “Barack Obama is a dictator,” it’s not at all obvious that the extension of ‘dictator’ gets loosened more than that of ‘table’ in 2 above. It seems unlikely that Recanati could identify a level of adjustment that would serve to distinguish figurative and literal utterances as people ordinarily do. Until such a proposal is put forward, we should discard Recanati’s account.

5.c. Figurative Eliminativism

Some contextualists have responded to the assimilation of figurative and literal utterance meanings by denying any significant distinction between figurative and literal utterances whatsoever. Wilson and Carston (2006), for instance, write that the derivation of even the very ad hoc concepts required in understanding certain metaphors involves, “no special interpretive mechanisms not required for the interpretation of ordinary, literal utterances" (abstract). Sperber and Wilson (2006) have also pushed us to take their eliminativism about metaphorical meaning as an eliminativism about metaphor broadly:

> In our view, metaphorical interpretations are arrived at in exactly the same way as these other interpretations. There is no mechanism specific to metaphor, no interesting generalisation that applies only to them. In other terms, linguistic metaphors are not a natural kind, and "metaphor" is not a theoretically important notion in the study of verbal communication (2).

"Relevance Theory's account of metaphor," they assert, "is on the lean side, and is bound to disappoint those who feel that verbal metaphor deserves a full-fledged theory of its own" (2). In fact, contextualist accounts—such as Relevance Theory's account—of *metaphorical interpretations* are not bound to disappoint those of us who long for the full-fledged theory, though such broad pronouncements about *the end of metaphor* are certainly unwarranted. Relevance Theory, like other varieties of contextualism, is concerned primarily with the propositional contents *asserted* in instances of metaphorical speech and grasped in instances of metaphorical understanding. Even if it is right (as I tend to think it is broadly right) to identify such propositional contents with those expressed by literal utterances, we cannot generalize from the fact that metaphorical meanings are not a natural kind to the conclusion that *metaphors* are not a natural kind. There is much more to metaphor, as we shall see in the next two chapters, than the propositional contents we assert in speaking metaphorically.

I disagree with those who, in the face of the differentiation problem, think we should give up on the ordinary notion of metaphor, with its attendant distinction between figurative and literal language. I think this would be a mistake. I agree with David Hills (1997) that:

> Whatever its theoretical origins, 'metaphor' has long been a term of ordinary language, one of the words we live with and live by…a member in good standing of

> the ‘common stock of words’ articulate people use to mark distinctions of recurrent practical importance, whatever their individual interests and concerns (135).

And with Austin (1979), who Hills also quotes favorably:

> If a distinction works well enough for practical purposes, in ordinary life (no mean feat, since ordinary life is full of hard cases), then there is sure to be something in it, it will not mark nothing…Ordinary language is *not* the last word: in principle it can everywhere be supplemented and improved upon and superseded. Only remember, it *is* the *first* word (185).

Eliminativism of a purported folk distinction—such as that between figurative and literal utterances—can be warranted. We may come to realize, for example, that what we took as a cultural universal was really just an inculcated term-of-art. That seems unlikely in the case of figurative language since, as discussed in chapter 1, there is empirical support for the universality of such a folk distinction. Alternatively, even if people do quite generally draw a distinction between two classes of things, we may argue for elimination. Once we clarify the basis of the distinction it may become clear that the distinction is irrelevant (or at least irrelevant to a particular theory). Suppose it was discovered that a distinction people were apt to draw between two races was based on nothing more than recognizable differences in skin pigment. In that case, it could make sense to judge the distinction between those races irrelevant and to, so far as possible, try to limit its use. But if we do not know what allows us to draw a distinction, then (barring other evidence) we do not know whether the distinction is relevant to closely related theories, or useful in general. I have argued that existing contextualist explanations of the folk distinction between literal and figurative utterances fail. But if contextualist explanations of the distinction fail while contextualism is generally correct, then (barring other evidence) we are in no position to know whether the distinction is irrelevant.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter we considered two final views which try to locate the distinction between metaphorical and figurative language in different sorts of meaning. The sentence meaning view suffered from many problems independent of its failure to locate a distinct kind of figurative meaning. Whereas the contextualist utterance meaning view of figurative meanings, while a promising account, failed to adequately distinguish the two kinds of utterances. In the next chapter I offer an account that largely captures the intuitive distinction between figurative and literal utterances and is available to contextualists. The advent of such an account will put us in a better position to ascertain the relevance of the ordinary distinction. If the account I develop largely respects our intuitive convictions, explains where and why we have contradictory convictions, and at the same time defines an important role for figurative language, we may decide that we have not yet heard the last word on the first word—the word of ordinary language—on figurative language.

Chapter 6:

The Perlocutionary View of Figurative Language

Sally and Sid have worked together for a while, and Sally knows Sid to be a hard worker. She might make this point about him by asserting, “Sid is a hard worker.” Or, she might make it by asserting, “Sid is a Sherman tank.” We all recognize that there is some distinction between the first assertion, in which Sally is speaking literally, and the second, in which she is speaking figuratively. But philosophers have seldom directly addressed this distinction. Those who have discussed metaphors have been mostly concerned to explain the nature of purported metaphorical meanings. Perhaps they suppose that, by appealing to a special kind of meaning metaphors allegedly express, we can in time explain the difference between speaking literally and speaking metaphorically. The discussion of the last four chapters renders such a supposition untenable. In those chapters, I argued by process of elimination in favor of contextualist views of figurative utterance meanings. But, while some contextualist views try to preserve a limited notion of figurative language, the tendency to equate what’s distinctive about metaphor with a distinct kind of meaning has led many contextualists to abandon a robust notion of figurative language in light of their recognition that there is no stable distinction between the meanings of metaphors and the meanings of other, literal utterances. I think the move to abandon a robust notion is premature.

In this chapter I argue that the fundamental distinction between the figurative and the literal rests in a speaker’s uses of these utterances. By saying, "Sid is a Sherman tank," Sally might mean to convey, for example, *that Sid is one who cannot be deterred from achieving his goals*. She might also mean to amuse her audience with the thought *that Sid is an armored assault vehicle*. In rough approximation of the account I will offer, if she means to do both of those things, Sally speaks metaphorically.

1. A Partial Catalogue of the Uses of Language

Attempting to explain metaphorical meaning is not the best way to explain the ordinary distinction between figurative and literal utterances. We should altogether abandon the idea that an utterance is figurative only insofar as it has a special kind of content. I will offer an account of metaphors which employs simply truth-conditional contents in general. I allege that we can discover what differentiates metaphors from literal utterances by asking: What are a speaker's distinctive aims in speaking metaphorically? Since this approach to constructing a theory of figurative language requires that we draw distinctions between the acts we perform in and by speaking, before I address that question directly, I will offer a partial catalogue of speech acts in this section.

In speaking one utters a sentence (or at least some words) with a particular linguistically mandated meaning.[74] In so far as those sentences contain indexical expressions, one utters words that must be saturated through context by hearers. In so far as they contain ambiguous expressions, one utters words that require contextual disambiguation. Thus, there are linguistically mandated pragmatic processes which specify sentence meaning. But even taking disambiguation and saturation into account, contextualists contend that speakers often mean something more or different than what the sentences they speak mean (where such additional meanings are not equivalent to

[74] Or so I am assuming here, but see Recanati (2004) chapter 9 for a different proposal I also find attractive.

implications). Contextualists allege that hearers use the non-mandated primary pragmatic processes of addition and adjustment to arrive at these non-implicative speaker meanings. Disambiguated and saturated sentence meanings are subjected to the primary pragmatic processes of addition and adjustment to deliver primary propositions, the propositions hearers grasp as the meanings of utterances, which contribute to implicature calculation. When communication is successful (as most of the following examples will assume) these will be the same propositions intended by speakers. In such cases, we can refer unambiguously to what I have been calling utterance meanings.[75]

Aside from speaking a sentence or expressing an utterance meaning, a speaker might perform other acts in and by speaking. A speaker can cause effects in or occasion reactions from her audience and a speaker can perform still other actions which are not *eo ipso* acts of producing such effects (though they might be tightly connected with them). We can distinguish these further actions by considering an example of communication. Suppose Bob has just informed his dramatic teenage daughter, Tammy, that she cannot borrow the car on Saturday. Then Tammy says to Bob, "I hope you die." In so speaking, Tammy utters a sentence with a particular content, *that she hopes her father dies*; and Tammy intends to express the more specific utterance meaning, *that she hopes her father dies very soon*. But Tammy may also intend to assert *that she hopes her father dies very soon*, which is an act distinct from the mere act of expressing that content. Tammy would

[75] Relevance theorists, such as Carston (2004) and Sperber and Wilson (1995), refer to what I have been calling an utterance meaning as an *Explicature*. Bach (1994), on the other hand, calls it an *Impliciture*. And Recanati (2004) refers to it simply as "what is said," which can include implications in the traditional sense but also meanings derived via primary pragmatic processes. In any case, since a speaker may often mean something different than what a hearer interprets the speaker to mean, it would be more accurate to refer to hearer's meaning and speaker's meaning than utterance meaning. Up to now, I have ignored such complications in this dissertation and spoken only of an idealized utterance meaning. I will reflect on the distinction between speaker and hearer assessments of utterance meaning later. (See McFarlane 2005 for a related distinction between a context of use and a context of assessment.)

have expressed the same proposition in conjecturing *that she hopes her father dies very soon*, though in that case she may not have asserted it (at least, according to Searle's, 1969, theory of speech acts she could have). Now Tammy's act of asserting is *eo ipso* not an act of affecting anyone. She could have asserted the same proposition had no one been present and had she herself already been in whatever state such an assertion might normally be supposed to effect. But in addition to such non-effect-producing acts, there are also acts of affecting one's audience. For example, Tammy not only means to convey her belief *that she hopes her father dies very soon*, we may suppose that she also intends her utterance to cause Bob to believe that she believes *that she hopes he dies very soon*. And Tammy certainly intends to hurt Bob by saying what she says. I will borrow Austin's (1962) terminology and call the first kind of speech act (in this case, the act of asserting) an *illocutionary act*, and the second kind of act (here acts of causing to believe and of hurting) a *perlocutionary act*. If Tammy produces her intended effects, she will have successfully performed two *Perlocutionary Acts*—the act of making Bob believe that she believes the proposition she conveys and the act of hurting Bob by saying what she says.

