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# THE LIFE AND DEATH OF A METAPHOR, OR THE METAPHYSICS OF METAPHOR

ABSTRACT: This paper addresses two issues: (1) what it is for a metaphor to be either alive or dead and (2) what a metaphor must be in order to be either alive or dead. Both issues, in turn, bear on the contemporary debate whether metaphor is a pragmatic or semantic phenomenon and on the dispute between Contextualists and Literalists. In the first part of the paper, I survey examples of what I take to be live metaphors and dead metaphors in order to establish that there is a phenomenon here to be explained. I then propose an explanation of metaphorical vitality (and by implication of metaphorical death) in terms of the dependence of the interpretation of a metaphor on a family or network of expressions specific to its context of utterance. I then argue that only a Literalist account of metaphor — one that posits metaphorical expressions (a la Stern (2000))— and not Contextualist and Gricean approaches can accommodate this explanation. Finally, I discuss some objections to my Literalist account and sketch an explanation of types to counter Platonistic objections to my metaphorical expression types.

Metaphors have lives. They are born on the occasion of their first utterance or inscription. Their progenitors are their literal vehicles and the speakers who use them.[1] Some have lives no longer than it takes to utter them, others are stillborn, and many, like the mass of humanity, live undistinguished lives that are soon forgotten. Some, however,



have meaningful lives—they are shared and repeated, they change how others act and think, and they change: juvenile tokens mature into seasoned figures; their interpretations have a history. Some have careers—in law, science, literature, and even philosophy. And some are so full of life they never seem to die. No matter how many times they are used, they retain their metaphorical soul. The most alive gain immortal entry into the Library of Living Metaphors, everlastingly responsive to tireless (and sometimes tiresome) interpreters. Others become dated, ossify, stultify. They go into retirement. And, finally, some die natural deaths. Their metaphorical contents pass into the stock of meanings assigned to the very words used metaphorically, rendering them polysemous though literal. The once metaphorical meaning may supplement the meanings already in place, or it may replace the original (literal) meaning of the word, making the once metaphorical meaning by default its only active, working meaning. Among the latter, some are called 'dead' metaphors, though it is really the literal that is dead. It would be better to call this state the literal afterlife of the metaphor, and there are those who regard it as the great success story for a metaphor. For others, like Richard Rorty, you couldn't wish a worse fate on something than a literal afterdeath.[2]

All this talk of the life and death of a metaphor is not just metaphorical. Metaphors, like other things that live and die, are beings, in some ways natural, in other ways artifactual, but either way, with histories. That they are created from the literal and sometimes end up literal also suggests that we can learn something about the literal, or words in general, from metaphor.

I shall focus on what it is for a metaphor to be either alive or dead and on what a metaphor must be in order to be either alive or dead. These questions, in turn, bear on the contemporary debate over whether metaphor is a pragmatic or semantic phenomenon and the dispute between Contextualists and Literalists. Although I shall start off by talking of 'a metaphor' as a token of an expression used or interpreted metaphorically (on an occasion), ultimately I will argue that there must also be metaphorical expressions (i.e., types). Parallel to this line of argument, I shall claim that these matters of metaphorical life and death require more resources than pragmatics can offer. Something literalist, and semantic, is unavoidable even if undesirable.[3]

### 1. TYPOLOGIES OF LIVE AND DEAD METAPHORS

I begin with a typology of live and dead metaphors. My point here is not to legislate which metaphors are alive and which dead, or to provide a comprehensive listing of the many and various uses of metaphor, but simply to establish that there is a phenomenon to be explained. First, the live metaphors:

(1) The metaphor most philosophers focus on is the utterance of an expression Ø (in a sentence S), interpreted metaphorically in a context c, to express a property or content P which is true of some object x.[4] In a first sense of 'live,' an utterance of such a metaphor is live insofar as it is novel, not only in the trivial sense that Ø is applied metaphorically to x for the first time, but also insofar as Ø has not been used previously as a metaphor to express the particular property P that is applied to x.

(2) In a second, slightly stronger sense that still concerns the propositional or truth-conditional vitality of an utterance, an utterance of a metaphor is alive just in case it expresses a "novel" property we otherwise do not possess the linguistic resources to convey or communicate, a property for which we have no expression in our present lexical repertoire. But the deficiency at issue is not simply linguistic, the lack of a label. Rather the linguistic lacuna reflects a privation of understanding. Because the novel property in question is not yet sufficiently conceptualized or understood, there is no word or expression per se that expresses it from occasion to occasion or independently of the things to which it applies in each context; the property can be expressed only by the word in tandem with its context and application in that context: by exploiting extra-linguistic common knowledge, associated commonplaces, encyclopedic knowledge, presuppositions, and facts about the things to which it ostensibly applies. These metaphors must be figured out from and in their context, even if the figuring seems effortless. Because the properties in question are less than fully conceptualized, and therefore lack a sense that would qualitatively pick them out, elsewhere I have also called them 'de re metaphors.'[5]

(3) What makes some metaphors alive is not (only) what they say—their propositional content or truth-conditions—but how they say it. Even if we already know what the utterance of a metaphor says and that it is true, it can make us see that content in a new, live way. We may know what Romeo wishes to say about Juliet—that he cannot live without her or that she is peerless—but his metaphor makes us see Juliet as the sun, from a perspective or under an aspect that is informative above and beyond the content it expresses. Some have argued that this vitality is affective and non-propositional.[6] However, I would argue that this mode by which the truth-conditional content is presented is extra-propositional, i.e., not part of the truth-conditions of the metaphor in its context, but no less cognitive.[7] I will return to this information; for now I simply register that this is another measure of metaphorical vitality.

(4) Another way in which a metaphor can be alive is manifest when different speakers can actively use the same metaphor (type) to express the same property with different tokens applied to different entities. Suppose that Romeo utters 'Juliet is the sun,' and Paris disagrees, saying 'No, Rosalyn is the sun.' Suppose that they both metaphorically express the same property by their respective tokens of 'is the sun,' each exploiting the same (or similar enough) contextual presuppositions, made in each of their respective contexts. What makes such a metaphor alive is not just each of its individual contents in their respective contexts, but its potential for sustained and shared interpretations. Its vitality is not fleeting but extended. Here we begin to see the shape of a life for a metaphor rather than just a single momentary existence.

(5) Yet another kind of metaphorical vitality is manifest when multiple utterances of one literal vehicle in different contexts metaphorically express a range of different contents, each relative to the contextual presuppositions of its respective context. We can distinguish two cases:

a. Multiple utterances of Ø express disjoint sets of properties

b. Multiple utterances of Ø express increasingly inclusive sets of properties.

An example of (a) are utterances of 'is the sun' in, say, 'Juliet is the sun' in a context c and 'Achilles is the sun' in a context c* where each in its own context, in part triggered by differences between our presuppositions about the two subjects, makes its own presuppositions relative to which 'is the sun' is metaphorically interpreted with different disjoint contents. On the one interpretation, what is metaphorically expressed is that Juliet is peerless, the one about whom the speaker's life revolves, without whom he cannot live. On the other, what is metaphorically said is that Achilles is a raging, consuming brute force of nature. Yet,

despite their different contents, these count as one metaphor because what makes for the difference in their interpretations are their respective contexts, not the vehicle being used metaphorically. And its vitality consists in its power or potentiality to express such different contents in different contexts.

An example of (b) is a series of successive interpretations of, say, 'Juliet is the sun' each of which properly includes the content of its predecessor. This kind of metaphorical vitality shows itself in the power of a metaphor to lend itself to richer and more elaborate interpretations on reflection. We measure this vitality of a metaphor by its fertility, or pregnancy, for additional interpretation. What makes it alive is that, given its actual content in a context, the metaphor retains the potential for further interpretation in different contexts.

(6) Finally, eternally live metaphors are (like those in (5)) either ones whose content is extendable indefinitely, yielding richer and richer interpretations without end the more we dwell on them, or ones that lend themselves to different interpretations in an unbounded number of different contexts in which they can be interpreted. This kind of vitality is typically found in great poetic metaphors but it can also happen in science, or any enterprise that involves sustained reflection. These "immortal metaphors" are the ones, as Cavell put it, whose interpretations invariably end with "and so on." [8]

In sum, the vitality or liveness of a metaphor can be of one (or more) of three kinds: intra-contextual propositional vitality [(1) and (2)], intra-contextual extra-propositional vitality (3), or inter-contextual propositional vitality [(4), (5), and (6)]. Note already that the metaphorical vitality of (4) and (5) cannot be captured simply in terms of a single utterance or its truth-conditions in a single context. After all, a single token in a given context does not itself have a potential for further interpretation, for additional or alternative contents in other contexts distinct from its actual content in its context of utterance. Thus we need to identify a space for this kind of vitality.

I turn now to dead metaphors, a more motley bunch:

The first two classes or kinds of 'dead metaphor' will not concern us; I mention them only to bracket them.

(i) 'Cosmos' originally referred to a woman's headdress, was later metaphorically applied to the ranks of an army, and finally to the order of the universe, its only active sense at present.[9] "Blockbuster," as in "Star Wars was a blockbuster movie," refers to something that is extremely successful (especially in drawing audiences and in sales) but the word originally referred to a very large bomb that could demolish an entire city block.[10] Both of these are expressions whose original, once literal interpretation is now dead and forgotten. Only their once metaphorical interpretation survives as their meaning, but it is no longer even recognized as metaphorical.[11] The only sense in which the present meanings of these expressions are metaphorical is historical; the term describes their genesis. So, in this sense, to call the metaphor 'dead' is privative, just as a coat that is fake fur is not fur and counterfeit money is not money. A dead metaphor of this kind once was but no longer is a metaphor.

