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A CRITIQUE OF DAVIDSONIAN THEORIES OF METAPHOR

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A CRITIQUE OF DAVIDSONIAN THEORIES OF METAPHOR

A Master's Thesis

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January 2022

*To my parents and brother,
No muse could have inspired me more than they did,*

*“Hail, Muse! et cetera.”
Lord Byron*



A CRITIQUE OF DAVIDSONIAN THEORIES OF METAPHOR

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

A CRITIQUE OF DAVIDSONIAN THEORIES OF METAPHOR

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With their rich imagery and unique effects they generate, metaphors have been used in a variety of discourse. But what are their functions in language and communication? Which mechanisms govern the metaphorical interpretation? These fundamental questions fueled dissensus between different theories of metaphor in philosophical and linguistic frameworks. In the emergence of this ongoing debate, Davidson's rejection of a special category of metaphorical meaning and his characterization of metaphor in terms of a special effect had an influential role. Lepore and Stone side with the Davidsonian tradition. By stressing the creativity of the user against the conventionality of content, they argue that metaphorical content is open-ended and semantically indeterminate. Moreover, Lepore and Stone ground these arguments in their distinction between *imagination* and *convention*, as well as in the notion of *conversational record*, which are fundamental to their inquiry-based model of language and communication. In this thesis, I present a critique of Davidsonian theories of metaphor, by particularly focusing on their argument from open-endedness. I argue that we must distinguish between two types of metaphors: *poetic/creative* and *ordinary*. I claim that ordinary metaphors are not open-ended in the way Lepore and Stone understand them to be. By offering a new interpretation of

open-endedness, I illustrate how literal content can, in this regard, be similar to metaphorical. To solve potential challenges of my radical view, rather than providing a pragmatic or contextualist account, I turn to Fillmore's notion of *frames* and illustrate the role of information, embedded in lexical items, on our understanding of literal and metaphorical content.

Keywords: Communication, Metaphor, Open-endedness, Ordinary Language, Semantics.



ÖZET

DAVIDSON'CI METAFOR TEORİLERİNİN ELEŞTİRİSİ

Gürsoy, Zeynep

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

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Zengin imgelemleri ve yarattıkları benzersiz etkiler ile metaforlar pek çok farklı söylemde kullanılmıştır. Peki bunların dildeki ve iletişimdeki işlevleri nelerdir? Hangi tip mekanizmalar metaforsal yorumlamayı yönlendirmektedir? Bu temel sorular, felsefe ve dilbilimi çerçevelerinde yer alan, farklı metafor teorileri arasındaki fikir ayrılıklarını beslemiştir. Metafora özgü bir anlam kategorisi olduğunu reddetmesi ve yarattığı özel etki üzerinden metaforu tanımlaması ile, Davidson sürerlilikte olan metafor tartışmasının ortaya çıkışında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Lepore ve Stone, Davidson'cı geleneğin tarafında yer almıştır. Özellikle dil kullanıcılarının yaratıcılığını, içeriğin kalıplaşmışlığına karşı vurgulayarak, metaforsal içeriğin açık uçlu ve anlamsal olarak belirsiz olduğunu iddia etmişlerdir. Buna ek olarak, Lepore ve Stone bu argümanları, tahkikat temelli dil ve iletişim modelleri için esaslı olan *yaratıcılık* ve *gelenek* arasındaki ayrım, ve aynı zamanda *konuşmasal kayıt* kavramının üzerine kurmuştur. Bu tezde, özellikle, açık uçluluk argümanına odaklanarak, Davidson'cı metafor teorilerinin bir eleştirisini sunuyorum. *Sıradan* ve *yaratıcı/şiiirsel* olmak üzere, iki tür metafor arasında bir ayrım yapmamız gerektiğini savunuyorum. Sıradan metaforların, Lepore ve Stone'un anladıkları türden bir açık uçluluk göstermediğini iddia ediyorum. Açık uçluluğa yeni bir yorum getirerek, düz anlatımsal içeriğin metaforsal içeriğe benzer olarak görülebileceğini