We can draw certain distinctions between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Primarily, these focus on a speaker's characteristic aims in performing each kind of act. The aim of a perlocutionary act, Austin (1962) writes, is to effect certain extra-linguistic, psychological (or behavioral) responses on the part of a hearer:

> Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed…[a perlocutionary]…act (101).

To be hurt is to have an emotional response. So, in the case of performing the perlocutionary act of hurting, a speaker aims to affect her hearer's feelings. To come to believe is to have a psychological, non-emotional response. So in causing her speaker to believe, a speaker aims to effect a specific psychological, but non-emotional response in her hearer. Though perlocutionary and illocutionary acts are tightly related and generally concomitant, on at least the present characterization one performs an illocutionary act only if one's aim in so acting is not to affect the feelings, thoughts, or actions of persons. But aside from simply *not being* acts of producing effects in or responses from ones audience, are there positive characteristics of illocutions? According to Searle (1969), Bach and Harnish (1979), and Bach (2003), most illocutionary acts express psychological attitudes and can be distinguished from one another according to the attitudes they express. An act of assertion expresses a psychological attitude of belief; an act of apology expresses an attitude of regret; an act of asking expresses a desire to know something; etc.[76] The aim of a felicitous act of asserting, for example, is to state something one believes true, not to cause others to draw inferences from that which is stated as true—though a hearer is certainly justified in drawing inferences from what is asserted, and a speaker may well intend that she does (and thereby perform certain additional perlocutionary acts in speaking). Perlocutionary and illocutionary acts are both distinct from Austin's (1962) locutionary acts, in which one simply aims to make a sound, utter a

[76] Austin attempted to differentiate illocutionary acts according to purported conventions to which they conform. Strawson (1964) offered a powerful, early criticism of that view. But Bach and Harnish (1979) irenically contend that two classes of illocutionary acts exist, one set distinguishable according to speaker attitudes and the other—conventional illocutionary acts—according to social conventions. The latter, they claim, were the model for Austin's original theory.

word or sentence, or, I would add, express a proposition.[77] Clearly, we must slice actions quite finely.

Previously, I mentioned the illocutionary act of expressing something one believes true. This alludes to the fact that illocutionary, but not perlocutionary, acts sometimes require endorsement of propositional contents for their felicitous performance. In making this claim, I mean to be following Searle (1969), who noted that there are certain sincerity conditions on the felicitous performance of many illocutions. Non-defective assertion requires belief. One non-defectively requests only if one actually wants the requested satisfaction conditions fulfilled. But Searle also noted that certain illocutions, such as greeting, appear to have no sincerity conditions. The situation with locutions and perlocutions is quite different than with illocutions. I may non-defectively utter a sentence and express a proposition without endorsing the content, as I do when I lie. In that case, the infelicity has to do with the illocutionary act of asserting, not the concomitant acts of uttering and expressing. Nor is an act of insulting—qua act of insulting—defective for being untrue. No locutionary nor perlocutionary act is infelicitous in virtue of my failure to endorse some proposition. Some illocutionary acts are infelicitous precisely in virtue of some such failure on my part. Thus, if a speech act requires endorsement of an expressed proposition for felicitous performance, it is an illocution.[78] Besides asserting, illocutions include acts of *asking*, *denying*, *warning*,

[77] Or, if we follow Searle (1968) in rejecting the distinction between locutions and illocutions, we might, with Searle (1969), distinguish illocutions and perlocutions from propositional acts—acts of referring and predicating.

[78] Teaching may be thought to present a counter-example to this claim, since teaching is a speech act aimed at affecting hearer'sxxxx psychologically, but also arguably one felicitously performed only if the teacher endorses the propositions she intends to teach. I prefer to treat teaching as a hybrid speech act. The psychological effect sought in teaching is getting someone to believe, and one need not endorse a

promising, *advising*, *sentencing*, and many more. *Hurting, frightening, surprising, amusing*, *insulting*, *convincing*, *inspiring*, *inciting* and many others are perlocutionary acts.[79]

Let us return finally to the example of Tammy and Bob. Notice that Tammy's utterance could have hurt Bob in any of several different ways. If Bob was gullible enough to believe everything that came out of his teenage daughter's mouth, then he might have believed that she believes *that she hopes he dies very soon*, which would have caused him pain. More likely is a situation in which Bob recognizes the intended illocutionary force behind Tammy's assertion, does not assent to it, but is still hurt by it. In that case, the recognition that Tammy is attempting to convey an attitude of belief toward the proposition *that she hopes her father dies very soon* (an attitude she actually lacks, thus rendering her assertion infelicitous) would be the vehicle effecting Bob's pain. (One can imagine Bob's post-hoc justification of such a reaction: "If she really wants me to think that she hopes I'll soon die, her concern for my feelings must be very insignificant indeed!") Bob could have been hurt by the illocutionary force of Tammy's utterance—either because he accepts that it expresses a certain psychological attitude or merely recognizes the psychological attitude it attempts to express—but, as I will explain, Bob might also have been hurt by the mere recognition of the propositional content of Tammy's utterance. To see that propositional content apart from associated illocutionary force can affect one's audience, consider a situation in which Tammy had not asserted

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proposition to felicitously make someone believe it. It's just that, in the case of felicitous teaching, one gets others to believe what one believes true.

[79] Austin stresses that there may be speech acts for which we do not have verbs, and that certain verbs may serve double duty, naming an illocution or a perlocution depending on context. Some of the illocutionary acts I have isolated here may also have perlocutionary senses, or vice versa. Nonetheless, it seems to me that there exists a sense of each that names an act of the type I have suggested. But nothing much hangs on this *particular* list of acts.

but merely joked *that she hopes her father dies very soon.* Perhaps she joshingly remarks, "I wish you would kick the bucket, so I could just *have* the car." What Tammy said may still have hurt her father, though she would not then have actually expressed or intended to convey a belief *that she hopes her father dies very soon*. Bob's reaction would not then have been due to a recognition of Tammy's expressed attitude, nor, assuming Bob's not very paranoid, would it be reasonable to attribute the reaction to Bob's coming to believe his daughter actually holds such a belief on the basis of her willingness to make such a joke. It is most reasonable to suppose that Bob is hurt *by the bare propositional content* of Tammy's utterance. The very ideas expressed by a speaker can affect us, independent of any illocutionary force with which the speaker's utterance is imbued. Moreover, a speaker can intend to achieve such perlocutionary effects through a hearer's recognition of an utterance meaning. Cutting jokes can be examples of this phenomenon, but so, I believe, are figurative utterances.

2. The Distinctive Aims of Figurative Communication

Having toured part of the territory of speech act theory, let us return to our central question: What are the typical aims of speaker's in speaking metaphorically? Several stand out. To begin with, note that in numerous, clear and central instances of metaphorical speech, speakers aim to make claims or assertions (or requests, or commands, or to ask questions, as the case may be). In such cases, the asserted propositions (or the propositions which convey one's request, etc.) are at least apparently endorsed by speakers. In the case of assertions, one endorses (or appears to endorse) the truth of a proposition conveyed by an utterance. In the case of requests, one actually requests (or appears to request) that certain satisfaction conditions be met. These are, then, clearly illocutionary acts. Speakers intend these illocuted propositional contents to directly contribute to the calculation of other supposedly true (or otherwise endorsed) propositions on the part of hearers—and they generally do. (Note that therefore, these illocuted contents are the proper targets of relevance judgments, in the technical sense of the last chapter, so are constrained by this and related contextualist processes of interpretation constraint.) But, obviously, metaphorical utterances do not differ from literal utterances in respect to their capacity to be used to make assertions, issue requests, or perform other illocutionary acts. I may literally declare, "The cat is on the mat," or request that you, "Close the window." So to intend to make an assertion, a request, or perform other illocutionary acts, is not to have an aim distinctive of speaking figuratively.

Alternatively, one might point out that in many of these same clear and central instances, a speaker's aims in speaking figuratively include those of producing certain psychological effects in her audience, so performing perlocutionary acts. Salient instances of metaphorical language—such as the great bulk of those appearing in creative writing—are clearly intended to occasion effects of amusement, anger, sadness, or aesthetic effects in general. As shorthand, I will refer to such perlocutionary effects (which are central to the view of figurative language to follow) as ways of *striking* one's audience. Such effects are not positive cognitive effects in the RT sense, as they do not generally and are not intended to contribute very directly to the calculation of beliefs. But notice: such psychological effects do sometimes *relate* to other truth-evaluable (though not actually believed) contents. We can pretend the very ideas which strike us were endorsed assumptions and draw out the would-be implications; this is part of what poets do when they extend metaphors. But that speakers aim to produce psychological effects in hearers by speaking metaphorically is insufficient to distinguish metaphors from literal utterances. I may attempt to elicit anger by conveying *that the election was unfair* by means of a literal utterance. So, literal utterances too are intended to produce the relevant psychological effects.