A related case are 'dead' metaphorical interpretations of words that survive together with their original literal meanings, even while it is totally forgotten that the former are related to, and once were dependent on, the latter. For example, the meaning of 'culture' according to which it refers to human arts and civilization was once metaphorically derived from the biological sense of the term (as in 'bacteria culture'), but at present the two senses are understood entirely independently.[12] In these cases, calling the originally metaphorically derived meaning 'dead' is also privative; it is no longer metaphorical because the (original) literal meaning plays no role in its (metaphorical) understanding. Such words are polysemes with two meanings, neither metaphors nor (given their origins) homonyms.[13]

(ii) A second class of 'dead metaphors' that are only debatedly metaphors are so-called 'double-function' terms—e.g., physical or sensory terms like 'hard,' 'deep,' and 'bright' applied to psychological states—and synaesthetic adjectives, i.e., predicates taken from one sensory modality that express features applicable to a second sensory modality. Without entering into detail, these seem to involve phylogenetic metaphor-like transfer but no metaphorical interpretation at the ontogenetic level.[14]

I put aside these first two classes in order to concentrate on dead metaphors: i.e. uses of expressions that are (a) clearly metaphorical interpretations on an occasion and (b) dead or dying. On the privative use of 'dead,' a dead metaphor of this kind is an impossibility; if it is

dead, it is not a metaphor. What, then, could these be? Some candidates in the literature are:

(1) Foot of a mountain
Mouth of a river
Eye of a needle
Leg of the table
Chest of drawers
Foot of a bed
Branches of government
To grasp a concept
To bait/goad
Raise one's voice
Growth of the economy

I won't challenge the status of any of these stock examples, but I do want to register a word of caution against armchair theorizing. Without some detective work, we should not assume that any or all of these, at some earlier time or when first introduced, were metaphors. 'Foot' of a mountain may simply be what is at the foot, one of whose literal senses is: at the bottom, of the mountain; 'eye' has as one of its meanings 'a hole,' and so on. There is also a second problem of backwards-projection: Most of us, as lay readers, would identify Shakespeare's use of "(tattered) weed" in his Sonnet #2 as a metaphor (meaning, "(worn) garment") which employs as its literal vehicle the word referring to a wild plant. But in fact Shakespeare's word 'weed,' derived from the archaic English 'waed', primarily (which is one sense of 'literally') referred to a garment, while the plant word 'weed' was derived from another archaic English word 'weod.' Thus what may strike us now as a dead metaphor may rest on a similar error. A similar danger exists regarding idioms which some take to be (like polysemous simple words) the corpses of once live metaphors or metaphorical phrases. Although it is not difficult to speculate about how 'fork in the road' came to be a metaphor and then survived in its afterlife as an idiom, in actual fact this phrase originated with a literal application of 'fork' meaning 'that which branches or divides.'[15]

The problem of dead metaphor is to explain the possibility of the dual status of being a metaphor and being dead. I am not interested in





metaphors that are merely trite, clichéd, or tired— 'dead' in the sense, as Samuel Guttenplan reminds us, in which I say 'I'm dead' after running on the treadmill for two hours. A dead metaphor is also not, despite a widespread impression, a metaphor that has been repeated or used frequently.[16] There is nothing dead about 'Juliet is the sun' even though it has been used repeatedly and regularly. On the contrary, the most frequently and regularly used metaphors may be the liveliest and best, the immortal ones in our typology of live metaphors. As Borges once wrote:

> When I was a young man I was always hunting for new metaphors. Then I found out that really good metaphors are always the same. I mean you compare time to a road, death to sleeping, life to dreaming, and those are the great metaphors in literature because they correspond to something essential. If you invent metaphors, they are apt to be surprising during the fraction of a second, but they strike no deep emotion.[17]

Our problem is also not the diachronic question: How in the development and growth of a language did expressions that were metaphorical cease to be and in some cases become literal? We are concerned with a synchronic issue: What determines whether the interpretation of an expression (uttered by a speaker in a community at a time) is metaphorical and alive rather than dead metaphorically? To try to answer this by citing a dictionary entry as a criterion that a given metaphorical interpretation is dead only pushes the question one step back: By what criterion did the lexicographer decide that the given meaning should be codified in the dictionary?[18]

Earlier we described three kinds of metaphorical vitality that consist in inter-contextual propositional vitality [(4), (5), and (6)]. One strategy to pursue in order to characterize dead metaphor might be to conceptualize it as the privation, not of metaphor per se (as do all those who identify dead metaphors with polysemes, one of whose current literal meanings had once been a metaphorical interpretation), but of metaphorical vitality or liveness. In all three of the above cases, the vitality, or degree of vitality, of a metaphor Ø is a function of the degree to which its interpretation in a context depends on presuppositions associated with Ø specific to that context. So, as the interpretation of

the metaphor ceases to be sensitive to or dependent on presuppositions specific (to some degree) to its context of utterance, the metaphor will die (to that degree).

Let me describe two kinds of metaphors that do not meet (to varying degrees) this condition for metaphorical vitality, each for a different reason. Hence, their interpretations count as metaphorical but dead.

(iii) Routinized metaphorical interpretations: Some expressions Ø interpreted metaphorically turn out to have the same interpretation in whatever context they are uttered—because they bring the same presuppositions to bear on their interpretation in each context. Examples include the 'default' interpretations of metaphors that exploit the normal notion or stereotypical features associated with the literal vehicle; e.g., 'Cheney is a gorilla,' 'Sharon was a gorilla,' 'Sadam was a gorilla,' and so on. With these metaphors, the interpreter computes—figures out—extra-linguistic presuppositions about features associated with Ø to yield a metaphorical content for Ø in the context. But the presuppositions are the same for all contexts. The metaphor, as it were, carries its context on its sleeve. Now, since the metaphor draws on the same set of presuppositions in every context, it obeys what I call the Actual Context Constraint: the content of a metaphor in a context c is always dependent on presuppositions held in c. Because the same presuppositions are held in all contexts, they are held in c in particular. Nonetheless, the metaphor loses its vitality to the degree that its interpretation is not dependent on presuppositions specific to its (actual) context of utterance c.

(iv) Root-inized metaphorical interpretations:[19] Take a metaphor in a foreign or ancient literary text, something whose context of production is far removed from the interpreter's actual context. Or a metaphor produced in such a special context that a lot of stage-setting is necessary to get the metaphor going. We identify the inscription as a metaphor, and its only acceptable interpretation is by typing it as a metaphor. But it is only by recovering the particular presuppositions that obtained in its context of origin that we can give the metaphor an acceptable interpretation (whatever the criteria of acceptability). It is not only that we have no presuppositions of our own—in our actual context—by which we can acceptably interpret the metaphor to express (even) a different content. Unless we recover the presuppositions of its authors—which





we do not share—there is no making sense of this metaphor. The interpretation, then, is a metaphor but it is "rooted" in one context, try as we do to 're-create' it or put ourselves into it. Another way to describe this kind of dead metaphor might be in these terms. To the degree to which the metaphor, notwithstanding its acceptable interpretation according to its ur-presuppositions, resists alternative interpretations, it is dead. The point is that, regardless of its author's intentions, a live metaphor is one that has the potentiality for different interpretations in different contexts. Metaphors that exclude that potentiality of interpretation can be uprooted from their original context only at the risk of being killed.

An example may make the idea of a root-inized metaphor clearer. Among the many metaphors in the Hebrew Bible, one large group refer to the Israelite temple, temple-city, the land of promise, and the people of Israel using vocabulary for plants, vineyards, trees, vines. Here is a very small sample:

(2a) You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your possession (Ex 15, 17)

(b) You plucked up a vine from Egypt;
You expelled nations and planted it. (Ps 80, 9)

(c) Israel is holy to YHVH,
The first-fruits of His harvest (Jer 2, 3)

(d) But I have planted you as a choice vine,
Entirely with authentic seed;
How have you transformed
Unruly, alien vine
Even if you wash with natron
And use much lye,
Your sin is stained before Me–declares YHVH God.
(Jer 2, 21-2)

When one reads any one of these individual verses in scripture, she will identify it as a metaphor. The Israelite temple and the Israelites are obviously not meant to be literally planted or picked, and each of these metaphors in isolation has a clear but thin metaphorical content (that often can be stated literally). Indeed thinness of literally explicable content is possibly one mark of a dead metaphor. However, when we situate each of the individual metaphors in this more complex garden (or

jungle) of ancient plant metaphors, each single one becomes cognitively thicker. Ipso facto, it becomes harder to conceive of different interpretations for them relative to other contexts. Why should this be? According to Bible scholars, this system or network of metaphors using terms for plants, vines, and trees to express the relation between God and Israel or the Israelite temple derives from the pre-biblical Mesopotamian conception of a divine garden, a bejeweled garden where luxuriant trees grow by a stream of living waters, and where only immortals dwell, the abode of the deity. Furthermore, this idea of a divine garden as the dwelling place of the deity was itself modeled after the mythopoetic conception of the divine manor. In the ancient near east, each temple city was believed to be the manor of its patron deity, and each local ruler was divinely elected to supervise and oversee the temple estates, especially its garden. Thus the best humans were chosen to care for God's physical manor, and we know as historical fact that ancient near eastern kings invested much of their energies in the cultivation of rich pleasure gardens in and around their royal palaces, assembling a variety of exotic plants from around the world, often brought back from military campaigns, viewing their private gardens as a microcosm of the world and the fertility of their gardens as an epitome of the fertility of the whole universe. By the time we reach the Hebrew Bible, this mythopoetic idea of the divine garden is a metaphor, transferred to the Israelite temple or temple-city or the entire land of Israel, taken as God's divine garden realized in the physical world. Like the Mesopotamean king, it is now the people of Israel that is elected to care for the divine manor, the temple, temple-city, or land. In some biblical narratives, e.g. Genesis 2-3, Adam and Eve, first created to work and care for God's garden and then expelled for disobedience, serve as a figure for the nation of Israel, likewise brought to the promised land to settle and care for their lord's manor and then exiled for disobedience. In other prophetic or eschatological verses, the Israelites are God's elect whom He plants in His divine garden, the land of Israel. [20]

Now, my point in filling in this pre-biblical background is to illustrate that it is only when we identify the full context in which these metaphors originated, including their pre-biblical mythopoetic sources, that we can begin to appreciate how alive and vital these metaphors once were and how they once had the power to explain or depict their history to the ancient Israelites. But precisely because of the specificity and remoteness of that ancient context, the richer these metaphors become, the more they tend to be rooted in the ancient context, and the more alien they are to us given our present beliefs and attitudes. Because they are so root-inized, and their roots are so far from our ground, they lack the potential to enable or empower us to project them productively in other contexts. Indeed they resist such generation or projection—depriving them of their vitality. Even while we know them to be metaphors, and very specific metaphors, they are dead for us.