gösteriyorum. Sunduğum radikal görüşümün karşılaşılabileceği olası zorlukları aşmak adına, edimbilimsel ya da bağlamsal teorilere yönelmek yerine, Fillmore'un *çerçeve* kavramına yönelerek sözcüksel öğelere gömülmüş bilginin hem metaforasal hem de düz anlatımsal içeriği anlamamızdaki rolünü gösteriyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Açık uçluluk, Gündelik Dil, İletişim, Metafor, Semantik.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ÖZET.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: LEPORE AND STONE’S ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE AND METAPHOR.....	4
1.1 Setting The Framework of Language: Conversational Record.....	4
1.2 The Difficulty of The Conversational Record And Commitment.....	7
1.3 Imagination and Figurative Language.....	9
1.4 Metaphor and the Argument From Open-endedness.....	11
1.5 Distinguishing Between Two Types of Metaphor.....	13
1.5.1 Poetic/Creative Metaphors.....	13
1.5.2 Ordinary Metaphors.....	15
CHAPTER 2: THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT IS SAID AND MEANT: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON METAPHORICAL AND LITERAL CONTENT.....	17
2.1 A Sternian Perspective on Open-Endedness.....	19
2.2 A Threat to Determinate Literal Content.....	22
2.2.1 Epistemic Contextualism.....	24
2.2.2 Contextualism and Relativism.....	26
CHAPTER 3: THE NOTION FRAMES AND DIFFERENT KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE	30
3.1 Ellipsis and Open-Endedness.....	31
3.2 Fillmore’s Notion of Frames.....	35
3.3 Metaphor, Frames and Semantic Knowledge.....	38
3.4 Social and Linguistic Knowledge.....	41
CONCLUSION.....	45
REFERENCES.....	47

INTRODUCTION

Within the second half of the last century, metaphor has been widely analysed and theorised in the analytic philosophy tradition, as well as in linguistics and cognitive science. Among all the different theories of metaphor, there seems to be consensus on one particular aspect of this phenomenon: it makes us see an object as something else.¹ However, there is also an ongoing debate regarding what kind of processes are involved in understanding of metaphors and whether there is a special kind of meaning that can be associated with metaphors. A prominent tradition has emerged in this debate with Davidson's influential paper "What Metaphor Means".

In "What Metaphor Means", Davidson rejects that words face a change in meaning when used metaphorically and postulates that a metaphorical expression "means [...] what the words literally mean" (1978:32). Together with his adoption of the traditional dichotomy between *meaning* and *use*, this rejection becomes his motivation for situating metaphor in the domain of pragmatics. It is crucial to notice that the emphasis in Davidson's discussion is on the effect of metaphor. For him this is highly unpredictable, unconstrained and unsystematic, as it depends on hearer's creativity and the context.

Recently, this view has been elaborated on by Lepore and Stone, in a Davidsonian way, but, I think, more explicitly by stressing the creativity of the user against the conventionality of the content. Their view of metaphor is grounded in their radical thesis that everything that there is to say systematically and philosophically is in semantics. In *Imagination and Convention*, Lepore and Stone argue that interpretation of metaphor relies on a special kind of perspective-taking, an

¹ This characteristic has been named as: "perspective-taking" (Lepore&Stone), "seeing-as" (Camp) and "exemplification" (Stern).

imaginative engagement on the part of the hearer, and not on a special meaning or communicative intention conveyed by the metaphor itself (2015: 159,162). So when we come across a metaphorical expression, we reconstruct the content from scratch, without conventionally relying on any certain regularity.

Lepore and Stone's theory of metaphor is embedded in their inquiry-laden exploration of language and communication. This exploration targets many larger issues that have not either been settled in philosophy of language or provided a fruitful model for how we communicate, such as semantics/pragmatics divide, figurative and evocative uses of language, the distinction between social and linguistic knowledge and so forth. To provide an extensive critique of the main Davidsonian targets of this thesis, I dedicate many sections in discussing some of these broader issues as well.

I begin the first chapter by providing a detailed overview of Lepore and Stone's model of language and communication in *Imagination and Convention*. The set of novel notions that function as the backbone of this model are *conversational record*, *commitment*, *convention* and *imaginative engagement*.² Upon presenting the difficulty of such an organization based on these notions, I then focus on Davidson's and Lepore and Stone's claims regarding metaphors and figurative language. I concede some ground to Davidsonians, by distinguishing between two types of metaphors: *ordinary* and *poetic/creative*. I claim that the kind of open-endedness Davidsonian theories of metaphor rely on is plausible when poetic metaphors are at stake. However, ordinary metaphors present a challenge, not only for the alleged open-endedness of metaphorical content but also for the determinacy of the literal.