In the case of both metaphorical and literal utterances, speakers intend to make assertions and to affect their hearers psychologically, that is, they intend to perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. But we can begin to see what a speaker's distinctive aims in speaking metaphorically are if we consider *how* speakers achieve these aims in the case of figurative as opposed to literal utterances. Suppose I utter, "The election was unfair," and, in addition to endorsing what I believe true, I also want to make you angry. For many such literal utterances, it will be the case that what I mean to endorse is the same propositional interpretation with which I mean to strike you—in this case, *that the election was unfair*. Furthermore, my endorsement matters to whether or not my intended, psychological effects are brought off. If you are made angry at the assertion *that the election was unfair,* you are made angry because you believe this claim to be true, and you believe it to be true on the basis of my successful illocution of my belief in the target proposition. My purported endorsement of this claim—together with other background assumptions, including assumptions about my trustworthiness and accuracy as an informant—plays a crucial role in your acceptance of its truth. But in speaking figuratively, a speaker also intends to endorse a particular propositional interpretation with which she means to strike her audience. For example, by saying, "Sid is a Sherman tank," Sally might mean to assert and for her audience to grasp the idea *that Sid is something that cannot be deterred from achieving its goals*. But what distinguishes metaphors from literal utterances is that, in the case of a metaphor, a speaker also means to affect her audience with a particular, intended, and distinct propositional interpretation of her utterance *which she does not generally also mean to endorse.* For instance, Sally might also intentionally amuse her audience with the idea *that Sid is an armored assault vehicle*, though she does not mean to endorse this idea. According to the view I will put forward, figurative utterances are not distinctive because they have a distinct kind of meaning, rather they are distinctive because speakers, in uttering these, attempt to achieve their ends in a distinctive way—one involving two different propositional interpretations of their utterance, each of which they (in a loose sense) convey by uttering what they utter in the context in which they utter it.

Both of the propositions a metaphor speaker intends are interpretations, it is important to note, not, for example, implicatures, of the speaker's utterance. These are dual utterance meanings. As I have previously alluded to, and will explain later, one of these interpretations does not fit the technical notion of relevance we have previously discussed, so is not constrained by at least some of the more prominent contextualist methods of utterance constraint. But by expanding the notion of relevance in fairly intuitive and independently motivated ways both can be seen as constrained by contextualist principles, so as contextualist interpretations of the speaker's utterance. Moreover, at least one of the interpretations of any metaphorical utterance will be arrived at on the part of the audience by loosening or tightening lexically encoded concepts. In the case of Sally's utterance of, "Sid is a Sherman tank," the concept of a Sherman tank is loosened to achieve at least one of the two relevant interpretations. Because we think of tanks in general as unstoppable, if Sally speaks truly and her audience knows something of Sid, the ad hoc concept of *something that cannot be deterred from achieving its goals*, will quickly and unconsciously be arrived at, and will contribute to the propositional interpretation which Sally is understood to assert. Additionally, her audience may reach the striking idea *that Sid is an armored assault vehicle* by loosening the lexical concept associated with 'Sherman tank' in different ways to generate the more generic concept. Of course, since most people have a fairly weak and non-specific conception of a Sherman tank, thinking of Sid as kind of assault vehicle may be the default interpretation for the sentence. So, in this case, only the illocuting content may require the intervention of primary pragmatic processes. (I will offer another case momentarily that is a clearer example of dual divergence from encoded meaning.)

We are now in a position to explicitly formulate the folk conception of figurative language. Although this view will come in for some modification in the next section, it captures the majority of metaphors as I will presently state it. According to what I will call the *Perlocutionary View* (PV), in speaking metaphorically one aims to perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts by means of a particular, intended truth-conditional interpretation of one's utterance, while intending to perform a perlocutionary (but no illocutionary) act by means of a particular, intended, and distinct truth-conditional interpretation of the same utterance. In the case of literal utterances, insofar as one aims to perform both illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, the truth-conditional interpretation with which one performs illocutionary acts is the same as that with which one performs perlocutionary acts. People ordinarily class utterances as figurative or literal in virtue of their (sometimes mistaken) apprehension of one or the other pattern of a speaker's intentions.

In assessing whether a particular utterance is figurative according to the current view, we will have to ask ourselves if, in uttering it, the speaker meant to express two contents—one used to perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, the other to perform only perlocutionary ones. To determine this, we must attend to the differences between illocutions and perlocutions. Though we are very good intuitive psychologists—so very good at reading the intentions of our conspecifics—we lack an infallible window into others' minds. Therefore, the fact that some illocutions may, like all perlocutions, lack sincerity conditions, will be particularly important to bear in mind when assessing an utterance. To determine if a given propositional interpretation of a speaker's utterance was used to perform *only* perlocutionary acts, we can ask ourselves: With that content does the speaker aim to achieve some effect that can be understood apart from any hearer whatsoever? Though I can utter something amusing without an audience, I can never amuse without the benefit of one. On the other hand, I can assert, promise, accuse, advise or so on without any audience.[80]

To recall some examples from the last chapter (five), when you assert and convey to me *that businessmen are cruel beings*, by saying, "Businessmen are ogres," I may be amused at the idea *that businessmen are mythical oafs*. According to PV, if you intentionally assert and convey to me the one proposition while amusing me with but not asserting (or illocuting in some other way) the other proposition, in uttering, "Businessmen are ogres," you utter a metaphor. The hiker, on the other hand, speaks literally when he says, "Look on the table," because he means to make a suggestion and

[80] I do not mean that the establishment of the conventions required for promising (etc.) does not require interactions between speakers and audiences. Even so qualified, in the case of certain illocutions, such as advising or warning, the claim may seem incorrect. But consider an absent minded hearer, coming to attend to the words you have just spoken. He might sensibly ask, "Were you warning me?" It would be awkward, to say the least, for the hearer to ask, "Were you frightening me?" I take it, then, that we can warn (though not frighten) even absent an audience.

to influence his fellow's behavior by means of the single content, *look on something table-like*, while not perlocuting by means of some other, non-illocuted interpretation of his utterance.

We can perform lots of illocutionary acts; and we sometimes perform these in making a metaphor. One can produce a metaphorical question. John Donne might have done this had he asked (instead of stated) "Is any man an island?" An island is a thing that exists in isolation and in a wide range of contexts the concept would be loosened to include all things that exist in isolation. The endorsed question would be *is any man among the things capable of existing apart from others of its kind*? While entertaining the utterance, we may be struck by a distinct question: *Is any man an insignificant land mass completely surrounded by water?* If in uttering the sentence, Donne had meant both to ask and cause us to wonder about the first content but to only strike us with the second, he would have uttered a metaphor. A judge may pass sentence figuratively. Saying, "Your ass will fry," the interpretation related to the sentencing, which no doubt saddens the hearer, is *you will be put to death.* But with the unendorsed interpretation, *you will be cooked in oil*, she aims to effect a further emotional toll.

In the previous examples the interpretations to which speakers' illocutionary and perlocutionary acts relate were generated by *loosening* the concepts constitutive of an encoded logical form. But this is not essential. Less often the interpretations involved are reached by a process of tightening. Consider, a metaphorical utterance of, "He's no tiger," said of the crestfallen circus tiger at the end of a rusty chain. A concept conveyed in the logical form of this utterance, that of a particular kind of great cat, is restricted to generate what the speaker claims. She is claiming, *that particular tiger is not fierce*, *proud, or otherwise tiger-like*. But the proposition which the speaker does not endorse, but uses to affect a subtle reaction of perplexed surprise, is *that particular tiger is not a tiger*.

Finally, in each of the above cases, the perlocuting content is so closely related to the expressed sentence, that it is arguably the sentence's meaning.[81] But there are cases of figurative utterance in which neither the perlocuting nor the illocuting and perlocuting content is arguably the sentence's meaning. Suppose Carl owns a department store and, after considering several potential suppliers, decides to contract with a mannequin wholesaler who looks something like Vincent Price. Carl's wife might say to a friend who knows of the situation, "Carl gave his business to Vincent Price's House of Wax." If Carl's wife means thereby to assert and inform the friend *that Carl contracted with such-and-such particular wholesaler*, but to amuse the friend with the idea *that Carl contracted with the House of Wax owner Vincent Price portrayed in the movie*, then according to PV Carl's wife speaks figuratively. But in that case, neither interpretation is arguably the meaning of the spoken sentence, for both involve adjustment of the compositional meanings of "gave his business to" and "Vincent Price's House of Wax".

PV solves the differentiation problem, not by positing a distinctive kind of metaphorical meaning, but rather by identifying a distinctive way in which speakers perform the actions they perform in speaking metaphorically. Although it solves that

[81] When a proposition expressed by an utterance is distinct from the pronounced sentence's meaning, then, if the sentence itself determines a propositional content, the speaker expresses two propositional contents. But according to standard contextualism, hearers are only conscious of utterance meaning (and its antecedent implications), so (setting aside cases of miscommunication, experts, etc.) they are only conscious of sentence meaning in so far as it is meant by a speaker. I want to depart from the standard view and suggest that, in the case of some figurative utterances, it may be that speakers can express saturated and disambiguated sentence meanings as well as distinct propositional content derived via addition and adjustment of such sentence meaning. In any case, my proposal commits me to the idea that speakers sometimes intentionally convey two propositional contents by means of a single utterance (though I believe they generally only endorse one of these).

problem, it may be thought to have problems of its own. In the next section, I will discuss certain cases that may be thought to constitute counter-examples to the view. In fact, one of these does constitute a genuine counter-example to the view as previously stated, and will occasion revisions. I will also explain how the current view allows for the possibility of distinguishing different figurative tropes. With PV as an account of figurative language generally, we can distinguish various figurative tropes—in so far as we can distinguish figurative tropes at all—using various resources from rhetoric theory and psychology, some of which I will discuss. In the final sections of this chapter, I will offer some resources for explaining cases in which intuitions diverge as to whether or not a particular utterance is figurative, discuss how my theory of figurative use can accommodate folk tendencies to identify certain figurative sentences independent of context, and more.

3. Some Potential Problems for the Perlocutionary View

Many potential counter-examples to PV fit into two important types: There are utterances we would intuitively class as literal which may appear to be classed as figurative utterances according to PV, and there are utterances intuitively striking us as figurative utterances which PV may be thought to leave out.