To be sure, a metaphor can be alive in one respect and dead in another. Consider the following example, (from the right-wing Israeli press, written before Camp David):

(3) The State of Israel is trapped in a wheelchair being dumped into the sea.

One immediately recognizes (3) as a metaphor, but for its specific interpretation, its contextualization is necessary:

> Israel and the United States have always taken pains to conceal the fact that, back in 1985, Arafat had been in direct radio contact with Mahmoud Abbas after the Palestinian terrorist hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro in the Mediterranean. Abbas chose one passenger, a wheelchair-bound elderly American Jew named Leon Klinghoffer, as a hostage.
>
> "What should I do with him," Abbas asked Arafat.
>
> "Throw him into the sea," Arafat answered.
>
> Abbas carried out his order and Klinghoffer died.
>
> History is repeating itself now. Arafat, with Israeli help, pulled the wool over the eyes of US leaders, such as President Clinton. Only now, he has trapped the entire state of Israel in a wheelchair, which he is in the process of dumping in the sea.

What is striking about this metaphor is that the context-specificity of its rootedness conflicts with its productivity. One must know the

highly context-specific presuppositions of the story of Klinghoffer to recover the full content of the metaphor 'is trapped in a wheelchair being dumped into the sea' which means: to eradicate in a cruel manner, exploiting the victim's helpless situation. But precisely because so much stage-setting is required, the metaphor prima facie resists the potential for different interpretations in different contexts that is characteristic of live metaphors. In judging, then, whether a metaphor or, more accurately, a use or interpretation of an expression metaphorically, is dead or alive, we should be prepared for equivocal, or mixed, answers.

## 2. LIFE IN THE METAPHORICAL FAMILY

With our descriptive typology of live and dead metaphors in hand, I hope the reader is at least convinced that there is a phenomenon here to be explained. I now turn to the question: what makes some of these metaphors alive and others dead and, as a consequence, what must a metaphor be in order to be alive or dead?

As we have seen, each individual biblical metaphor, though thin and dead in isolation, can be brought back to life, if only to its former (root-inized) life, by connecting it to its family relations, to other plant or horticultural metaphors, the set or network of metaphors as a member of which it is interpreted. The idea that metaphors "are transferred," or interpreted, in families, or networks, was first proposed by Nelson Goodman.[21] Since then, the idea has become a leitmotif in the literature, elaborated by Eva Kittay and Adrien Lehrer (in terms of semantic field theory),[22] George Lakoff and his co-authors (in terms of conceptual and conventional metaphors),[23] Deidre Gentner (in terms of her structure-mapping theory of analogy),[24] Lynne Tirrell (in terms of anaphor-like extended metaphors),[25] Roger White (in terms of complex metaphors),[26] Elisabeth Camp (in terms of characterizations and aspects),[27] and in my own writings.[28] Davidson also noticed the idea but misdiagnosed its significance. He writes: When the now dead metaphor 'he was burned up' was "active, we would have pictured fire in the eyes or smoke coming out of the ears."[29] Since pictures, on his view, do not have cognitive content, this is meant to bolster his argument that neither do metaphors. However, whether or not we would have pictured this, Davidson is right that when the metaphor was active or alive we would have said that the subject had fire in the eyes or smoke coming out of the ears or was seething at the mouth.[30] That is, these implications and associated metaphors would have been drawn. Live metaphors function as part of productive networks in which we draw extensions like these from antecedent metaphors, thus situating the given metaphor in a web of expressions. More than any other contemporary writer, George Lakoff and his school have documented this systemic dimension of metaphor through his "conventional" and "conceptual" metaphors. Ironically, Lakoff is sometimes criticized for his dependence on dead metaphors as data. In fact, when his individual examples are situated in the complex articulated networks in which they function, in what he calls "conceptual metaphors," metaphors that taken one by one are often so dead that they are hardly noticed as metaphors come back to life with varying but often high degrees of vitality.[31]

Although the systemic character of metaphorical interpretation is now widely acknowledged, it is not as well recognized that there are multiple kinds of networks at work in metaphorical interpretation and that they play a number of different roles. Let me briefly note three different kinds of networks.[32]

(i) The thematic roles of verbs and, derivatively, words in other lexical categories require and, thereby, generate a network of expressions that must co-occur and constrain them. The same thematic roles of literal vehicles carry over to their metaphorical interpretations, determining and constraining a set of obligatory or optional co-occurring expressions.[33] For example, the literal vehicle 'knit up' in Shakespeare's metaphor

(4) Sleep... knits up the raveled sleeve of care (Macbeth II, ii)

whose content (in its context) is that sleep restores the calm of the anxious, requires an agent (hence, it agent-izes or personifies 'sleep') and a patient, which furthermore must be the sort of thing that has parts that can be composed. Hence, the unacceptability of

(5) Sleep... knits up care

and the need for some theme that fits the bill. Notice that the thematic obligation does not uniquely determine a single patient expression. Shakespeare might have written 'the raveled sweater of care' or

‘the tangled loose threads of care.’ It is in choosing or discriminating among these alternative candidates that the true master of metaphor demonstrates his skill. But what is not “up” to the metaphor-maker is that there must be some noun phrase with these semantic properties to discharge that thematic role. Thus the metaphorical interpretation of one expression carries with it commitments to multiple co-occurring metaphorical expressions. As we shall see, unlike other networks, this aspect of metaphorical interpretation is determined linguistically and is known as part of the speaker’s knowledge of language.

(ii) A second set of networks function to generate the features that constitute the content of the metaphor. As many have argued, various kinds of metaphors (e.g., those grounded in similarity or exemplification) work by expressing a feature that the literal vehicle renders salient in its context. In turn, one determinant of salience is the diagnostic value of the feature which is a function of alternatives to be classified, both alternative objects in the sample or categorization-schema and alternative features sorted by the schema.[34] Thus the interpretation of any single metaphor depends on a network of expressions referring to these alternative members of the schema to which it belongs, expressions that are either made explicit in the context—e.g., ‘moon,’ ‘stars,’ ‘lamps,’ ‘eyes, ‘ and so on in the larger passage of Romeo’s ‘Juliet is the sun’ in Shakespeare’s play—or are implicit in the presuppositions held in the context.

(iii) The third kind of network is what Max Black (1962) called the “system of associated commonplaces” in terms of which, he proposed, a metaphor is interpreted rather than in terms of its lexical meaning or definitional features. But the term ‘commonplaces’ does not do justice to the variety of associations that feed into metaphorical interpretations, some of which may be lexical but most of which are properties or features at best inductively, empirically, or experientially related to the literal vehicle. Some of these associated properties may be false of the extension of the literal vehicle and only stereotypically related to it, associated beliefs or shared common knowledge a member of a linguistic community is expected to know when he knows the meaning of a word. Other properties may be associated with the vehicle only in the local context (as in (2) and (3)). What Black was absolutely right about, however, was the systemic character of these associated features.





Not only are the features related to one another by way of material inferential links; they are organized into coherent wholes, some members of which are more central and prominent (or, in Black’s terms, more weighted) than others. So, because the network as a complex gives, in Camp’s (ms.) terms, such a “characterization” of the literal vehicle of the metaphor, it might even be said to be more than the sum of its individual feature parts.[35]

Just as these multiple networks are all involved in metaphorical interpretation, so they play multiple roles. Let me briefly review some of them.

A. The material implications and extensions of a given metaphor articulate its content. When we are asked what Romeo meant by “Juliet is the sun,” we reply: “She is the warmth of his world; his day begins with her rising; he can flourish only when she shines her light on him.” That is, rather than attempt to paraphrase the metaphor in literal terms (even where we can), we frequently choose to explicate it with more metaphors. Indeed this is one, perhaps the best, way we manifest our understanding of a metaphor: by elaborating the other metaphors in its scheme or family.

Consider a complex metaphor like Alfred Lord Tennyson’s poem “Crossing The Bar.” (I have underlined each of the constituent metaphors in the network):

“Crossing The Bar”<br>
Alfred Lord Tennyson.

Sunset and evening star,<br>
And one clear call for me!<br>
And may there be no moaning of the bar,<br>
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,<br>
Too full for sound and foam,<br>
When that which drew from out the boundless deep<br>
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,<br>
And after that the dark!<br>
And may there be no sadness of farewell,<br>
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Because each of the individual metaphors is twice-true (i.e., it is possible for each of them to be true in the same context both on their literal and metaphorical interpretations), it is only when we identify the whole network of metaphors that, in turn, we identify each of the constituents as a metaphor.[36] But apart from the issue of metaphor identification, if one metaphorically interpreted each of the underlined elements singly, in isolation from every other one, and even if by chance, or miracle, one arrived de facto at a coherent interpretation for the whole poem, one would have missed something: namely, that they are all extensions or implications of one metaphor, generated by one set of contextual presuppositions about death and one's last voyage (or a voyage to a meet one's maker). This "root" or controlling metaphor is nowhere stated explicitly in the poem. Similarly, the controlling metaphor 'the fog is a cat' of T.S. Eliot's "J. Alfred Prufrock" is never made explicit in the poem. In other examples, like Romeo's utterance of 'Juliet is the sun' in its whole context, the "one" unifying or ur-metaphor—'[Juliet] is the sun'—is explicit. In either case, failure to acknowledge the systemic character of the network will lead one to miss how it guides, directs, even commits, us to go on metaphorically, i.e., how we extend and elaborate the metaphor. When we adopt a metaphor, we inherit its whole family whose relatives constitute a single interrelated scheme, organized and weighted relative to each other. This is crucial to our understanding of the content.