To expand my discussion of open-endedness, I turn to a radical question regarding literal meaning in chapter 2: how close-ended is literal content? I begin by exploring the gap between what is said and meant, and argue that there is a parallelism between the open-ended content of ordinary metaphors and the literal

² Some of these notions themselves have their origin in other philosophers' works. However, Lepore and Stone combine these and present their own, novel understanding.

content of expressions containing a special class of words I refer to as *psychological state expressing*, rather than a parallelism between metaphors and other kinds of figurative language, as suggested by Davidsonian theories. To provide an explanation regarding how we get to understand and communicate through ordinary metaphors and these literal expressions, I use Stern's notion of *m-associated properties*. So both of these types of content generate *a range of acceptable interpretations*, which are in accordance with one another. The discussion proceeds by the analysis of contextualist and relativist accounts of language, which recognize the existence of such words whose content are not determinate. I conclude the chapter by presenting my radical claim: The expressions I have examined, whether literal or metaphorical, are doomed to be open-ended not because of their particular semantic properties but rather because of the very nature of this kind of subject matter.

Chapter 3 illustrates why the view I have presented so far does not give rise to some radical conclusions regarding the open-endedness, or elliptical nature of language in general. And through this discussion, I also illustrate how truth-theoretic semantics is deficient in capturing some of the fundamental information embedded in expressions at lexical level. Yet the alternative to turn to for this issue does not have to be pragmatics. To support this point, and also to elaborate on the semantic knowledge that is used for identifying and interpreting metaphors, I appeal to Fillmore's notion of frames.

CHAPTER 1

LEPORE AND STONE'S ACCOUNT OF LANGUAGE AND METAPHOR

1.1 Setting The Framework of Language: Conversational Record

Imagination and Convention is an influential work, in which Lepore and Stone present an extensive theory of language and communication. Their treatment of metaphor can be regarded as a product of their understanding of language, rather than being a theory of metaphor per se. I cannot just explore their treatment of metaphor in isolation because for them metaphor is not that different from other kinds of evocative and figurative uses of language, such as jokes or hinting. Therefore, I believe that initially it is crucial to give an overview of their unique, and even, at times, radical theory of language.

Lepore and Stone do not directly appeal to the traditional semantic/pragmatics distinction that sharpened with the emergence of foundational pragmatic theories, by Grice and Austin, in the second half of the 20th century. The motivation behind this is their view that: “the received understanding of the semantics– pragmatics divide is a poor way to organize our thinking about language” (2015: 197). It is unhelpful to rely on a divide that separates truth and reference from behaviours of rational agents where the aim is to explore language, from an epistemic perspective, in terms of inquiry and knowledge. And, in fact, this one of the prominent aims of Lepore and Stone. So what they suggest, instead, is that a better organization is possible only when the Gricean notion of speaker meaning and conversational implicatures get eliminated from the tools of philosophy of language. Gricean theories of language reduce meaning to intentions (2015: 6). To Lepore and Stone,

this causes our conception of language to get farther and farther from systematicity and predictability. Their radical thesis is that anything there is to say philosophically and systematically belongs to the domain of semantics.

Now, I want to proceed by presenting how they build their semantic theory of language, and briefly explore its unique architecture. To understand what their idea of semantics consists of, we need to initially understand two concepts: *conversational record* and *convention*. Both of these concepts³ were initially developed by David K. Lewis, respectively, in his works “Scorekeeping in a Language Game” and *Convention: A Philosophical Study*.

Lewis’s analogy between a baseball game and language is crucial. In “Scorekeeping in a Language Game”, Lewis regards conversation to be cooperative in nature, where the goal behind utterances made by interlocutors is to exchange or share information (1979: 340, 345). Lewis’s idea of scorekeeping is a way of keeping track of such information sharing among interlocutors. The scoreboard of a baseball game registers the necessary information regarding the game and it keeps getting updated depending on certain moves players perform in accordance with the rules of the game. But more importantly, just as the game affects the scoreboard, the scoreboard also affects the game.⁴ So there is a bi-directional relation between what goes on in the field and what the scoreboard registers. Lewis claims that conversations function in a similar way. He refers to this imaginary linguistic scoreboard as the *conversational score*⁵ (1979: 344-345). Although, from his article on its own, we do not actually get a clear picture of how this record functions, it is sufficient for now to focus on Lepore and Stone’s use of this analogy.