In fact, I think that careful consideration will reveal that the clearly literal utterances *thought* to be classed as metaphors according to PV are generally correctly classed after all. Consider Fred Thompson's utterance at the 2008 RNC concerning the governor of Alaska, "She can field dress a moose." Here Thompson means to assert and to inform his audience *that Sarah Palin can gut a moose*. His audience may infer, from their knowledge of the relative similarity of moose and human anatomy, *that Palin could gut*

Joe Biden. In context, this inference may call to mind the idea, *that Palin **will** gut Joe Biden*, and Thompson may intend to amuse his audience with this idea, though he does not endorse it. Here Thompson intends to illocute and perlocute by means of one proposition while perlocuting but not illocuting by means of another. Does he not then speak metaphorically according to PV? Thompson speaks literally according to the view, because the merely perlocuted proposition is inferred from the single interpretation, *that Sarah Palin can gut a moose*, and is therefore an implication of, and not an interpretation of, the utterance. In assessing PV, we must be sure the propositions doing the distinctive work it requires are interpretations of the utterance, not, for example, implications of interpretations.

Rather than being too permissive, PV may be thought too restrictive. Consider the prominent role the view accords perlocutionary and illocutionary acts. I follow Austin (1962) in conceiving these as felicitously performed only insofar as they are intentionally performed. Thus, according to PV, there are no unintentional metaphors. But this is no significant problem for the view. Importantly, PV does not require that, in speaking metaphorically, we *intend* to speak metaphorically. In speaking metaphorically, one may be completely ignorant that one is doing so. What about the fact that we unconsciously formulate metaphors? Does this support the conclusion that there are many cases of metaphors in which one does not intend illocutionary or perlocutionary effects of the requisite sort? I do not believe it does. An unconscious act is not necessarily an unintentional one. I may intentionally but unconsciously grab a toothpick while leaving a restaurant. Finally, insofar as the view does leave out certain unintentional utterances that would ordinarily be considered metaphors, the damage is mitigated since a highly plausible error theory is available: A non-metaphorical utterance will be judged metaphorical if it lends itself in the context to two interpretations, which could easily be used in the ways PV requires. We will reflect on this possibility more (as well as the possibility of figurative sentences) in the following section.

The previous two objections do not occasion modification of PV as it is previously stated. But now consider cases of twice-true metaphors, such as, "Rome wasn't built in a day," or Donne's, "No man is an island." According to the previous formulation of PV, one speaks metaphorically only if one aims to perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts by means of a particular, intended truth-conditional interpretation of her utterance, while intending to perform a perlocutionary act (but no illocutionary one) by means of a particular, intended, and distinct truth-conditional interpretation of the same utterance. In introducing PV, I pointed out that the interpretations of metaphors with which we are struck—*that Sid is an armored assault vehicle,* for example—are not generally true, so not generally endorsed by speakers in ways distinctive of many illocutions. But this generality fails in the case of metaphors in which the perlocuting interpretation is also true. Though Donne meant primarily to perlocute with his utterance's largely compositional interpretation *that no man is an insignificant land mass completely surrounded by water*, this interpretation is true and Donne presumably believed it. So, Donne might have endorsed it, and he could have intended to illocute with it. So twice-true metaphors may occasionally be twice-illocuted metaphors, which would not fit the previous formulation of PV.

Fortunately, PV can be modified to handle possible instances of twice-illocuted metaphors. Consider the two contents I allege Donne expresses in speaking metaphorically: *that no man is among the things capable of existing apart from others of its kind*, and *that no man is an insignificant land mass completely surrounded by water.* According to PV, Donne intends to perlocute with both interpretations. However, each interpretation works its perlocutionary magic in different ways. If we are struck by the proposition, *that no man is among the things capable of existing apart from others of its kind*, we are struck through coming to believe that it might be true. Thus the perlocutionary effect of this interpretation of Donne's utterance—its capacity to cause us to look at things differently—depends upon its illocutionary force as a purportedly true assertion. But, though it may as a matter of fact be true, and may in rare cases serve as a dual assertion, the perlocutionary effect of the other interpretation of Donne's utterance, *that no man is an insignificant land mass completely surrounded by water*, does not depend on its illocutionary force. This interpretation would not cease to amuse were it no candidate for plausible endorsement at all—if, for example, it was common knowledge that a sleeping man was once carried out by high tide, became covered in sediment, and was sustained for several years by a seafaring people who thought him an island god. Thus we may account for twice-illocuted metaphors by reformulating PV as the view that: One speaks figuratively if and only if one aims to perform an illocutionary act, and *thereby* a perlocutionary act, by means of a particular, intended truth-conditional interpretation of her utterance, while intending to perform a perlocutionary act by means of a particular, intended, and distinct truth-conditional interpretation of the same utterance (where it's possible to perlocute by means of the second interpretation with or without illocuting by means of it or any other interpretation). This reformulation encompasses the central cases of figurative utterances and leaves out those of literal utterances.

Turning away from the two types of objections to PV mentioned above—those that have to do with PV potentially including or excluding target utterances—we can challenge PV by asking whether, as other views fail to differentiate metaphorical and literal utterances, PV fails to differentiate the various figurative tropes?[82] In fact, independent of other resources, PV *does* fail to differentiate these. Speakers mean to express two contents with metonymies, similes, metaphors (in the restricted sense), and other utterances which are typically lumped amongst the "metaphorical" or figurative utterances. In each case, one content is used to perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, while the other is used primarily to perform perlocutionary ones. Thus, independent of other resources PV does fail to distinguish the various figurative tropes, though this is not a problem for the current theory. The folk distinction which I set out to explain is between literal utterances and a class of figurative utterances that is broader than any trope. And what is more, while we must recognize PV as an account of figures of speech in general, I will demonstrate how once that distinction is in place we have independent resources for differentiatiating figurative tropes from one another in virtue of their surface structure, relations between the referents of their terms, or certain other intuitive features.

Metonymy—or substitution of a word with a closely associated one—sometimes qualifies as figurative language according to PV. If Mia says, "The king's hand stopped the executioner's axe," meaning to assert and inform *that the king's decree stopped the*

[82] Henry Peacham, for example, enumerated 184 different figurative tropes in his *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577).

execution from taking place, while impressing her audience with the heroic interpretation, *that the king used his actual hand to stop the executioner's axe mid-swing*, she speaks figuratively.[83] In this regard, there is no difference between metaphors and metonymies. Still, we can differentiate the two by turning to Jakobson (1990). He contends that metaphors and metonymies are affected by different aphasias, and goes on to offer a distinction between these based on features of linguistic processing. Metaphors involve attention to similarities between the lexical concept and the ad hoc concept constitutive of the illocuted interpretation. To understand what's asserted by, "Businessmen are ogres," we must focus on the cruelty distinctive of businessmen and ogres. Metonymies work simply by contiguity. We need not understand features distinctive of kings' hands (other than their connection to kings) to understand Mia's metonymy.[84]

Similes deserve attention because of the prominent role they have played in theorizing about metaphors. According to the Reductive Simile View (RSV),[85] metaphorical statements are similes in which the word, 'like,' is elided. RSV also denies a distinction between similes and literal comparisons, thereby reducing both metaphors and similes to literal utterances. However, this reduction seems entirely unpromising. A fundamental difference exists between what Governor Palin (nearly) uttered at the 2008 RNC, "Hockey moms are like pit-bulls with lipstick," and what the mechanic says to his

[83] Synecdoche, which was previously discussed in chapter 5, is often considered a subset of metonymy in which a part of the thing takes the place of the whole thing. So, in this sentence, the reference to the king's hand is also an instance of synecdoche.

[84] The Perlocutionary View holds that figuration is fundamentally a matter of speakers' aims. So not all instances in which we work out an illocuted interpretation by contiguity relations constitute figurative utterances. A reporter does not speak figuratively if she says, "Moscow is upset with the White House over its recognition of Kosovo," and means only to briefly convey *that Russian officials disapprove of the President's recognition of Kosovo's independence*.

[85] See Tirrell (1991) for a careful and illuminating discussion.

dimwitted assistant, “The 3/8ths wrench is like the ½ inch but smaller.” PV explains this difference: Like metaphors, similes, but not literal comparisons, are utterances in which speakers primarily perlocute by means of one interpretion while illocuting and perlocuting with another. But how do similes and metaphors differ? Like RSV, PV locates the difference in comparative words. A simile, but not a metaphor, has the surface structure of a comparison using ‘like’ or ‘as,’ but the difference also goes deeper. Suppose Palin had said, “Hockey moms are like pit-bulls with lipstick.” According to PV, Palin means to illocute and thereby perlocute with one interpretation of this utterance. Perhaps she intends us to tighten the lexical notion of ‘pit-bull’ and interpret her as claiming *that hockey moms, like pit-bulls, are tough.* Regardless of her intended illocutionary aims, the interpretation by which we are struck seems to be the pretended classification of hockey moms as pit-bulls. It is amusing to think *that hockey moms* ***just are*** *pit-bulls with lipstick*. We may go on to consider them yapping alongside the ice rink, or viciously attacking the opposing players. This holds for many similes, so we can assert as a general rule that similes strike us by means of a perlocuted *classification*. Therefore, regardless of what other loosenings and tightenings are involved, similes always involve restricting the broad class of similarities to the relatively narrow class of classifications, and perlocuting by means of the latter rather than by means of the former. Thus, the current view subverts RSV. Metaphors are not similes in which the word ‘like’ is elided, rather, focusing on their perlocuting contents, similes are metaphors in which the word, ‘like,’ is added.