B. Second, networks enable the expression of the novel metaphors that I called earlier "de re metaphors," metaphors that express properties for which we do not possess the kind of fully conceptualized understanding that would enable us to express them context-independently. Linguists call this function of metaphor catachresis:[37] to compensate for the lack of vocabulary in a language for a concept or property. But the deficiency is not primarily a matter of words but of concepts: the lack of understanding that would enable us to express (or refer to) the property in all contexts, independently of the application of the metaphor to a particular thing in a particular context and independently of the





application of associated expressions in the metaphor network in the same context. Like a predicate demonstrative, metaphors, by exemplification relative to a schema of alternatives (like those in (ii)), can point to properties in context. Likewise, through the implications traced in a network (like those in (iii)), the speaker can tease out 'implications' or details of the metaphor, follow it in the directions guided by its various associations to experiment and explore its context, trying out what does and does not constitute the property or concept expressed. We can see this role of a network at work in a wonderful passage by E. M. Forster in his Abinger Harvest:

> We know what the sea looks like from a distance: it is of one color, and level, and obviously cannot contain such creatures as fish. But if we look into the sea over the edge of a boat, we see a dozen colors, and depth below depth, and fish swimming in them. That sea is the English character - apparently imperturbable and even. The depths and the colors are the English romanticism and the English sensitiveness - we do not expect to find such things, but they exist. And - to continue my metaphor - the fish are the English emotions, which are always trying to get to the surface, but don't quite know how. For the most part we see them moving far below, distorted and obscure. Now and then they succeed and we exclaim, 'Why, the Englishman has emotions! He actually can feel!' And occasionally we see that beautiful creature the flying fish, which rises out of the water altogether into the air and the sunlight. English literature is a flying fish. It is a sample of the life that goes on day after day beneath the surface; it is a proof that beauty and emotion exist in the salt, inhospitable sea.[38]

What is Forster trying to say here about the English character and how is he trying to say it? It would be a mistake to assume that the controlling metaphor 'That sea is the English character' has a determinate content which we can articulate in the specific instances Forster draws as if they were its material implications: e.g., 'English romanticism is the depths of the sea,' 'English sensitiveness is the colors of the sea,' 'The fish are the English emotions,' 'English literature is a flying fish,' and so on. Although each of them conveys a content within

the context of the passage as a whole, it is hardly possible to articulate isolable contents for them outside that context. The first two (literal) sentences of the passage set up a rich visual image of the sea, an image that is essential to the content of the complex demonstrative that is the subject of the controlling metaphor. (To be sure, even while the first two sentences are interpreted literally at first, we also go back and metaphorically re-interpret them in light of the second half of the passage.) With this scene before us, Forster then draws our attention to its details: its colors, depths, fish. None of these individual metaphors can be interpreted in isolation; each is dependent on the whole and there is no isolable conceptualized content we could assign to any of the specific extensions. Rather the network of metaphors as a whole gestures toward Forster's visual presentation, or characterization, of English character which is shown rather than stated. The parts in turn have their metaphorical content only in the context of the whole image, but the content of the whole, however rich, detailed, and exact, alludes or points to its content rather than articulates it. What we are given, then, is a rich specific characterization of the subject, the English character, but (like a perceptual demonstrative) it is pointed at as shown rather than described in conceptually discrete notions. As we increasingly understand and articulate what we are trying to say, we may be able to express some of its content discursively but, absent this ability, the metaphor-network gives us the wherewithal to demonstrate what it shows us.

C. In addition to the propositional contents expressed by expressions in the network, the network holistically—through its structuring and weighting of its constituents–articulates a further cognitive perspective, a metaphorical mode of presentation on those contents. This incremental perspectival information is given only through the unit of the whole network, which gives us a way of thinking of the content by bringing us to <u>see</u> Juliet <u>as</u> the sun, the fog <u>as</u> a cat, dying <u>as</u> a voyage. <u>Seeing</u> x <u>as</u> y is not merely a matter of holding another individual belief about x; it is a broader cognitive stance that can only be given by spelling out the whole metaphorical network, by elaborating the place of each individual metaphor in its various schematic inferences and associations. This perspectival information explains the surprise and informativeness of a metaphor beyond its content in a given context, its explanatory





power and extra-propositional contribution to belief contexts, the pictorialness of a metaphor, and various other features that have been taken to be obscurely unique to metaphor and to resist assimilation to truth-conditional semantics.[39]

### 3. FIRST MORALS

With this overview of the different kinds of metaphor networks and their different functions, we are in a position to say more about the vitality and death of a metaphor and about what a metaphor must be in order to be either alive or dead. I turn first to the question: What makes a metaphor alive or dead? We suggested earlier that the more the interpretation of a metaphor Ø in a context <u>c</u> depends specifically on <u>c</u>, i.e., on presuppositions associated with Ø <u>specific</u> to that context <u>c</u>, the livelier the interpretation of the metaphor. If a network of a metaphor Ø articulates a crucial set of metaphorically-relevant presuppositions for Ø, we can now make this proposal more explicit. Although there are metaphorically-relevant presuppositions that are not articulated in the networks to which a metaphor belongs, the network or family is one way by which we can measure its degree of liveliness. The richer its network(s) in a given context, the more specific the network is to that context. Where the same expression functions in different networks or families each specific to a different context, the metaphor is multiply vital. Conversely, a metaphor is dead to the degree to which it operates within the same network in different contexts, or if it operates only in one network which must be recovered in any context in which it is uttered or, in the limiting case, if its content is determined independently or regardless of the network to which it belongs. Similar remarks apply to the degree to which the network of a metaphor provides a perspective on its content (in a context) above and beyond the content itself. The stronger the context-specific perspective, the more vital the metaphor. The weaker the perspective, or the less context-specific it is, the more dead the metaphor. In sum, the life and death of a metaphor is a function of its context-specificity and sensitivity.

There is indirect support for this characterization of metaphorical life and death in the research of the psychologists Brian Bowdle and Dedre Gentner (2005) (Henceforth: B&G). The support is at best in-

direct because B&G are concerned with the processing of metaphorical understanding while I am concerned only with the speaker's competence, what she knows when she understands a (live or dead) metaphor regardless of how that competence is psychologically processed. Nonetheless the parallels are instructive. Setting some of the details aside, what B&G argue is that the two main competing approaches to the processing of metaphors, those that analyze them as comparisons and those that treat them as categorizations, should really be understood as complementary theories of two distinct stages in the "career of a metaphor." Comparison approaches, among which they include both traditional (weighted) feature-matching accounts (of simple base and target concepts in the metaphor)[40] and their own analogical approach that maps (i.e., aligns and projects) the relational structures of the complex base domain onto the target domain, are accounts of novel metaphors, metaphors that generate new features or contents.[41] Categorization approaches are accounts of conventional metaphors, metaphors on the way to dying, whose contents are fixed to some degree and in the course of being lexicalized as their vehicles become polysemes. According to B&G's "career of metaphor" hypothesis, when a metaphor is first produced, the interpretation is based on alignment of the relational structures of the predicates in the semantic domain of the base concept and those in the domain of the target. This alignment in turn leads to projection of new predicate alignments in the two domains and the induction of an abstract relational schema that subsumes both target and base, i.e., a new metaphorical category that applies to both. As that metaphorical category is applied to additional targets and productively aligned with other semantic domains, it becomes conventionally associated with the base term. And where this is successfully repeated time and again, the base term becomes polysemous; either it preserves its original category and adds the new metaphorical one, or the original category goes out of use and only the metaphorical category survives as its meaning.

Like our account, B&G's structure-mapping analogical account emphasizes the systemic nature of metaphorical interpretation, the role in the generation of metaphorical content of the domain of concepts or network of predicates to which the literal vehicle or base concept belongs and its internal relations to other predicates or concepts in the base complex. However, unlike B&G, I would argue that relational comparison judgments and analogical structure mapping <u>generate</u> the contextual presuppositions that in turn yield the contents of metaphors, while the <u>logical form</u> of <u>all</u> metaphors, novel and conventional, is (in the basic case) categorical, i.e., of subject-predicate form.[42] But apart from this issue, we also agree that what distinguishes novel from conventional, or dead, metaphors is, as B&G state, that "the secondary, figurative senses" in "metaphorical polysemy"—what we would call the interpretations of dead metaphors—are "typically more abstract" (B&G (2005), 198). Unfortunately, B&G seem to mean several different things by the word 'abstract.'[43] Sometimes they use 'abstraction' to cover all instances of category (or concept) formation, simplification or generalization of the specific category meant by the (literal) base term to a broader super-category (ibid., 195, 197). Elsewhere they seem to identify the "abstract-ness" of the metaphorical categories of polysemes with the characteristics of ad hoc concepts (whatever they are).[44] However, in still other passages, categories are said to be abstract just in case they are "domain-general" (ibid. 198ff.) This last use is, I think, closest to what we have in mind. What it seems to mean for B&G is that as a base concept is mapped (aligned and projected) onto different targets, one converging schema emerges. This metaphorical interpretation, i.e., the resulting relational schema, abstracts away from whatever is specific to the target and base. It eliminates specific details and thereby yields a schematic concept that applies generally across all domains. In our terminology, that is to say: as a vehicle Ø is interpreted or used metaphorically on different occasions with (more or less) one content but in application to different things, each associated with different contextual presuppositions, the metaphorical content comes to be expressed by, or associated with, Ø regardless of its contextually specific presuppositions. The content ceases to be dependent on the families and networks to which Ø belongs in one or another particular context, relative to which it first expressed that content. Instead, the content is identified with Ø independently of its family relations or invariantly across its changing family relationships. To be sure, this can occur either by routinization or by root-inization. Either way, however, such abstraction marks the death of the metaphor.