Thomason’s reading of the conversational record has a heavy influence on Lepore and Stone’s use of it. The way they understand the scoreboard is that it registers

³ In the sense Lepore and Stone use them in *Imagination and Convention*.

⁴ For instance what Lewis refers to as ‘correct play’ predominantly depends on the score. As he states: “What is correct play after two strikes differs from what is correct play after three” (1979: 342). Further details regarding the dynamics of baseball and how the scoreboard affects the game can be found under the section of “Scorekeeping In A Baseball Game”.

⁵ Although this is the original term Lewis uses, Lepore and Stone explicitly state that they have preferred to use Thomason’s terminology: *conversational record*.

interlocutors' *commitments* to the information that characterizes what they are doing in the conversation, and also updates of common ground (2015: 248). And these updates are essentially *propositional* and *public*. So, as Thomason states: "private memories, intentions and beliefs of participants can't be assumed to be part of the conversational record unless steps have been taken to explicitly enter them" (1987: 335). Yet there is a difficulty with such a way of defining commitments. I will return to this issue shortly, in the next section.

For Lepore and Stone, the conversational record is also "an object of *coordination*" (2015: 252). In any given conversation, we have, at least, two individuals with their own strategy for registering on the scoreboard a proposition with the utterance they choose to make (2015: 253). So given that each individual has their own conversational record, and also given that conversation is a joint activity, Lepore and Stone characterize coordination simply as matching conversational records (2015: 253). In other words, in their account, coordination is only possible when the hearer adopts a corresponding strategy to that of the speaker's. Yet the story does not end here. When coordination is at stake, there may be various different ways in which interlocutors can match their strategies (2015: 5). Such multiplicity can cause *coordination problem*. The solution is simple and it also appears to be the last Lewisian notion left for me to explore in this section: it is *convention*.

In *Convention: A Philosophical Study*, Lewis describes convention as "regularity in behaviour" (1979: 51). So anything from driving on a certain side of the road to greeting a stranger by performing a particular gesture are conventions. But to be more precise, many of these regularities are merely *social conventions*. When it comes to language, we have a different set of conventions, which can be referred to as *linguistic conventions*. I believe that the challenge is identifying which elements of language, meaning and communication belong to which set of conventions. For Lepore and Stone "meaning is a matter of conventions, and listeners normally recover the meanings of utterances by recognizing the conventions involved, not by reasoning about the speaker in any deeper sense" (2015: 199). So the meaning of an utterance can only update the conversational record when it is governed by conventions, and not by some kind of arbitrary psychological state of the agent or

their intention. So Lepore and Stone would strictly insist on conventions being linguistic. Because if they accept that social conventions were playing their part in communication then they would have to the Gricean way. Clearly this is the opposite of what their understanding of language consists of.

1.2. The Difficulty of The Conversational Record And Commitment

So far I have presented a theory whose backbone is predictability, systematicity, informativeness (propositionality) and most importantly linguistic conventions. These are all, very well, compatible with the semantic theories that have already been developing since Frege. The uniqueness of Lepore and Stone's theory lies in their argument from conversational record and commitments. Although the conversational record notion is supposed to play the central role in this theory, I believe that it just does not work. We do not get a clear picture regarding what it means for something to be going on the conversational record. Is it just the English sentence, or is it some kind of a Fregean thought? The influences that shaped this notion are not helpful in terms of giving us precise answers either. The Lewisian baseball analogy is not sufficient for pointing out this fundamental aspect of the record. Same goes for Thomason's take on the record.

One possibility is shifting our focus from the question of what goes on the record to the question of what sort of a criterion selects what goes on the record. When it comes to this idea of criterion, Lepore and Stone talk in terms of *commitments* (2010: 255):

In conversation, normally, each of us defers to a broad set of background commitments about meaning. These commitments describe how to update the record, but they also describe our responsibilities in using language in accord with the broader community, in introducing and negotiating new meanings in special situations, and in working to make sure that we understand one another as making meaning in established ways. Interlocutors have an interest in understanding one another, but also have broader interests in using their understanding to pursue consistent and public meanings. So while we want to coordinate on the record, we do that by agreeing on a wide range of additional background commitments that cover the full range of conversational dynamics.