There are other kinds of utterances that, though closely related, are not, according to PV, generally figurative in nature. For instance, there are puns, in which we intend an ambiguity between two possible meanings. Examples include “Keep off the grass” (on a sign in front of a drug rehab center), or, “The cross-eyed teacher can’t control his pupils.” In such cases a speaker intends an ambiguity between two possible interpretations—*that the cross-eyed teacher can't control his students*, for example, and *that the cross-eyed teacher can't control the direction of his eyes*. Generally, however, the perlocutionary aim in these cases is to amuse the audience at the ambiguity in the utterance, or, possibly, to amuse the audience with the idea *that the utterance admits of an ambiguity*. Either way, the audience is not generally amused by an *interpretation* of a pun. So puns are not generally figurative utterances.[86]

Lastly, let us turn from this discussion of PV and the various figurative tropes to a final concern regarding PV, which has to do with the crucial role relevance plays in constraining contextualist utterance interpretations. Recall that according to relevance theorists (and by analogous principles, most other contextualists) a proposition is an interpretation of an utterance if it is an enrichment of the logical form of the pronounced words which contributes to optimal relevance. But a proposition is relevant only insofar as it strengthens or defeats existing beliefs or combines with existing beliefs to yield some new beliefs. However, since a belief is a belief that some proposition *is true*, the propositional interpretations which only affect psychological responses to metaphors—propositions such as *businessmen are mythical oafs*—are not often beliefs, since they are not often assumed to be true. Therefore, propositions which merely affect psychological responses on the part of hearers and which, according to PV, speakers use to perform

[86] But a pun might be a figurative utterance, as might, “The cross-eyed teacher can’t control his pupils,” if the context allowed and the speaker intended to claim that the cross-eyed teacher can't control the direction of his eyes, while intending to amuse with the idea that the cross-eyed teacher can't control his students, or vice-versa.

only perlocutionary acts in the case of metaphorical utterances often do not enter into the truth-functional calculations according to which relevance is judged, so do not satisfy the traditional notion of relevance.

I think that this inapplicability of the traditional account of relevance to unendorsed thoughts is not so much a problem for PV as a fundamental limitation of RT and related contextualist views. Austin (1962) pointed out that theorists were often disproportionately concerned with fact-stating language, convinced that, "the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs" (1). When contextualists such as Sperber and Wilson (1995), claim that, "The function of a cognitive system is to deliver knowledge" (263), they make the same mistake to which Austin is alluding, just in the updated terminology of evolutionary psychology. They fail to make room for creativity, which is also the business of a human cognitive system. Fortunately, this oversight admits of a remedy. We can see how the needed rehabilitation of relevance would go if we pay attention to our perlocutionary aims in speaking metaphorically. If in saying, "Businessmen are ogres," you intend me to be struck by a proposition other than that you assert, then the most *perlocutionarily relevant* interpretation of your utterance is that which has optimal perlocutionary effect in the context, minus the resources required to achieve it. If I believe *that mythical oafs have green skin and befriend talking donkeys*, then the interpretation *that businessmen are mythical oafs*, will give rise to the pretended assumption *that businessmen have green skin and befriend talking donkeys*. As the epistemic value of a truth-apt inference counts in favor of the interpretation from which it follows on the traditional relevance picture, the perlocutionary value of the pretended inference will accrue to the considered interpretation, thus redounding to its perlocutionary relevance.

I have responded to some purported counter-examples to PV and discussed how it is best construed as an account of figurative utterances generally, which is compatible with various ways of individuating figurative tropes. With the PV account of figurative utterances in place, I suggest that we characterize metaphors (in the narrow sense) as figurative comparisons that work by similarity. We can distinguish these from metonymies (figurative utterances that work by contiguity), similes (figurative comparisons), hyperboles (figurative overstatements), and other figurative utterances through close attention to distinctive features of these tropes.[87]

4. Disagreements Over Figurative Use

In the first chapter, I alluded to the following case in order to illustrate the point that people routinely disagree about whether a particular utterance is literal or figurative:

> On March 25th, 2010, during a House Armed Services Committee hearing on military installments on Guam, Georgia Representative Hank Johnson quizzed U.S. Navy Pacific Commander, Admiral Robert Willard, about the size of the island territory. He then explained his questions, saying, "My fear is that the whole island will become so overly populated that it will tip over and capsize." Many people took Johnson to be voicing an actual fear that the island would sink. Video of his interrogation of the Admiral became something of an internet sensation, prompting Johnson to issue a statement claiming that, "The subtle humor of this obviously metaphorical reference to a ship capsizing illustrated my concern about the impact of the planned military buildup on this small tropical island."

[87] Regarding ironic utterances, I reject the view that these are cases in which we say one thing and mean its opposite. Instead, I embrace Glucksberg's (1995) allusional-pretense model, which holds that ironic utterances are those in which we allude to some expectation or norm and pretend to be (but are not) bound by the felicity conditions of the linguistically signified illocutionary act. So, for example, if Hope says sarcastically of her friend, Hal, who has betrayed her, "Hal is a fine person," she alludes to the expectation that we think our friends fine people, and pretends to be bound by the felicity condition that assertions should be true. It's clear to everyone that this is what is going on because of the ironic form of intonation, first noted by Cutler (1976). Thus, irony involves only one interpretation and manipulation of the felicity conditions of its attendant illocutionary act, so is not plausibly figurative on PV. Though it is an empirical conjecture, I believe that this accords with general folk use of the term, "metaphor".

I will now use this case in order to explain various ways in which people can disagree over whether a particular utterance is literal or figurative. First, note that if PV captures the folk distinction between figurative and literal language, what must be going on here is that A) many observers of Rep. Johnson's comments *did not* understand him as expressing dual interpretations with his utterance, one of which was associated with perlocutionary and illocutionary acts while the other was associated with only perlocutionary acts, whereas B) many observers and Rep. Johnson himself *did* understand him to be expressing dual interpretations with his utterance, one of which—*the island will become so overly populated that negative environmental results will ensue*—was the conduit for perlocutionary and illocutionary acts, while the other—*the island will become so overly populated that it will overturn and sink*—was the conduit for only perlocutionary acts. Each explanation of the disagreement will thus amount to an explanation of how it could come to pass that the different parties could understand Rep. Johnson's comments in the relevantly different ways. Of course, as Chomsky (1965) points out, there are the usual ways in which the content of utterances can be misunderstood as the result of, "memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying...knowledge of the language in actual performance" (3). But here I will focus on explanations of disagreement that are unique to a psycho-linguistic, folk theory such as PV.

1. Hearer's Context vs. Speaker's Context and Intentions:

According to PV, when successful figurative communication occurs, a speaker not only intends to express two contents by means of his utterance and intends with these contents to perform the relevant acts, it is also the case that hearers apprehend a speaker's intentions. But what hearer's understand a speaker to express and how they interpret his intended speech acts is in part a matter of their background assumptions about the context. And a speaker calculates his utterance to affect the intended results based on *his* context of utterance. Insofar as there is disagreement about the background there will be divergent interpretations. In the case of the example, Rep. Johnson (and his colleagues in the House) are in a very different context than many of the viewers at home who understood him to be speaking literally. Viewers at home may fail to understand the background assumptions operant in the Congressional context. Thus they may fail to interpret Rep. Johnson's utterance to express his actually intended dual contents (which those in the chamber were in a better position to grasp).

2. Hearer's Prejudice:

Interpretation rests on background assumptions about a context, but a special subset of such assumptions are assumptions about the speaker. Thus misinterpretations of figurative utterances may be due to hearer prejudice against a speaker. For example, those who interpreted Rep. Johnson's utterance literally may have done so because they found it easy to assume that an African American, Democrat, or Congressman is too stupid to know that islands do not actually capsize. The hearer prejudices that inform specific misinterpretations may be due to general or more specific prejudices. And presumptions about a speaker which do not qualify as prejudices in a negative sense can also play this role.

3. Cultural Differences:

Though perhaps unlikely in this case, cultural differences can also explain disagreements over whether or not an utterance was figurative. Suppose Rep. Johnson was part of a culture that practiced the turning and tilling of botched land. In that case, the idea of an island tipping over and capsizing would be closely associated with an environmentally botched island. The utterance could have been selected to cue this association on the mistaken assumption that others shared a similar cultural background. That others did not could then explain the disagreement.

4. Speaker Prevarication:

The disagreement could not consist in the moment, but rather it could be generated as a rearguard defense on the part of Rep. Johnson. That is, perhaps Rep. Johnson *was* too stupid to realize that islands do not actually capsize at the moment of utterance. In that case, his audience may have interpreted his utterance correctly, as a literal utterance. Later, in an effort to save face, Rep. Johnson may have attempted to defend himself by insisting that he was in the first instance speaking literally. Speaker prevarication may be quite sophisticated. Rep. Johnson could misremember his intentions and lie even to himself!

5. Figurative Utterances vs. Figurative Sentences

Finally, disagreement over the literal/figurative distinction may consist in different targets of assessment. Notice that in his subsequent statement Rep. Johnson referred to, "this obviously metaphorical reference to a ship capsizing." Indeed, the sentence itself independent of context does seem to be figurative. How is this possible if figuration consists in use? Importantly, PV does not rule out the possibility of a figurative sentence. It simply explains figurative sentences by reference to figurative utterances. A figurative sentence is one that in salient contexts would be interpreted figuratively or that easily lends itself to figurative use. In large part, this will have to do with our ordinary assumptions about the actual state of affairs. Thus, because islands do not in the actual world capsize, a sentence claiming that an island will capsize is a good candidate for figurative utterance. It's surface meaning cannot be endorsed, so if any interpretation of an utterance of the sentence is to be endorsed, it would have to be a primary proposition that departs from sentence meaning. Given that most communication has an informative aim, there would in the most easily imaginable cases of communicative utterance of this sentence be two propositional interpretations available (the sentence meaning and the primary proposition enriched by addition and adjustment). Thus, the sentence lends itself to metaphorical expression. If Rep. Johnson is prevaricating about the figurative nature of his utterance, his original sentence choice puts him in good stead, since it is a figurative sentence.