The second point I want to emphasize in light of our discussion of

networks and families is the degree to which they are dependent on the literal vehicle, the very expression, employed by the metaphor. The substitution of a synonym even as close as 'dusk' for 'sunset' in Tennyson's poem, or 'ocean' or 'the deep' for 'sea' in the Forster passage, generates a different network, leading to a systemically different metaphorical interpretation. This is not to say that the network associated with a metaphor is a function only of its literal vehicle. But nothing that is not at least as fine as the literal vehicle, with its so-called literal meaning, will suffice to individuate the associated network. In particular, intensional notions like properties or contents, or extensions and referents, are not sufficiently sensitive and fine-grained. Similarly for so-called synonyms such as 'sweat'/'perspire' 'tully'/'cicero', 'cur'/'mongrol'; each member of these pairs is associated with a different network, generating different metaphorical interpretations. This is the full sense of the truism that the metaphorical 'depends' on the literal: it is not just that there must be some notion of literal for the possibility of metaphor, or that knowledge of the literal meaning of Ø is necessary for its metaphorical use, or that presuppositions about literal Ø's are the stuff of metaphorical interpretations. The literal vehicle is what controls the interpretation of a metaphor insofar as it dictates the relevant family or network relative to which the metaphor is interpreted. Furthermore, where there is no literal vehicle on which the metaphorical interpretation depends (as with the dead privative metaphors that we bracketed in section I), there is (literally) no metaphor. It follows that if we want to capture the vitality of a metaphor in our explanation, we must somehow represent the literal vehicle of the metaphor as part of the structure that bears its interpretation.[45]

Max Black (1993) characterizes what he calls "strong metaphors" by two features: (1) emphaticality and (2) resonance. (1) A metaphor is emphatic (as opposed to 'expendable,' 'optional,' 'decorative,' and 'ornamental') to the degree to which its user allows no variation upon or substitute for the words used, especially the literal vehicle. (2) A metaphor is resonant to the degree to which it supports implicative elaboration. Black observes that emphaticality and resonance tend to hang together but he does not explain why. On our account, we can give an explanation. The implications of a metaphor are those expressed by the other members in its network, the extensions to which it is (materially) inferentially related and those enabled by its systemic nature. Furthermore, the network to which a metaphor belongs depends on and is individuated by its literal vehicle. Hence, the more resonant the metaphor, the more it exploits its family relations, hence, the more sensitive it must be to its literal vehicle (that picks out its family); hence, the more emphatic it is. Likewise, the more emphatic the metaphor, the more its implications will be affected by the slightest change in the literal vehicle, i.e., the more the literal vehicle will affect its degree and quality of resonance. Thus resonance and emphaticality go hand in hand.

This brings us to our second question: What must a metaphor be in order to be alive or dead? So long as we want to account simply for its truth-conditions, or content, on a single occasion of utterance, the natural candidate to identify with a metaphor is a token of an expression (type) used or interpreted metaphorically on that occasion; and the natural candidate for the explanation would be pragmatic—a la Grice, Searle, Davidson, relevance theory, or some recent version of contextualism. But as soon as our explananda include the vitality or aliveness (or death) of a metaphor—especially where a live metaphor is one that lends itself to further uses, that has the potential for extended or completely different interpretations in different contexts—an explanans limited to the individual token in a single context is not sufficient. A single utterance u clearly cannot lend itself to additional interpretations. If we ask what it would express in a different context c*, we cannot be asking what that very token u (uttered in a context c) would express in c* since tokens occur at most in one context. We are asking what a replica of u would express in another context c*, i.e., what another token of the same type as the given token u would express. But a replica of which type? The relevant type cannot simply be that of the literal vehicle, because not every replica of the literal vehicle will be used metaphorically. Nor can it be another live metaphorical use of the given literal vehicle, without telling us what a live metaphorical use consists in—which is what we are trying to explain. Nor can it even be another use of the same literal vehicle that yields the same content as the given metaphorical use since that need not be by way of metaphor.

Let me illustrate this last point by way of a claim made by the Relevance theorists, Deirdre Wilson and Robyn Carston (2007) (Henceforth: W&C). As support for their theory, they adduce the fact that

their relevance-theoretic lexical pragmatic processes can explain semantic change, “so that what starts off as an ad hoc concept [which is the truth-conditional content of a metaphor on an occasion] may end up (for at least some members of a speech community) as a new encoded sense.” Suppose, for example, that for Robyn, e.g., “as a result of frequent metaphorical use,” the word ‘angel” acquires an “extra encoded sense” ANGEL*, rendering ‘angel’ polysemous. However, suppose that for Deirdre, who has never before heard this metaphor, on first hearing it, ‘angel’ simply has its single encoded sense ANGEL and its metaphorical interpretation on that occasion involves “constructing” the appropriate ad hoc concept ANGEL*. Now, according to W&C the propositions expressed by Robyn’s and Deirdre’s utterances are one and the same (or close enough), both containing ANGEL*. However, for Robyn that sense is recovered by disambiguation and for Deirdre by ad hoc concept construction. The only difference is in the routes the two take to the same destination. Now, at the level of truth-conditional content, this is right. But something has surely been left out of the story: namely, the fact that for Deirdre her utterance involves a live metaphor—which is to say that in different contexts, with different encyclopedic knowledge or different presuppositions, the same word ‘angel’ interpreted metaphorically would generate a different interpretation, not ANGEL* but ANGEL**. For Robyn’s utterance, this is not an option or a potentiality. It is not enough, then, to say that Deirdre and Robyn arrived at their respective ad hoc concepts ANGEL* by different routes. Somehow or other this explanandum—the fact that the one is a live metaphor and the other not—should be represented, and explained, even if it is not part of the ad hoc concept itself.

Note: I am not yet concluding that Relevance Theory cannot somehow capture this information, only that it is not captured simply by the ad hoc concepts themselves. I will return to the question whether Relevance Theory has the resources to capture this aspect of metaphor. But first let me sketch how this information could be represented within a Literalist, rather than Contextualist, approach; this will help us sharpen what must be represented in order to account for the vitality of a metaphor.





## 4. A LITERALIST APPROACH TO LIVE AND DEAD METAPHOR

The Literalist begins from a number of assumptions. (1) If there is something like a metaphorical expression-type, it cannot be the very same expression type as the literal vehicle being used metaphorically. This follows from two premises. First, because there are an unbounded number of contexts in which the same word can be used metaphorically to express an unbounded number of different interpretations, or (propositional, truth-conditional) contents, treating each content in a context as another meaning of what would be then a multiply polysemous expression would set off an explosion of polysemy.[46] Therefore, the metaphorical meaning of an expression, whatever it is, must be different from its contents in contexts. Second, meanings (at least in part) individuate expression types. It follows that the metaphorical expression type, the expression type that has a metaphorical meaning, must be different from the (homonymous) literal expression type, i.e., the expression type of the literal vehicle. (2) Although we distinguish the metaphorical from the literal, the literal vehicle (type) plays a crucial role in metaphorical interpretation: the metaphorically relevant contextual presuppositions, the various families and networks of expressions relative to which metaphors are interpreted, the implicative resonance of the metaphor, its perspectival information and cognitive significance, the way in which a metaphor furnishes speakers with a way of thinking of its content, how it makes us see x as F, and its potential for further interpretations, both extended interpretations and disjoint alternative interpretations—all of these are sensitive to and dependent on the literal vehicle of a metaphor. In all these ways, and others, the metaphorical ‘depends’ on the literal. Thus the metaphorical expression must itself ‘capture’ or represent the literal vehicle, with its meaning, within its interpretive structure. (3) Given the history of empirical research into language over the previous half-century, I assume that, not only concrete utterances of sentences or structures close to the surface of utterances, but also abstract linguistic structure (i.e., phonetically unrealized elements and structure) have proven themselves both necessary and highly productive in order to explain speakers’ knowledge of the principles of meaning in virtue of which they are able to communicate.[47] The point of the Literalist approach that posits abstract underlying linguistic structure is not to insist, come what may, that linguistic

meaning exhausts propositional content or what is intuitively said by an utterance, but to constrain the expression of speakers' intentions and to enable the expression of more information than that conveyed in the truth-conditions of what is explicitly articulated in the actual sentence uttered.

It is this conception of the role of linguistic structure in metaphorical interpretation that orients my own account of metaphor. Its central idea is that metaphorical interpretation is a kind of systematic and regular, though context-dependent, interpretation on the classical model of demonstratives and indexicals whose own content also systematically varies from context to context according to rules of meaning. By analogy to David Kaplan's (1989) Dthat-descriptions that "lexically" represent the demonstrative interpretations or uses of definite descriptions, I have proposed that an expression Ø interpreted metaphorically can be represented by (to introduce a term of art) the "metaphorical expression" 'Mthat[Ø].' The metaphorical expression 'Mthat[Ø]' "lexicalizes" the metaphorical interpretation or use of Ø. The semantic rule for 'Mthat' is given in (M):

(M) 'Mthat' is a lexical operator (i.e., a term forming operator on terms) at the level of logical form which, when prefixed to a (literal) expression Ø, yields a context-sensitive expression 'Mthat[Ø]' whose tokens in each context c express a set of properties presupposed in c to be m(etaphorically)-associated with the expression Ø, such that the proposition <... {[Mthat[Ø]}(c).... > is either true or false at a circumstance.