It is just not very clear what we are getting here. The nature of such commitments appears quite vague to me. So once again, I feel inclined to ask, what is it really that interlocutors are committing to? Because from Lepore and Stone's explanation it seems that, given any conversation, interlocutors could be committing to anything from a certain thought, to the uttering of English words or even to the uttering of particular sounds. I believe that here it would be interesting to briefly look into what Lepore and Stone do with malapropisms.

(1) Mystery loves company.

Assume that I misspoke and instead of "misery" I used the word "mystery", just as in (1). Lepore and Stone would insist that what I just mistakenly said, namely my malapropism, is what must be registered in the conversational record. Yet what I originally wanted to say was that "misery loves company". It might be clear to me, it might also be clear to other people that I actually did not mean "mystery loves company". Yet since such information stems from my intention and not from the actual content of my utterance, it cannot get registered on the record. For Lepore and Stone, this is the case for not only malapropisms but also for creative uses of new names. They support this view in terms of a central worry they have, which is as follows: "Are interlocutors really coordinating successfully if the audience's interpretation is just 'whatever the speaker must have meant'?" (2015: 253).

Rather than being a special case of a minor set back for Lepore and Stone, I claim that this case with malapropisms indicates a much larger difficulty with their theory. I am wondering what kind of a role this notion of conversational record commitment is even doing when a malaprop is supposed to be committed to his/her malapropism. If we just focus on their analysis of cases such as (1) then it appears that what goes on the record is just English words themselves, with their literal meaning of course. Yet from their own statement we also know that commitments of interlocutors must determine what goes on the record. It can often be the case that what I commit to, or even at times what interlocutors mutually commit to, is not the literal meaning of utterances. In other words, there can be an explicit gap between utterances and commitments of interlocutors. This difficulty becomes even

more challenging when it comes to figurative language, which I will explore in the next section.

1.3. Imagination and Figurative Language

What we can do with language is not limited to constructing propositional sentences by appealing to conventional meaning of words. We do all sorts of things with language. And those very things create *ambiguity*, namely a central challenge for analysis of language. By particularly considering the richness of ordinary language and communication, I believe that there is a very crucial question that needs to be addressed: Can the conversational record model, based on linguistic conventions, truly capture the essence of dynamics of conversation? I believe that Lepore and Stone's theory falls short in this respect, especially when we consider their treatment of *figurative language*.

Lepore and Stone regard figurative or indirect uses of language such as irony, sarcasm, jokes, metaphor and so on as being 'cases whose content is not resolved conventionally' (2015: 4). This means that there is no separate category of secondary meaning, such as metaphorical or ironical meaning, in their account. Rather than situating such uses in the domain of pragmatics and letting the conversational implicatures and speaker meaning do their work, in terms of the analysis of such cases, they claim that all such cases require the *imaginative engagement* of the hearer, which is triggered by an *open-ended invitation* from the speaker. I want to briefly explain how these notions, which are central to their theory, work.

(2) X: Our new neighbour seems like a very nice person.

Y: Oh you say so? He is indeed so extremely nice that I saw him throw his son's toys to the bin when he just couldn't tie his shoelaces properly. Also I keep hearing him yelling to his wife all the time.

X: So it turns out that he is a Gestapo...

The conversation between two neighbours above is an example containing both a sarcastic and a metaphoric expression. Lepore and Stone would say that Y's sarcastic utterance is an open-ended invitation to X "to explore the contrast between the apparent contributions of an utterance and the way things actually are" (2015: 173). The same applies to X's metaphorical utterance. According to Lepore and Stone, X "offers an open-ended invitation to find insights from seeing one domain, analogically, as another" (2015: 5). None of these utterances have a content that is generated by linguistic conventions.

A pragmatic analysis of this example would focus on the specific information being conveyed through exploiting conversational maxims.⁶ Because clearly, the information that Y wants to contribute is not a part of the literal meaning. However Lepore and Stone would insist that there is actually no specific information, at all, that is being conveyed. Because in the first place, our interlocutors X and Y do not coordinate on the information itself, Lepore and Stone would claim. This also means that, X and Y cannot be committed to anything other than the literal meaning of their utterances.

The gap between what is said and what is meant is the main difficulty with evocative or figurative uses of language. For instance, what Y meant with their sarcastic utterance is the exact opposite of what they were saying. This is nothing new, in fact this was one of the motivations behind the development of pragmatics. However, since Lepore and Stone's semanticist programme aims to give pragmatics solely the role of disambiguating, they do not want to rely on that for explaining such cases.