These are some of the possible explanations of literal/figurative disagreement available on the PV view. In each case of such disagreement, through careful consideration of the entire situation, we may agree that one explanation or another is the most plausible.

6. Conclusion: A Genuinely Troubling Counter-Example

PV has resources to explain disagreement and it can accommodate many initially plausible instances of counter-example. However, there is one example of figurative language we have discussed that is genuinely troubling for the view. That is the case of the head monk's statement about Tokusan, discussed in chapter four. Recall that, in that chapter, I interpreted the first part of the head monk's utterance about Tokusan—"He soon turned his back on the Dharma hall, put on his straw sandals and went away. One day he will build a grass hut upon a lonely peak and scold the buddhas and abuse the patriarchs"—as a figurative utterance with the asserted content: *Tokusan chose to ignore organized spirituality.* If it is a legitimate figurative utterance, and this is its essentially illocuted content, than what is its perlocuted content? Presumably it is something very near to the sentence meaning of the head monk's utterance. It is plausible that the head monk wanted to get Isan to believe this true statement along with his deeper statement about spirituality. But notice, the interpretation of the head monk's utterance that runs, *he soon turned his back on the Dharma hall, put on his straw sandals and went away*, is true and presumably asserted by the head monk as well. What is more, Isan's coming to believe this proposition is presumably attached in a non-negligible way to Tokusan's asserting it. How then are we to reconcile this intuitively figurative utterance with PV?

There seem to be three unsatisfying strategies. First, we can look for another interpretation of the utterance which is plausibly intended by the head monk and available to his audience, and intentionally perlocuted in a way distinct from any illocutionary force attached to it, but no such interpretation seems to be forthcoming. Second, we could amend the perlocutionary view yet again. Perhaps we could rule out non-affective perlocutionary acts such as believing from the class of relevant, independent perlocutions. In that case, we could maintain that the interpretation, *he soon turned his back on the Dharma hall, put on his straw sandals and went away*, is affectively perlocuted independently of illocutionary force, since it is a rather striking image. Such a move may be justified on independent grounds, but it is no solution to this counter example since the relevant content would still be asserted and attached to the perlocution of making Isan believe. Finally, third, and perhaps best out of the three options, we could deny the intuitive force of the example. And, indeed, this utterance would not seem to be among the class of substantial and significant crucial cases on which descriptive adequacy rests. (Nor would denying the intuition impugn my case against the implication view, since there would still be its failure to differentiate literal and figurative utterances.) Nonetheless, the utterance does strike me as figurative, so I would like to avoid even this third strategy. What then are we to do?

In the face of this counter-example, I believe we must acknowledge that no theory of a folk category is likely to be perfect. There will be counter-examples. However, so long as those are not crucial cases, and insofar as the theory can accommodate the crucial cases, and has additional explanatory benefits besides, we should still accept it. In this chapter, I have introduced PV and discussed how it accommodates the crucial cases. In the next and final chapter, I will detail its other explanatory benefits.

Chapter 7

Perlocutionary View Payoffs

According to the Perlocutionary View of figurative language, one speaks figuratively if and only if one aims to perform an illocutionary act, and *thereby* a perlocutionary act, by means of a particular, intended truth-conditional interpretation of her utterance, while intending to perform a perlocutionary act by means of a particular, intended, and distinct truth-conditional interpretation of the same utterance (where it's possible to perlocute by means of the second interpretation with or without illocuting by means of it or any other interpretation). Though not without exceptions, this view captures the most important central instances of figurative use, and can be expanded to offer a plausible account of figurative sentences. However, aside from its classificatory achievements, PV also has other benefits, which I will discuss in this final chapter.

1. Differences in Processing and Differences in Use

Recent cognitive linguistic work on the topic of figurative language has focused on differences in processing speed for literal and figurative utterances. On the assumption that implicature calculation involves comprehension of two truth-conditional contents, one inferred from the other, and therefore takes longer than non-implicative, literal sentence comprehension, these studies have been thought to help adjudicate between implicature and standard contextualist views of metaphorical meanings. However, as Camp (2006) points out, if metaphor and literal utterance processing were on a par, this would not clearly tell against a Gricean view, since:

> Grice and Searle intended their theories as rational reconstructions, aimed at explaining how utterances could in principle enable successful communication. They were not concerned with how utterances were actually processed, let alone with the conscious experience of linguistic interpretation (157).[88]

A contextualist could also explain slower processing speeds for figurative meanings compared to *some* literal meanings. After all, some literal meanings are close to lexically encoded meaning, whereas figurative utterance meanings universally depart from encoded meaning in requiring enrichment through primary pragmatic processes.

As Camp notes, the results of processing time studies are fairly mixed. On one hand, Gibbs found no difference over the course of several studies (1990, 1994). And in one important study Glucksberg, Gildea, and Bookin (1982) found that participants took longer to judge whether a sentence was "literally" true when it admitted of a salient metaphorical interpretation, even when they had been told to pay attention to only literal meanings. One might not expect this result if metaphor processing required literal interpretation—however, it could also be that the salience of the figurative meaning distracted participants, even if its calculation was in some sense optional and ancillary. On the other hand, as Camp discusses:

> Various studies (e.g. Blasko and Connine 1993, Gentner and Wolff 1997, Bowdle and Gentner 2005, Giora 1997, 2002) have found that unfamiliar and novel metaphors take significantly longer to process than either literal sentences or familiar metaphors (159).

This might be a surprising result from the standard contextualist point of view, but it is not entirely inexplicable. Familiar figurative utterances, but not literal ones, are likely to work by way of well-established cognitive associations. But unlike these standard

[88] This is a common enough refrain when it comes to Grice's theory. I actually think it's rather suspect when applied to Searle's account of metaphor. He does not say other than, and it seems fairly clear, that he is concerned with an actual processing model when he writes that, "in order to understand the metaphorical utterance, the hearer requires something more..." (85).

contextualist and implicature accounts, which must be finessed to accommodate the timing study results, PV positively predicts differences in processing speed based on use.

Attention to the notion of perlocutionary relevance allows us to offer a nuanced and novel explanation of how we understand the asserted (or otherwise illocuted) propositional content of metaphors in different contexts. Notice again that the implicature account and contextualism hold differing views of the order in which these contents were grasped. Insofar as it is not merely a rational reconstruction, *IV* holds that such contents are reached via a process of implicature calculation. When Sally utters, "Sid is a Sherman tank," hearers first fix upon the obviously false, largely compositional, and amusing sentence meaning and work through it, the maxim of quality, and other pragmatic processes to arrive second at the claim actually endorsed, *that Sid is something that cannot be deterred from achieving its goals.* Thus, *IV* holds that, in the case of metaphors, the asserted content is arrived at later than in the case of literal utterances, for which the asserted content is generally the compositional meaning of the uttered sentence. On the other hand, contextualism emphasizes that, to achieve the illocuted content of figurative utterances, one sometimes needs to loosen or tighten the extensions of lexically encoded concepts. But this has to be done in most cases anyway, irrespective of whether the utterance is figurative or not. Thus, contextualism holds that the asserted contents of figurative utterances are arrived at in the same order as they are in the case of literal utterances.

PV builds on contextualism but, in recognizing the distinction between illocutions and perlocutions, is able to give a more nuanced view of the order in which we grasp the illocuted interpretations of figurative utterances. Whether or not we grasp these before the perlocuted contents depends upon the speaker's aims and the hearer's interests in an instance of metaphorical communication. In the case of the work-a-day metaphors that often enter into ordinary conversation, a speaker's primary aim is often illocutionary in nature. One aims, primarily, to ask questions, or to make claims or requests. In such contexts hearers also are primarily concerned with speakers' illocutionary aims, and to a lesser extent with the relatively unimportant aesthetic effects speakers are nonetheless intending to produce in speaking metaphorically. So, when Sally utters, "Sid is a Sherman tank," in an ordinary conversational context, hearers generally arrive at the asserted content, *that Sid is something that cannot be deterred from achieving its goals*, first, as contextualism suggests. In such contexts, *IV* is turned on its head, since the asserted content is grasped first, and the amusing content, *that Sid is an armored assault vehicle*, is then fully worked out only if the situation allows and the hearer expends the additional effort.

The situation is just the opposite for many of the artistic metaphors appearing in poetry and other sorts of creative writing. Authors of these figurative utterances have a primary interest in producing aesthetic effects in the minds of their readers, and their readers are well situated to experience such effects. Therefore, the illocutionary contents such authors are intending to produce in speaking figuratively are often more difficult to tease out, as they are in the fifth stanza of Wallace Stevens' poem, "Sunday Morning," (reprinted in Stevens, 1978):

> She says, "But in contentment I still feel
> The need of some imperishable bliss."
> Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
> Alone, shall come fulfillment to our dreams
> And our desires. Although she strews the leaves
> Of sure obliteration on our paths,

> The path sick sorrow took, the many paths
> Where triumph rang its brassy phrase, or love
> Whispered a little out of tenderness,
> She makes the willow shiver in the sun
> For maidens who were wont to sit and gaze
> Upon the grass, relinquished to their feet.
> She causes boys to pile new plums and pears
> On disregarded plate. The maidens taste
> And stray impassioned in the littering leaves (68-69).