(For each expression Ø, {Ø} denotes the character of Ø; {Ø}(c) denotes the content of Ø in the context c; and {Ø}(c)(w) the extension (referent, truth-value) of Ø uttered (and interpreted) in c and evaluated at the world w. Thus, if Ø is a predicate, then {Ø}(c) denotes a property and {Ø}(c)(w(c)) denotes the extension of Ø uttered in the context c at (the world of) that context.)[48]

In brief, the set of properties presupposed to be m-associated with Ø can be associated in a variety of ways: either as stereotypical or normal properties, through exemplification or a similarity relation, or in more idiosyncratic ways. However, as I said earlier, the presuppositions are individuated by the expression Ø, not by its content or referent (even though the properties in question may be properties of Ø's). So (6)





(6) Juliet is the sun.

in which 'is the sun' is interpreted metaphorically, will now be represented at the level of its logical form as containing the corresponding metaphorical expression:

(7) Juliet Mthat['is the sun']

The metaphorical expression 'Mthat[Ø]' has a non-constant character, i.e., a meaning or rule (or function) that in different contexts yields different contents, i.e., different truth-conditional factors (for predicates, properties). Thus, knowing the character of a metaphor is like mastering a general skill of interpretation. It is a rule or function that enables speakers, for each expression Ø that can be interpreted metaphorically in a sentence S, to map the properties presupposed to be metaphorically associated with the expression Ø in c into a subset of properties that determines the truth-value of utterances of S in c. Exactly how that rule is applied in each context (including identification of the relevant m-associated properties) is not specified in the semantics but in the pragmatics. So, like Kaplan's 'Dthat,' 'Mthat' is a lexical—not syntactic or even semantic—operator that articulates a general skill at metaphorical interpretation of any expression.[49] Also like 'Dthat,' metaphorical expressions are lexically complex though syntactically simple. 'Mthat" does not, then, generate a new (syntactic or semantic) category of expression called 'metaphorical phrases"; it simply lexicalizes the interpretation or use of all expressions that it is (grammatically) possible to interpret metaphorically. However, unlike 'Dthat' and like the indexicals (like 'I'), the content of a metaphorical expression 'Mthat[Ø]' is not a function of the semantic value of Ø (e.g., what it denotes), but of a contextual parameter, in this case, the presuppositions associated with the expression or word Ø. Thus my metaphorical expressions are a hybrid of 'Dthat' and indexicals.

It is not simply a technical accident that the literal vehicle is mentioned—"quoted" in some sense—as the operand of 'Mthat.' As we have seen, the character of the metaphorical expression 'Mthat[Ø]' is sensitive to the very expression—the literal vehicle Ø—that is interpreted metaphorically. The family or network to which the metaphor belongs and the metaphorically relevant contextual presuppositions are individuated by the literal vehicle, not just by its (intensional) content but by

its finest-grained meaning. As we have said, this is how the metaphorical 'depends' on the literal and how the literal remains "active" in the metaphorical interpretation.[50] This may also be what explains Cavell's (1967) remark that the "meaning of a metaphor is bound up with the very words that are used" (79) and what lies behind Jakobson's (1981) observation that metaphor has a meta-linguistic dimension.

One important role of metaphorical character is to constrain what speakers can intend to express as the contents of particular expressions interpreted or used metaphorically.[51] But a second equally important role for the character of the metaphorical expression (or the metaphorical character of the expression used metaphorically) is to "bear" the various kinds of extra-propositional information in virtue of which metaphors are alive in one or another way (and to varying degrees), and in the absence of which they are correspondingly dead. When one knows the non-constant character of a metaphorical expression, she knows that its content (in a context of utterance) will differ in different contexts, i.e., with different disjoint sets of contextual presuppositions or with additional presuppositions that extend the actual context of utterance. One also knows, given knowledge of those sets of presuppositions, what the contents in those alternative contexts would be. In both these ways, one knows "directions" for the interpretation of tokens of that metaphorical expression type. The metaphorical expression type has a potential for interpretation that goes beyond the content of its present token, and the interpreter knows how to go on. In a very familiar sense, these are ways in which the metaphorical expression is alive: no matter how many lives it has already lived, its life is not yet over. On the other hand, when the metaphor is root-inized or routinized, it does not have the same life, or potential for future or counter-lives, but it is still a metaphor. In both cases, its metaphorical character still operates on a context to generate its content, but the number of contexts to which it is sensitive is now reduced. It is still living but its quality of life is impoverished, not as creative or productive as it might be. But both of these cases differ from the once-metaphor that has now mutated to a polyseme whose (sole or incremental) meaning is what had originally been the content of a metaphorical use or interpretation. To return to Wilson and Carston's (2007) example discussed at the end of the previous section, ANGEL* may be the same concept expressed by the novel





metaphor and by the polyseme, but the interpretation of the novel metaphor is the semantic value of its underlying metaphorical expression 'Mthat['is an angel']' while the meaning of the polyseme is the value of 'is an angel.' Thus at the level of character we can capture differences that do not emerge in content.

The character of the metaphorical expression also captures two more dimensions of metaphorical vitality. First, as we have seen, by way of the network or family individuated by the literal vehicle, which occurs as the 'argument' of the lexical operator 'Mthat,' the metaphorical expression, and its character, empowers us to demonstrate or point to novel properties or contents, properties or contents that we do not yet sufficiently well understand to express them context-independently by way of a simple expression. By this means, the vitality of the metaphor manifests itself in the ways in which it contributes to our growth of knowledge and the space of contents we can express. Second, the literal vehicle of the metaphor carries the extra-propositional perspective by which the metaphor presents its content (in each context), the character-istic information that provides the cognitive significance of the metaphor, its pictorial quality, the way of seeing the content as the metaphor has it—all the information that is articulated in the networks to which the vehicle belongs. As a metaphor dies, the information it conveys comes to be limited to its content (in a fixed context). It may be possible to articulate that content in other words, and that content may come to be the (sole) meaning of a once-metaphor now-polyseme. But neither a literal paraphrase of the content nor of the polyseme will 'mention' the literal vehicle on which the metaphorical interpretation depends and which explains its added vitality.

## 5. PRAGMATIC APPROACHES TO LIVE AND DEAD METAPHORS

With our glimpse of how the literalist accounts for the vitality of a metaphor through the character of metaphorical expressions, can pragmatic accounts do the same without positing metaphorical expressions? As we said earlier, they do well accounting for the content or truth-conditions of individual metaphorical utterances (in a context), but the individual metaphorical utterance cannot itself be what has a potential for extended or different contents in different contexts. Furthermore, it is

not clear how they can show how a metaphor depends on its literal vehicle, which is necessary to individuate the networks that articulate the metaphorical mode of presentation of its content. Because the relevant networks are individuated by the literal vehicle—the expression itself with its literal meaning, not its content or extension—the literal vehicle must itself be somehow represented in the structure of the metaphorical interpretation, even if it is not itself part of its content in context. But the literal vehicle, or networks and families of expressions, are part neither of what is said nor of what is meant, the two main categories with which Grice works; each of these, however different they are in function, is just a set of truth-conditions for, or a proposition expressed by, the utterance in its context.[52]

For the Relevance theorists, there is a similar problem: there is no way to capture within the ad hoc concept the significance that makes a metaphor alive or vital as distinct from its truth-conditions or content in the context, the information spelled out in the networks individuated by the literal vehicle (and recovered through it). Each ad hoc concept is atomic; therefore, the ad hoc concept BULLDOZER* no more contains the meaning of the literal concept BULLDOZER, not to say the word 'bulldozer' than 'bulldozer' contains 'bull' or 'doze.' Relevance theorists will respond that this objection fails to take into account the dynamic, process-focused character of ad hoc concept formation, that it begins from the encoded lexical concept (=literal meaning or meaning of the literal vehicle) that triggers access to lexical and encyclopedic information, and then by broadening, narrowing, and transfer (or some combination of these operations) arrives at the ad hoc concept. My objection is that the sense in which the literal vehicle is still 'active' in the metaphorical interpretation requires that it be not just the point of departure but also part of the destination: it functions not just in the story of how the concept conveyed by the metaphor is arrived at but also in what is conveyed by the metaphor. Relevance theory, no less than the Gricean story, is focused exclusively on the truth-conditions of the metaphor in its context.[53, 54]

### 6. PLATONISM, METAPHORICAL TYPES, AND THE LITERAL

I want to conclude by addressing three objections to metaphorical ex-





pression types. All three objections spring from the proliferation of types entailed by my account. But the first objection is linguistic or psychological, while the second and third are metaphysical.

The first objection is directed at a proposal intended to follow up the claim that "underlying" the interpretation of an expression Ø used or interpreted metaphorically, there is a metaphorical expression 'Mthat[Ø].' To spell out this idea, I have also hypothesized (Stern (2000), 134) that the grammar "generates" for each string, a set of logical forms whose terminal nodes are filled by lexical items containing all (grammatically) possible Mthat-expressions in the string in every (grammatically) possible combination.[55] Since a grammar is the speaker-hearer's knowledge of her (I-) language, this is to say that she knows as part of her linguistic (syntactic, semantic, and lexical) competence all the (combinations of grammatically) possible metaphorical expressions—expressions that grammatically admit metaphorical interpretations—that might occur as part of her utterances. So, when hearing an utterance to be identified (or typed) as metaphorical or not, she has available the linguistically possible structures among which the utterance might be a token of a metaphor. Among these candidate structures, the speaker-hearer then uses her knowledge of the (pre-semantic) context to decide which type would best fit the utterance as its interpretation (in the context) given her other conversational goals, beliefs (about the speaker), relevance, informativeness, and so on.

A number of critics have objected to this proposal—that the grammar generates such a set of possible metaphorical logical forms for each surface string—that it "requires a substantial increase in the linguistic work that must be performed in order to interpret any utterance" (Wearing (2006), 317). Furthermore, it is claimed that it overgenerates, yielding many more possible interpretations than we ever in fact recognize, among them some that "look more like theoretically generated artifacts than distinct readings of the sentence in question" (ibid.).[56] In some cases, it is, to be sure, possible that there may be 'artifactual' offshoots of this sort, a consequence that is unavoidable, however undesirable, with most theoretical proposals. However, better that we be prepared for all possible interpretations than that there be interpretations for which there is no structure in the string. Furthermore, every benefit has costs, this is one of them, and, in evaluating alternative pro-

posals for their relative simplicity and advantages, one must take it into account. However, until we have a number of elaborated alternatives to compare, the verdict seems to me to be out.