So it appears that, according to their view, there is a narrow subset of content that can be communicated systematically. To understand this argument better we can look into the distinction between *sense* and *tone* that Lepore and Stone borrowed from Frege. In "The Thought: A Logical Inquiry", Frege states that (1956: 295):

⁶ To be precise, pragmatics is actually not limited to Gricean conversational maxims. However, since this is the main target of Lepore and Stone, I am only mentioning this particular project within pragmatics.

It makes no difference to the thought whether I use the word “horse” or “steed” or “cart-horse” or “mare” [...] What is called mood, fragrance, illumination in a poem, what is portrayed by cadence and rhythm, does not belong to the thought. Much of language serves the purpose of aiding the hearer’s understanding, for instance the stressing of part of a sentence by accentuation or word-order.

The Fregean thought can simply be regarded as the sense of a sentence. And from his definition we can regard tone to be those components of a sentence that do not make any contribution to the truth value. So, particular uses of particular words, such as “and”, “but” “still”, “already” and so on, can change the tone of a sentence but they do not change its truth value or thought expressed by those very sentences.⁷ Lepore and Stone’s notion of imaginative engagement essentially is a mode in which hearers’ interact with the Fregean tone. Because tone also serves the function of hinting and from Lepore and Stone’s treatment of figurative uses we know that anytime one comes across such an expression, they piece together hints, by using their imagination, and as a result they end up reconstructing the content from scratch.

1.4. Metaphor and the Argument From Open-endedness

Before I address some prominent difficulties with Lepore and Stone’s treatment of figurative uses and present my proposal regarding how they can be resolved, I need to also engage with their account of metaphor in more detail. Of course, their treatment of metaphor is not that much different from their treatment of other figurative uses, in terms of how the interpretation process happens essentially.

In their view, metaphor shows something, it makes the audience realise something by guiding their perception and thinking into a particular direction. They refer to this characteristic of metaphor as *perspective-taking* (2015: 162). However, from this it does not follow that it is metaphorical meaning that is responsible for generating perspective-taking. Metaphor triggers some kind of an imaginative engagement on the part of the hearer, and that is it. That is why metaphor cannot be

⁷ To better understand this we can look at Frege’s own example: “Alfred has still not come”. He states that the word “still” does not change the thought expressed by the sentence, which is: “Alfred has not come” (1956: 296).

paraphrased and can “legitimately ‘say’ different things to different hearers” (2010: 14). So it appears that they strongly appeal to *non-paraphrasability* and *open-endedness* arguments.

To better understand those two arguments, we need to initially understand another influential account of metaphor, namely Donald Davidson’s. Lepore and Stone’s treatment of metaphor seems to be an extension of that of Davidson’s in “What Metaphors Mean”. Davidson insists that there cannot be a separate category of meaning such as metaphorical (1978: 32, 43). Thus, he claims, it is metaphor’s effect that guides our perception and makes us realize similarities, gain new perspectives and so forth (1978: 33, 45). This emphasis on the effect also has a close connection to the traditional dichotomy between meaning and use, as well as semantics and pragmatics. Being committed to this dichotomy, he situates metaphor in the domain of pragmatics and characterizes the effect of the metaphor in terms of its dependence on hearer’s creativity and context, unpredictability and unsystematicity. The following paragraph by Davidson captures the core of the Davidsonian account of metaphor (1978: 46):

[...] what we attempt in "paraphrasing" a metaphor cannot be to give its meaning, for that lies on the surface; rather we attempt to evoke what the metaphor brings to our attention. [...] The central error about metaphor is most easily attacked when it takes the form of a theory of metaphorical meaning, but behind that theory, and storable independently, is the thesis that associated with a metaphor is a cognitive content that its author wishes to convey and that the interpreter must grasp if he is to get the message. This theory is false, whether or not we call the purported cognitive content a meaning. It should make us suspect the theory that it is so hard to decide, even in the case of the simplest metaphors, exactly what the content is supposed to be. The reason it is often so hard to decide is, I think, that we imagine there is a content to be captured when all the while we are in fact focusing on what the metaphor makes us notice. [...] There is no limit to what a metaphor calls to our attention, and much of what we are caused to notice is not propositional in character.

The prominent arguments Davidsonians rely on are non-paraphrasability, open-endedness and also non-cognitivism. They use these to support a very radical thesis, in my view, which is the following: there is no metaphorical content. This means that conversational participants would not be using their linguistic knowledge (to be more precise, semantic knowledge) in engaging with a metaphorical expression.