Who would argue that the imagistic language of this poem is not specifically chosen for its aesthetic effects? Take the line, "She causes boys to pile new plums and pears on disregarded plate." Here one is struck by the idea *that death orders the young to pile new fruit on a neglected platter*. One sees the perlocutionary relevance of this straightforward interpretation of the uttered line and comes to entertain other ideas presupposed or suggested by this and previous ideas. One imagines mother death issuing the order and ponders her motive. The perlocutionary potency of this line distracts from Steven's illocutionary aim. But illocutionary aim there is, and one which fits well with the overall theme of the poem: No beauty without death. Stevens lay clear his illocutionary aim in a letter to his editor, Harriet Monroe, on June 23rd, 1915:

> The words "On disregarded plate" in No. 5 are, apparently, obscure. Plate is used in the sense of so-called family plate. Disregarded refers to the disuse into which things fall that have been possessed for a long time. I mean, therefore, that death releases and renews. What the old have come to disregard, the young inherit and make use of (183).[89]

Through the saturation of indexicals and various loosenings and tightenings of lexical items, the uttered line, "She causes boys to pile new plums and pears on disregarded plate," is enriched with effort to Stevens' intended illocutionary interpretation, *that death allows young people to contribute new art and invention to the neglected inherited culture*. In the case of artistic metaphors, the illocutionary content of a metaphor is

[89] The letter is reprinted in Stevens (1996).

worked out as *IV* suggests, and contrary to the standard contextualist picture, only after the perlocuted and often wildly false content is grasped.

The predicted processing difference accords well with the experimental findings. Figurative language requires a context to be understood, yet figurative sentences can be understood apart from any *supplied*, relevant context. Thus, hearers must impute a context to figurative sentences. Since we saw in chapter five that the contextual assumptions required to understand metaphor are often assumptions about a speaker's intentions, it should come as no surprise if intentions about the speaker's conversational or artistic intentions were also constitutive of this context. Novel metaphors relatively easily engender perlocutionary effects, since they are new and more surprising than familiar metaphors, so novel metaphors should be more often understood as being issued with artistic intentions than familiar metaphors. Thus, in the case of novel metaphors, hearers focus more and earlier on the perlocutionary content, causing processing time for asserted contents to slow.

2. Why Metaphor? Some Potential Uses

As I pointed out in chapter four, one of the shortcomings of many articulated theories of figurative language is that they fail to explain why we use metaphor at all. Unlike all the other previously discussed views, PV suggests two interpretations of a metaphor, both of which are entertained by hearers in specific ways. Importantly, the non-endorsed content of a metaphor is not a mere gateway to the truly significant idea. It is often a fully individual content which must be worked out according to the same processes of comprehension as the illocuted interpretation. This increases the explanatory burden of the current view. If in many cases the essentially perlocuting content of the metaphor is not a necessary way-station on the road to endorsed content, why do hearers waste the resources to process it? Why do speakers express it? But it also suggests a plausible account of some important uses of figurative language.

First, let us consider what might be the default explanation for why metaphor speakers force hearers to make the circuitous route through non-endorsed content: They do it to entertain their audience. I am, of course, sympathetic to this idea. Indeed, on my view the presence of perlocutionary intentions for the unendorsed content is constitutive of figurative language. But many existing accounts of metaphor are poorly suited to this explanation. Stern's sentence meaning account and the standard contextualist view provide good illustrations. For the bulk of figurative utterances, both accounts fail to posit any propositional interpretation apart from that which is endorsed or illocuted by the speaker. For Stern, lexically specified pragmatic processes lead us to interpret a sub-sentential component as expressing a set of contextually associated presuppositions, which contribute to the meaning of the sentence. For the contextualists, non-mandated processes cause us to attribute ad hoc meanings to words, which contribute to the primary propositional content of the utterance, "what is said". For neither account is there ordinarily any potentially entertaining *idea* other than the endorsed metaphorical meaning. But then metaphor is on a par with literal utterance, and we have no account for why we use metaphors. The implicature view, though perhaps more amenable, does not lend itself to this explanation either, since, though propositional, the unendorsed, compositional "what is said" is only a conduit to the communicatively significant "what is meant". Of the cognitive views, only PV deems the non-endorsed content of a metaphor an independently relevant content of thought. And only on PV does non-endorsed content have a non-instrumental value. The non-endorsed content is an object of fancy that the hearer must often devote independent resources to grasp. Why then does the hearer bother? Because, as Bloom (2010) discusses, pleasure is one of the central goals of human cognition and it is often facilitated by imagination:

> Our main leisure activity is, by a long shot, participating in experiences that we know are not real. When we are free to do whatever we want, we retreat to the imagination—to worlds created by others, as with books, movies, video games, and television (over four hours a day for the average American), or to worlds we ourselves create, as when daydreaming and fantasizing (190).

Entertaining an unendorsed, perlocuted content provides a small pleasure even in information driven communication. Since people are independently motivated towards pleasure, we need not posit a mediate role for the content in order to explain why it is grasped.

Even if hearers bother *working out* non-endorsed, figurative interpretations for the end of pleasure, this fails to explain why speakers bother *using* metaphors. The effort might in part be explained by a prosocial sentiment, or it could stem from the same source as story-telling or other creative linguistic pursuits. However, I want to suggest another use for figurative language: Figurative language has an argumentative function for speakers. It motivates hearers to accept the cogency of speakers' endorsed ideas in several important ways.

One argumentative value of metaphor has been discussed ad naseum by Lakoff (2002, 2004, 2006). Lakoff's (1987, Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) cognitive semantic theory of metaphor, posits a cognitive model for every concept. Each model is constituted by mental images, embodied experiential information, and mappings between the target and other concepts established through metaphorical and metonymic imaginative capacities. In communication, interactions between the metaphorical models of referenced concepts establish an implicit framework for each utterance. For instance, the concept of "relief" implies a painful burden—the target of relief. So, when people speak of "tax relief" they automatically frame taxes as a burden from which people must be emancipated, rather than, say, as a fee people pay to help maintain and contribute to the national resources they use. Such conceptual mappings implicitly frame debates, according to Lakoff. And framing a debate correctly can be an important argumentative advantage. (Though this argumentative benefit is not specific to the notion of linguistic metaphor of primary interest to us.)[90]

The next two argumentative benefits of figurative language are focused more specifically on the current theory and developed from reflection on Petty and Wegener's (1998) work on persuasion. In particular, these have to do with their discussion of the factors that affect, "how motivated and able people are to assess the central merits of a person, issue or a position" (328). The first of these has to do with the effects of cognitive load on reasoning. As Petty et al (1976) demonstrated, distraction affects one's capacity to process issue relevant counter-evidence. Thus metaphor may have a positive argumentative value for a speaker insofar as his audience is inclined to entertain the perlocuted content of his utterance. If one's attention is partially focused on the false, but vivid, idea *that an iron curtain has descended on Eastern Europe*, or *that when a government collapses it can physically knock over a neighboring government*, one may

[90] I have not discussed Lakoff's cognitive semantic theory of metaphor in any detail in this dissertation. This is because I am inclined to think of the view as orthogonal to linguistic metaphor. In fact, many of Lakoff's claims about conceptual structure seem correct to me. But since Lakoff views metaphorical connections as a perfectly ubiquitous feature of conceptualization, his view could not possibly explain the intuitive distinction between the figurative and the literal. Thus, much of what I said about standard contextualism applies to the view, if it is construed as also supplying a view of linguistic metaphor. And if it is not, then I'm more or less inclined to accept it.

be less inclined to critically challenge the asserted worldview and its associated political implications.

A third argumentative value of figurative language bears on the role of positive affect in decreasing people's motivation to distrust an interlocutor. Affective attitude towards an individual helps determine how likely one will be to trust the individual as an information source (Petty and Wegener, 1998). Thus, if people are entertained by a metaphor's perlocuted content, they may be more inclined to think favorably of the speaker, so more inclined to trust what he says. Indeed, a connection between figurative language and positive appraisal of a speaker seems to be borne out by Mio et al (2005), who found that the presidents people rated as having high charisma, "used nearly twice as many metaphors (adjusted for speech length) than non-charismatic presidents" (287).

Finally, in a recent series of studies, Ackerman et al (2010) found evidence, "that experiences with specific object-related tactile qualities...triggers the application of associated concepts...even to unrelated people and situations" (1713). For instance, male participants in one study were significantly more likely to agree that more money should be allocated to social issues when a survey was attached to a heavy clipboard than a light one. (Women were close to ceiling on social spending in both conditions.) And participants were less flexible in negotiations when seated in a hard chair than a soft one. Heaviness is metaphorically associated with importance, whereas hardness is associated with personal inflexibility; so the studies give some indication that metaphorical structure may affect how one approaches a situation. In the case of consonant metaphors—those for which the endorsed proposition accords with the metaphorical associations triggered by the perlocuted content—the perlocuted content may help turn one's perspective in a direction that accords with the speakers claim. Cal may be inclined to accept Doug's claim, *that his father is stubborn*, because he likes and trusts him, but the way Cal makes the claim, by saying, "Dad is an unyielding calcification," might not hurt either.

The argumentative use of figurative language that I have discussed is essentially related to the pernicious attitude many philosophers have held towards figurative language. Effects of the perlocuted content of a figurative utterance lead hearers to attribute more credence to the endorsed content than rational processing would recommend. If we must ban figurative language from the republic, we should not do so because it is loose. Loose use is ubiquitous (and useful, after all). If we are to ban figurative language from rational discourse, we should do so because we side with Locke (1690, Bk. 3, ch. 10), when he writes that:

> …all the artificial and figurative application of Words Eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong *Ideas*, move the Passions, and thereby mislead the Judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheat: And therefore however laudable or allowable Oratory may render them in Harangues and popular Addressees, they are certainly, in all Discourses that pretend to inform or instruct, wholly to be avoided; and where Truth and Knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the Language or Person that makes use of them.

3. Non-linguistic Figuration

PV allows for the assimilation of verbal metaphor to other forms of non-verbal figuration. This is an important criterion for any folk theory of figuration since, as pointed out in chapter one, the folk concept is not restricted to language. Suppose, as you are sitting through a boring lecture, a friend catches your attention. With his ring and pinky fingers folded down and his other digits extended, your friend mimics a gun with his hand and, putting the 'barrel' to his temple, brings down his thumb like a hammer, pantomiming his own suicide. Why does your friend do this? It seems clear that he aims to achieve the following ends with this gesture: to point out and convey *that he finds this talk incredibly boring* and to strike you with the idea *that this talk is driving him to suicide*. Minus loosenings and tightenings of lexically encoded concepts, this is essentially the same account I have suggested for verbal metaphor.