As for the objection that my account increases "the linguistic work that must be performed in order to interpret any utterance," the issue of processing time and cognitive effort relative to utterance complexity is, as an empirical question, a complex one to which there is no simple answer. According to some psycholinguists such as Ray Gibbs, there have been no studies that suggest that number of possible interpretations per se increases processing time and effort.[57] Furthermore, it would be entirely compatible with my theory to hold, as does Relevance theory, that, while there exists a large set of possible interpretations for each sentence uttered, it is not necessary to go through all of the possible interpretations to get at the most reasonable one or ones in context. In fact, I might adopt the relevance-theoretic proposal that the presumption of optimal relevance serves as a useful heuristic for the task of identification of an utterance as a metaphor (what in Stern (2000), 2-7, I called the problem of knowing-that x is a metaphor), even if I do not employ it for the metaphorical interpretation itself.

The second and third objections are two sides of one metaphysical coin. The first of the objections is that my metaphorical expressions are unabashedly Platonistic. Every time a speaker introduces a new metaphor, he creates a new metaphorical expression type. Doesn't this lead to an exploding universe of types? But, even worse, how is it possible for anyone—other than God in Genesis—to create something simply by making an utterance? The second objection is that on my proposal a live metaphorical use of an expression Ø is not a use of Ø but of the metaphorical expression Mthat[Ø]. But, as we know, some metaphorical interpretations age and finally die, becoming in their afterlife literal or lexical meanings of the vehicle Ø. Thus a feature of one expression type 'Mthat[Ø]' is somehow 'transferred' to another expression type Ø. This is the opposite direction of metaphorical transfer; let's call it 'literalization.' How, on my account, is literalization possible?

I can only provide the briefest sketch of answers to these two objections but both of them seem to me to rest on a Platonistic conception of types—that they are eternal, unchanging archetypes, ontologically independent denizens of a Platonic world of Forms—something that one





need not endorse.

The idea that metaphor is "creative"—that by uttering a metaphor, its speaker creates something—goes back at least as far as Max Black's (1962) remark that "it would be more illuminating in some of these cases to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing" (37), a remark that has perplexed, provoked, and embarrassed many of Black's readers since he wrote that passage. Black himself continued to insist throughout his career that by 'create' he meant create, i.e., the ontological or metaphysically robust sense of the term, but many have tried to save him by interpreting the remark epistemically: The metaphor 'creates' similarities in the same sense that movie producers create stars; they bring hitherto unnoticed features or resemblances to people's attention. But maybe Black was right all along about the metaphysical claim. Consider some of the conceptions of types in the literature. One view is that they are kinds of tokens, perhaps sets or patterns, whose instances, the tokens, are similar in some underlying respect and can be recognized as members of the kind or type by their appearance, either phonological or orthographic shape.[58] Thus by uttering a novel metaphor a speaker instances and thereby creates a novel kind or type whose other (possible) instances will share some novel similarity, some common property. A second view of types, proposed by Zoltan Szabo (1999), is that tokens are representations of their type—that they depict or exemplify them. Here is not the place to go into detail, but both of these views are open to the Platonism objection since both take types to be abstract entities distinct from their tokens.[59] However, there is a third way of thinking of the type-token relation that avoids the Platonistic idea of abstract types from the start. Following Aristotle, we can think of expression tokens as hylomorphic entities, something like material substances. Their matter is the physical or phonetic stuff out of which they are made which, in turn, explains their material character. Their form is their meaning (or character), which may or may not be sensitive to its surroundings or context (somewhat like a photonegative or the appearance-form of a chameleon or Woody Allen's Zelig).[60] (Where it is sensitive to the surrounding context, the content will vary with context; otherwise, the character will determine a constant content for all contexts.) According to Aristotle (contra Plato), there is no form without matter (and no

matter without form). But if, as I argued earlier, no two words generally have the same meaning, then the meaning qua form will also determine, or, let's say, be the type of the expression. When a speaker first uses a metaphor, i.e., a metaphorical expression, on an occasion in a context, he tokens it and expresses a content, but he also thereby creates its type, its meaning or character, abstracted, as it were, from the content which is the product of character and context. This is true, moreover, even if the speaker had a content in mind for which he used the metaphor in order to express it. The type of the metaphor does not exist prior to or independently of its first token, just as Aristotle's forms (again, unlike Plato's) do not exist independently of their material substances. Thus we avoid the ontological anxiety associated with types, the metaphysical embarrassments of Platonism.

How exactly does the speaker "create" the metaphorical expression type (individuated by its character)? In one case, like the one just discussed, the speaker is like an architect who has a plan or design in mind and then builds the house whose form is given by that design or plan. Until the concrete house is built, the plan may exist as an idea in the architect's mind, but the form, or type, of the house, does not exist. Likewise, some speakers have a very specific intention in mind, and then teleologically choose a metaphor to express precisely that intended idea. Here, too, although the intended idea and means of expression were in mind, we would not say that the expression type existed until the speaker produced the token whose meaning it is, or to whose type it belongs. But the more interesting cases are where the speaker uses the metaphor precisely because she does not have a well-worked-out idea in mind; she wants to say something but the best she can do is use the metaphor in context, as it were, to point at the idea, exploiting both the literal vehicle, contextual presuppositions, and implications afforded by the networks to which the literal vehicle belongs. Earlier I called these 'de re metaphors' because they express not-fully-conceptualized properties. In producing the token utterance interpreted metaphorically, the speaker expresses the nascent content. That content is a product of a character, or meaning, of the metaphor and its context. There are linguistic constraints that the speaker is bound to observe by the character, and she knows the purported meaning of the literal vehicle. But what she may not know is exactly what context she is in, all the presuppositions or the networks in which the literal vehicle is actually figuring. What the speaker does, then, is explore the implications and extensions of the vehicle in all or in many of its possible networks and by way of different presuppositions, to see which content they yield and whether that is the content she wished to express. Each alternative network and set of presuppositions is another context. In virtue of knowing the character of the metaphor, she can figure out what it would express in alternative, counterfactual contexts, relative to different sets of presuppositions and as a member of alternative networks. So she tries them out one by one. By exploring each such imagined context, she sharpens what the metaphor could and would express in that context. At the same time, the speaker discovers the context she is in, and thus what the metaphor expresses in that context. As she repeats this over time, and as other speakers or interpreters do the same, the content is sharpened and, with it, the character. But what is important here about the repeated use of the metaphor is not its frequency but the incremental understanding that results from its (imagined) occurrences relative to different contexts. Over time, as replicas of the ur-metaphorical token are used and interpreted, the type to which they belong, their form or character, becomes better understood and better defined. In some cases, with its character delineated and applicable to still further alternative contexts, the metaphor remains continuously productive and alive. In other cases, the character becomes closely coordinated with the presuppositions of one context, either stuck or rooted in that context or routinely reproducing the same content for the metaphorical expression on all occasions of utterance. In the first case, we end up with vital metaphors that never die; in the second with one or another kind of dead or dying metaphor, either a routinized or root-inized metaphor.

In either of the last cases of dead or dying metaphors, the content of the metaphorical expression in any arbitrary context becomes less and less sensitive to the presuppositions specific to that context. As it becomes better understood, and its content fixed, the metaphor also becomes less dependent for its expression on its network of associated expressions. Hence, its characteristic information does less work and is less essential to its interpretive functioning. The metaphor thereby undergoes literalization. As its content becomes invariant across contexts, its character ceases to operate actively and becomes vacuous.

And the less we employ its network, the less important becomes the literal vehicle itself, and its respective character or meaning. As the literal vehicle—the expression itself—has less work to do, it need not be mentioned in the metaphorical expression. Similarly, since the operator 'Mthat' is there only to bear the non-stable metaphorical character, as that character ceases to do work, 'Mthat' becomes superfluous. Hence, the metaphorical expression "sheds" both its Mthat-operator and the single-quotes around the literal vehicle. What is left is simply the original vehicle Ø, but now with a new stabilized content (or a content that is the constant value of a new character, or meaning). The product is a type of expression (or the same old word but) with a new literal meaning. This is, to be sure, a metaphorical description of a metaphorical process but there may be no better way to explain the metaphorical—or the literal.[61]

## Notes

[1] By the 'literal vehicle' of a metaphor, I mean (following I. A. Richards) the word or expression with its literal meaning, which in turn is used or interpreted metaphorically on the occasion. I shall have more to say about the literal meaning of a word as we go on, but for now take it to be whatever meaning the semantics or lexicon (i.e., I-language, not a dictionary) assigns to the word. In addition to the literal meaning of simple words, we are also speak of the literal meanings of sentences by which most authors mean the compositionally determined meaning of the whole as a function of the meanings of all its articulated parts. I shall not discuss this notion here.

[2] Rorty (1987), 295.

[3] Although the topic of dead metaphor surfaces here and there in the literature, it has received relatively little sustained discussion. The major exceptions are Charlton (1975); Alston (1964); Davies (1982); Cooper (1986), 118-139; Reimer (1996); Guttenplan (2005), 182-202; Stern (2000), 309-316.

[4] Almost everyone nowadays, in contrast even to the recent past, grants that metaphors enter into truth-bearing propositions, make assertions, have truth-conditions, etc.—even if their truth-conditions are not what is most interesting about metaphor.

[5] Stern (2000), 187-197, borrowing Burge's (1977) understanding of the de re.

[6] Davidson (1984).

[7] Although this information is not part of the truth-conditions of the utterance in its context, to say that it is extra-propositional is not to say that it cannot be expressed propositionally. See Stern (2000), 272-295; Moran (1989); Davies (1982); Camp (ms. a).

[8] It should go without saying that while many of the liveliest and eternally live metaphors are found in poetry, it would be a mistake to identify live metaphor with poetic metaphor or metaphors found in poetry. Although a number of my examples of metaphors are drawn from poetry, I do not mean to suggest any claims specific to poetic metaphor (if there is such a beast).





[9] Henle (1958).

[10] Bowdle and Gentner (2005).