Lepore and Stone are clearly Davidsonians, in this respect. However, there is an issue to settle. Davidson's view seems to giving primacy to pragmatic processes, in terms of explaining how we actually engage with metaphors. Yet Lepore and Stone's own understanding of language and communication provided a novel characterization, which relied on conventions and imagination. Unlike Davidson, they do not want to situate metaphor in the domain of pragmatics, because they do not want to appeal to the traditional semantics/pragmatic dichotomy in the first place. So they insist that when we come across a metaphorical expression, we use our imaginative engagement and reconstruct the content from scratch, without conventionally relying on any certain regularity.

1.5. Distinguishing Between Two Types of Metaphor

1.5.1 Poetic/Creative Metaphors

At this point, I believe that a distinction between two types of metaphors must be made. Many examples within the existing literature, analysing this phenomenon, are *poetic metaphors*, which are novel, highly creative and rich with their imagery. On the other hand, I shall point out that there is another type of metaphor, which I will refer to as *ordinary metaphors*. These are commonly used in ordinary discourse, and they are much more conventional than creative metaphors. I hold that there is a *discontinuity* between these two types metaphors⁸, in the sense that the mode in which we engage with ordinary and poetic metaphors are idiosyncratic.

So Given this distinction I concede some ground to Davidsonians. When creative or poetic metaphors are at stake the open-endedness argument is plausible. For instance, take a look at the following example, from Byron's "Darkness":

(3) The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expir'd before

⁸ I am borrowing the terminology from Semino and Steen's distinction between "approaches that emphasize the discontinuity between metaphor in literature and metaphor in non-literary language, and approaches that emphasize the continuity between metaphor in literature and metaphor in non-literary language" (Semino&Steen: 2008, 233).

Before we even question if there is some kind of information being transmitted here we must question if poetry, or sometimes drama and prose as well, aims to transmit information in the first place? Byron's metaphor is creative with its rich imagery. However it would be perhaps tasteless to argue that some determinate content is transmitted by his lines. What is transmitted are some hints and images. Tides being in their graves or the moon being the mistress of waves and tides could be interpreted in many different ways. As Lepore and Stone claims, these interpretations would be a product of us collecting the hints and images, given to us by the poet, and bringing them together with our imaginative engagement. The poet would want us to do a lot of work ourselves. Yet this work is not only a linguistic one. As Peter Lamarque states, "literature is not definable in linguistic terms alone [...] a central component of *literary* interpretation properly so called -that part which makes it distinctive of literature- has less to do with *meaning* as such, or with *understanding*, than with *appreciation* of a special kind" (2002: 290-294).

Regarding poetry to be an object of appreciation can potentially raise many concerns, if not questions, as to how poetry can be defined, how we really engage with it, whether there is uniformity among different poetic genres and so forth. For instance, the example I have given to illustrate my point belongs to a very specific literary tradition, namely 18th -19th century English Romanticism. The richness of metaphors (especially those related to nature) in such poems can be taken to be a characteristic of this tradition. Furthermore, other types of poems, such as satirical and didactic ones, can be regarded as requiring its readers to understand them more than to appreciate. However, I do not find such a view plausible because I take a fundamental aspect of poetry to be its aesthetic value, which would make it an object of appreciation, regardless of the special characteristics of the tradition or genre it belongs to. So even a didactic poem would be an object of appreciation in this sense.

It should also be considered that there are many canonized poems, as well as novels and plays, that can be used to illustrate why literary works are object of appreciation rather than understood. For instance, most of Sappho's poetry is in

forms of fragments with missing words and lines. Only a very small portion of her work has been persevered through the course of history (Raynor&Lardinois, 2014: 7). So due this fact, before even questioning whether these poems are objects of appreciation or understanding, we should acknowledge that they cannot actually be understood. The reader must creatively engage with Sappho's poetry and use their imagination to fill in the blanks, interpret it. It is evident that such an interpretation really stems from appreciation as Lamarque states.

Of course, the discussion regarding what kind of object poems are and how we really engage with them can be further developed. However, these questions exceed the scope of my thesis and they are not among my target interests. Thus I am not going to further dive into this discussion as I believe that this is a topic on its own that would truly benefit from an exploration within the framework of aesthetics or literary theory.