The monolith scenes in *2001: A Space Odyssey* will be understood metaphorically if they are thought to intentionally capture our imagination with the idea *that there exists a superior alien intelligence*, while they symbolize and remind us *that evolution of the species can occur instantaneously*. If these (or similar) were the aims of Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick, then the monolith scenes actually constitute figurative film. An image of a labyrinth can be understood as an instance of non-linguistic figuration. When we see the picture we think of a maze, but we take the picture to symbolize the confusing nature of life's journey, on which the labyrinth leads us to meditate. To understand the labyrinth as a figurative image or artifact, we need not attribute intentions to one specific author. There can be cultural icons which are figurative because they occupy a certain position relative to the intentions of a group or tradition. Such metaphorical icons may resist death so long as the tradition continues—in fact, they may gain more significance over time for new initiates through their connection to a long tradition. This is not the case with most metaphors, which over time lose their potential to strike us as they become more and more familiar. A metaphor dies when hearers come to see it only as an attenuated representation, not a tool to affect unaffiliated psychological states.

Though PV does offer an account of non-linguistic figuration—of which there are legitimate instances—it is important to bear in mind that not everything we call a metaphor is a metaphor, or even really understood as a metaphor. Consider as one possible example: the British Petroleum oil spill. People refer to the oil spill as a "metaphor" for big oil's instrumentalist perspective on the natural environment, the incompetency of the Obama presidency, and the excesses of capitalism, among others. But on the current theory, if people really understand this as a metaphor, then they must (at least unconsciously) attribute the appropriate intentional framework to some author of the oil spill. I have no doubt that people do sometimes attribute intentional states to supernatural agents.[91] In some situations this may provide the appropriate framework for natural and cataclysmic metaphors. But we should also remember the contextualist mantra, that loose use is ubiquitous. The folk concept of figuration can also be used loosely to refer to things to which it does not strictly apply. Some purported instances of non-linguistic figuration may be nothing more than instances of loose use.

In any case, it is important to note how unique PV is in offering a theory of non-verbal figuration. None of the views of figurative language we considered in earlier chapters offered such a view. It would have been impossible to expand most of these theories beyond the realm of the linguistic. Implicatures and covert arguments are language-specific phenomena.

4. A Testable Hypothesis

Often theories of figurative language seem virtually unfalsifiable. In the face of findings that figurative processing does not accord with online implicature calculation, implicature theorists can emphasize that their view was only intended as a rational reconstruction. Non-cognitivists characterize metaphor understanding as requiring a vague sort of "seeing as" that we cannot say anything very specific about, so cannot test. PV refreshingly makes empirically testable predictions. It is a substantive theory which is

[91] See Mandelbaum and Ripley (ms), and Gray and Wegner (2010).

open to falsification. Here are three classes of predictions drawn from the discussion of this chapter:

1. Processing speed for endorsed content comprehension will change with a hearer's understanding of a speakers intentions. If the speaker is understood to be primarily interested in producing aesthetic effects, endorsed content comprehension will take longer than if the speaker is understood to be mainly interested in conveying information. This hypothesis can be tested by measuring processing speed for identical utterances relative to otherwise equivalent poetic vs. conversational contexts.
2. According to the current theory, hearers process the perlocuted contents of metaphors because they have an inherent cognitive interest in the pleasurable experiences these perlocuted contents effect, and speakers speak metaphorically because expressing an independent, perlocuting content has argumentative value. These hypothesis suggest a number of testable predictions. For the explanation of why hearers process the perlocuted content to obtain, it must be that fully processing a figurative utterance is a pleasurable experience, in which case it would raise general affect. Increases in affect are associated with various effects, including (as mentioned above) a tendency to judge others more favorably. So the conditions required for the target explanation of why hearers process metaphors are readily testable. Relatedly, if a primary explanation for why speakers speak metaphorically is the argumentative benefit of the figurative utterance, then we should see a decrease in metaphorical language when speakers are in contexts in which argumentative benefit is unimportant or obviated.

When speakers are addressing those who share their beliefs, they should use fewer metaphors, all else being equal.

3. When an addressee regards an action as figurative she apprehends it as symbolizing two ideas, one which is endorsed and one which is meant to affect a psychological reaction. Actions which are regarded as figurative should lend themselves to such dual interpretation. What's more, we should be able to elicit differences in response for figurative actions if we ask study participants to write a sentence that "captures the idea that your counterpart means to get you to believe" with a figurative action, verses "the idea with which your counterpart is trying to entertain you."

There are other testable upshots of the current view, and this redounds in its favor when compared with existing accounts of figurative language.

5. Flexibility of the Account

Although I have cast the Perlocutionary View from the bronze of linguistic contextualism, the view might have been cast from other metal. That PV does not stand or fall with linguistic contextualism is a further strength of the view. For instance, linguistic indexicalism (of the variety endorsed by Stanley and his co-authors and discussed in chapter five) and contextualism are competing explanations of instances in which the context invariant meanings of pronounced words do not determine truth-conditional contents essential to communication. Both views assume that context plays a large role in determining the sub-propositional meanings which are contributed to truth conditions in instances of use. As long as a view allows such a role for context—and also that utterances can express two contents (which consideration of certain non-figurative utterances such as puns suggests any view must)—the view is compatible with my theory of figurative language. So PV can survive the triumph of indexicalism over contextualism, should it come to pass, and versions of the view can be articulated for other theories of communication as well.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that although the old theories of metaphorical meaning did not supply a successful account of the concept of figurative utterance, accounts of figurative understanding and meaning do fall out of the Perlocutionary View. To fully understand any figure of speech is to grasp both intended contents, as well as a speaker's intentional acts in expressing these.[92] One may identify a speaker's metaphorical meaning with both propositional contents the speaker uses to achieve her illocutionary and perlocutionary aims. Or, since we typically think of the, for example, asserted contents of utterances as their meanings, one may prefer to think only of the content a speaker uses to achieve her illocutionary aims as the meaning of a metaphor.

5. Conclusion

In this dissertation I have criticized theories that attempt to explain figurative language in terms of a distinctive class of figurative meaning or (in the case of non-cognitive views) understanding. These fail to identify a distinctive kind of figurative meaning, so fail to differentiate figurative and literal language, and many fail for other, independent reasons as well. I offered the Perlocutionary View of figurative language, according to which one speaks figuratively if and only if one aims to perform an illocutionary act, and thereby a perlocutionary act, by means of a particular, intended truth-conditional interpretation of her utterance, while intending to perform a

[92] Although, in the case of an unsuccessful metaphor, a speaker's perlocutionary aims, though perhaps understood, may fail to be successfully brought off. In fact, understanding a speaker's perlocutionary aims (and so fully understanding a figurative utterance) may hamper the success of those aims (and that utterance), as, for example, in cases in which one aims to flatter or mislead.

perlocutionary act by means of a particular, intended, and distinct truth-conditional interpretation of the same utterance (where it's possible to perlocute by means of the second interpretation with or without illocuting by means of it).[93] This view accords with our intuitive assessments of clear and central cases of figurative language. It accommodates a range of figurative utterances and allows us to distinguish subclasses of these using various resources. As I have discussed in this chapter, it offers a nuanced treatment of the differences between poetic and conversational metaphors, but does not abandon a unified account of figurative language in general. It offers a theory of why we use and process metaphors. And it has application beyond the bounds of language to images, actions, and events. Unlike other views of figurative language, this Perlocutionary View lays legitimate claim to the title of *Figuration of the Folk*.

[93] Among the works that have, in certain ways, prefigured my own theory of metaphor and figurative language, two deserve special mention. Cohen (1975) precedes me in explaining figurative language generally in terms of interactions between illocutionary, perlocutionary, and other aspects of the total speech situation (in Austin's xxxxResidue of some discussion of C ohen? phrase). He maps various kinds of figuration onto a model of speech acts, according to which each sentence has a linguistically determined meaning and force. Ordinarily, these meanings (at least) partially determine locutionary content (or, 'what is said'). Each force has associated with it a particular illocutionary act, which, "when the circumstances of the utterance are altogether 'normal'" (676), is executed. And each illocution has an associated perlocutionary effect. Cohen holds that, "in all cases of figuration something prevents...[these various elements]...from fitting together." So, for example, in some cases of verbal metaphor, such as, "Rio is cold," the associated illocutionary act is one of assertion. But a felicity condition on assertions is that what is said should be (at least apparently) true, and it is obviously false that Rio is cold. So the locution and illocution do not fit together, and this causes us to reinterpret the locution. Cohen also suggests that there are cases of figurative illocutions. Suppose that the perlocutionary effect of causing to acquiesce is associated with the illocution of begging. Then if I say, "I beg you to get better," to someone not standing in the way of her own recovery, whatever effect my utterance has it cannot be the perlocutionary effect associated with begging. Her own recovery is something she cannot acquiesce to. In this case of a figurative speech act, Cohen thinks the linguistically determined force of my utterance is transfigured to produce some uncatalogued illocution. I also consider Hills (1997) a forerunner to my own view. In the closing pages of that paper, Hills claims that in the, "case of a routine freestanding metaphorical assertion, we take the same set of words to express two different thoughts ," one of these, he goes on, "is entertained in a spirit of assertion," while the other, "is entertained in a spirit of pretense" (153). This suggestion is very similar to my view as far as it goes, and though I disagree with Hills on some points (for example, the open-endedness of metaphorical paraphrase,) one could perhaps view my theory as a further working out of his basic idea.

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