[11] Similarly 'plastron' now refers to the lower shell of a turtle but originally denoted the breastplate of a suit of armor, its metaphorical application to the turtle drawing on a perceived (functional) analogy between the turtle-shell and breastplate. 'Consider' originally meant to look at the heavens, and only metaphorically came to mean to reflect (itself a dead metaphor). (I owe the last example to Sam Guttenplan).

[12] Bowdle and Gentner (2005), 209.

[13] On the relation between polysemy and homonymy, see Lyons (1977), 550ff.

[14] These 'metaphors' follow relatively regular paths of development both in individuals' acquisition of language and in the growth of languages. At the phylogenetic level, there is 'transfer' and even apparent directions to the paths of transfer from one sensory domain to another; see Williams (1976). Ontogenetically, however, the child acquires the one independently of the other. Despite the appearance that the term is extended on the basis of similarity, in fact these predicates are initially homonyms for the child and only at a later stage does she discover their phylogenetic or diachronic relation—that at some previous time in the history of the language one was literal, the other metaphorical. But what she then discovers is something about the history of the language, rather than a fact about her own interpretations. Hence the individual's acquisition of the expression may differ from its emergence in the growth of language. This suggests a distinction between expressions that are (dead ) metaphors in the language and metaphors for the individual. Another case, not entirely different from this kind of dead metaphor, are childrens' metaphors; see Cohen and Margalit (1972), 723 and Winner (1988). There too the empirical facts are not unambiguous. One must distinguish both mistaken overgeneralizations from metaphorical uses and adult observers' projections of their own metaphorical interpretations of the children's uses from the children's uses themselves. For discussion, see Stern (1979), 375-382.

[15] See Alston (1964), and Kronfeld (1980/81). On metaphors and idioms, see Stern (2006a), 168-185.

[16] "A dead metaphor is simply an expression whose frequent use has led to its loss of metaphorical force and, simultaneously, to its acquisition of a new literal meaning" (by which I assume is meant the meaning that prior to dying had been its 'metaphorical meaning'), Reimer (1996), 14. Cooper (1986), 119 calls this conception the "geriatric scale" for dead metaphor.

[17] Plimpton (1976), 120-1.

[18] Guttenplan (2005) proposes that a live metaphor is one that requires effort to interpret it, while dead metaphors, which are entered into dictionaries, require no effort. What makes them nonetheless metaphors is that a context is imaginable in which their interpretation would require more effort. The reference to a dictionary is, I am suggesting, unhelpful but his gesture toward a counterfactual context is a step in the right direction. But with no measure of "effort," this way of characterizing the distinction also does not go far.

[19] I owe this phrase to Charles Parsons.

[20] On biblical metaphor, and a sophisticated analysis in terms of contemporary semantic theory, see now Jindo (2006).

[21] Goodman (1976), 71-2.

[22] Kittay (1987); Kittay and Lehrer (1981).

[23] Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Lakoff (1987); Lakoff (1993); and Lakoff and Turner (1989).

[24] Gentner (1982); Bowdle and Gentner (2005).

[25] Tirrell (1989).

[26] White (1996).

[27] Camp (ms. a), (ms. b).

[28] Stern (2000), 169-176.

[29] Davidson (1984), 253.

[30] For an attempt to explicate the pictorial character of metaphor in terms of formal properties of its network and family, see Stern (2000), 289-294; Moran (1989), 112.

[31] Cf. Bowdle and Gentner (2005) who propose that conventional metaphors can be re-vitalized and, in particular, can be made to invoke extended metaphorical mappings—which they take to be one mark of a vital or novel metaphor—by "embedding" the metaphor "in a discourse context that includes other figurative expressions that consistently link the target [e..g. 'life' in 'life is a crossroads'] and base ['is a crossroads'] domains" (212-3).

[32] For detailed discussion see Stern (2000), 169-176.

[33] The system of thematic roles corresponds to the syntagmatic relations in Kittay's (1987) semantic field theory and to Camp's (ms.) colligations.

[34] See Tversky (1977); Stern (2000), 153-169.

[35] See Davies (1982), Camp (ms. a), Stern (2000).

[36] On twice-true metaphors, see Cohen (1976)

[37] Here I use the word 'catachresis' as does Black (1962), 33, n. 8, without its negative connotations of misuse.

[38] This passage is cited in Romero and Soria (2007), 154-157; see their comments, especially with regard to the question of metaphor identification. I am indebted to them for bringing the passage to my attention. The emphases are mine.

[39] On this role of the network, see Davies (1982), Elisabeth Camp (ms.), and Stern (2000), 289-295.

[40] In their terminology, A is the target and F is the base in the metaphor 'A is F.'

[41] Traditional comparison theories include Aristotle (1984), Poetics; Tversky (1977); Ortony (1979). For the analogical structure-mapping approach, see Gentner (1982), Bowdle and Gentner (2005). For the categorization account, see Glucksberg (2001); Glucksberg and Keysar (1990), (1993).

[42] See Stern (2000), 147, 225-229.

[43] One thing B&G do not seem to mean by 'abstract' is an ontological or metaphysical status, as do Lakoff and his school when they write that "abstract domains of knowledge can be conceptualized only in terms of more concrete or experiential ones" (B&G 212). See Lakoff (1987, 1993).

[44] Bowdle and Gentner (2005), 198, referring to Glucksberg and Keysar (1990), (1993), who in turn refer to Barsalou (1987).

[45] On the problems of analyzing the relevant notion of literal meaning, and individuating literal vehicles, within our semantics, see Stern (2000, 2006, ms.).

[46] By a 'word' I mean here a morpheme, or a syntactically well-formed (but semantically uninterpreted) shape; by 'expression' I mean a word plus meaning (or character).

[47] It is not obvious that all Contextualists share this assumption. Recanati's (2004) conception of Minimalism invariably takes the relevant linguistic meaning that determines his minimal propositions to be that read off the surface structures of sentences uttered in concrete speech, ignoring the role of abstract understood elements at a "deeper" or more abstract level of linguistic representation. This assumption is especially evident in his discussion of Travis' examples (149, n. 46); cf. Stern (2003).





[48] For further detail, see Stern (2000), chs. 4-6.

[49] I.e., any expression that admits a metaphorical interpretation. Although the matter requires much more research, there may well be linguistic constraints on which expressions or on which syntactic positions allow metaphorical interpretation. For preliminary thoughts, see Stern (1983) and Glanzberg (2007).

[50] Stern (2000), 108, 221, 293-4. Although the m-associated presuppositions for exemplificational metaphors involve properties presupposed to be exemplified by the referent of the literal vehicle, which property is exemplified also depends on how the referent is (qualitatively) presented by the literal vehicle (Stern (2000), 155).

[51] See Stern (2000, 2006, ms.).

[52] For an example of a Grice-like account that attempts to build into what is meant both aspectual meaning of a metaphor and non-propositional elements involved in "seeing one thing as another," see Marga Reimer. Elisabeth Camp (p.c.) who defends a Gricean approach in Camp (2006) and has done the most work attempting to work out the characterizations involved in the aspectual seeing-as of metaphors, informs me that she does not count that information as part either of what is said or what is meant. She suggests that it may possibly fall within the perlocutionary effects of the metaphorical utterance. In any case, this seems to me to acknowledge a serious limitation on a Gricean account.

[53] Another problem for Relevance theoretic explanations of dead metaphors is that, given the highly context-sensitive nature of ad hoc concepts, it would seem unlikely that exactly the same ad hoc concept is expressed by the metaphorical use of the same word on two occasions in two contexts. But in that case, it is hard to accept the relevance theoretic explanation that dead metaphors result from frequent use or interpretation of the same word—so long as frequent uses requires that the word be used frequently to express the same ad hoc concept on the multiple occasions of use.

[54] Robyn Carston suggests that there may be two kinds of processing at work in metaphor. The first is the "more prosaic sort [which is] on a continuum with banal loose uses and hyperboles and result in an ad hoc concept," i.e., the kind of processing that is standardly adduced in Relevance theoretic accounts of communicative meaning, including that of metaphor. She acknowledges, however, that this approach is inadequate to account for poetic effects and information. In those cases, she suggests that we engage in a different kind of processing "where the words/concepts which are metaphorically used retain their 'literal' meaning but are meta-represented/framed/taken to describe another world. Our thought (world conception) is adjusted so as to correspond to the word meaning." In other words, on this "imaginative way" of interpreting a metaphor, we reconstrue our sense of the world to fit a literal understanding of the words" (however deviant they may be). Similar conceptions of metaphor as world-imagining exercises have been proposed in the literature; see, e.g., Levin (1977). Here is not the place to evaluate them. However, the question that should be asked is what this proposal has to do with Relevance Theory. It is true that meta-representation has been employed by Relevance theorists from way back; see, e.g., Sperber and Wilson (1981). But the question remains whether this principle of interpretation is an integral part of Relevance theory or an appendage to it.

[55] See earlier n. 46 and references therein.

[56] Wearing (2006) also objects that the proposal overgenerates for "sentences that do not have any obvious metaphorical reading, such as 'Juliet is tidy'" (317). I fail to see the force of this example. It is easy to imagine contexts in which 'Juliet' is being used metaphorically to refer to, say, Cathy, contexts in which we have been praising her peerlessness and the fact that she is the center of the speaker's world. We can also imagine a context in which we are evaluating, say, musical compositions, Bill's, Tom's, and Juliet's. I say: "John there is a mess, Bill too convoluted, but Juliet is tidy."

[57] R. Gibbs, personal communication; cf. also Gibbs and Tendahl (2006).

[58] See Bromberger (1989).

[59] Szabo (1999) defends his representation view from the charge of Platonism. For reasons of space, I cannot pursue his response here.

[60] I owe the basic idea of an expression token as a hylomorphic substance or entity to Adam Crager. He is not responsible for my elaboration of the idea.

[61] I want to thank Liz Camp for discussion of and comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I also want to thank the American Council of Learned Societies for fellowship support in 2007-8 while this paper was composed.

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