1.5.2 Ordinary Metaphors

Returning back to the distinction between two types of metaphors, I believe that we need to address the question of whether ordinary metaphors can transmit information. After all, the goal of conversation or ordinary speech is not appreciation but rather communication. When we talk, we want to get across certain information, share and coordinate. Lepore and Stone do not believe that metaphor, or other kinds of figurative uses, are good candidates as means for such ends. It is their commitment to the notion of conversational record, more than Davidson's influence on their account of metaphor, which directs Lepore and Stone's argument towards this direction. Because regardless of his arguments against the existence of a special metaphorical content and meaning, Davidson's account of metaphor does not have any claims contradicting the idea that we can communicate through metaphors. It is just that Davidson situated metaphor in the domain of use, as he regarded it to be a phenomenon that is highly unconstrained and context-dependent. However Lepore and Stone insist that "figurative and evocative speech fails to update the conversational record to reflect the distinctive insight that it may prompt" (2015: 234). At this point we must separate our ways because contrary to

Lepore and Stone, I claim that ordinary metaphors do communicate metaphorical content and there is transmission of information. I will use (4-6) to elaborate:

(4) The flavours were exploding in my mouth.

(5) She stabbed me with her words.

(6) Before the AC was installed, my room was a freezer in the winters and a sauna in the summers.

I must insist that these metaphors cannot mean completely different things to different people. Lepore and Stone would argue that we need the other participant creatively engaging in the conversation to understand and interpret this metaphor. However, I do not believe that such ordinary metaphors require the creative engagement of the audience. Metaphors in (4-6) are not a particularly creative, especially compared to (3). Just like these, there are many other standardized metaphors that I must insist that are still metaphors. They are not literal uses that have lexicalized meanings. And such kinds of metaphors do transmit content. So open-endedness argument does not apply to all kinds of metaphors. At least not in the way Lepore and Stone characterize open-endedness. I will further expand my exploration of ordinary metaphors and open-endedness in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE GAP BETWEEN WHAT IS SAID AND MEANT: A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON METAPHORICAL AND LITERAL CONTENT

Having presented a modest critique of Lepore and Stone's theory of language and metaphor, I want to further expand my focus to the gap between *what is said* and *what is meant*. Rather than strictly working with the pre-established domains of semantics and pragmatics, I believe that it might be fruitful to just focus on this very idea of the gap⁹, and use it to better understand the relation between content and understanding.¹⁰

To begin with, it might be helpful to taxonomize the gap to figure out where we situate metaphor among other linguistic occurrences.¹¹ I believe that this is an essential move as the discussion of metaphor cannot be isolated from the discussion of language in general. Furthermore, the drastic contrast between literal and figurative content that Davidsonians' arguments rest upon must be revisited. An alternative approach, to this, would be taking open-endedness of all sorts into account, rather than just drawing parallelisms between metaphor and other kinds of figurative expressions.

So there seems to be two main categories under which different occurrences can be

⁹ We can also refer it as incoordination.

¹⁰ This can be regarded as a move à la Lepore and Stone, in the sense that they wanted their theory to have more inquiry-laden and epistemic grounds than to be one that strictly uses this pre-established divide. I need to emphasize that, of course, my discussion will rely on this distinction but the focus itself will be on this notion of incoordination.

¹¹ I am focusing on the gap at a smaller scale and not focusing on sentences but rather on words. So I won't be discussing syntactic ambiguity at this point.

grouped. One is where the gap stems from meaning and linguistic conventions and the other is where it stems from social conventions, psychological states of agents and context. In the former, it is an incompatibility between meaning and meaning whereas in the latter it is between meaning and a non-linguistic form. How the further branching of this taxonomy can be shaped depends on the general theory of language one adopts. It might be tempting to regard the first one as being literal meaning/lexical where disambiguation occurs at a semantic level and the second one as figurative uses against the literal meaning where disambiguation is at a pragmatic level. Take a look at the following expressions:

(7) I saw her land.

(8) You should swallow your pride.

(9) The visit was so pleasing that I kept checking the clock!

(10) Their startup project is just a fetus, they report.

(11) The divorce has been painful for Jane.

The first two are very orthodox examples of different kinds of ambiguity that are widely used in the semantics literature. What renders (7) ambiguous is the existence of multiple dictionary entries for the same word, namely “land”. (8) is not much different either, the verb “swallow” has more than one meaning registered in the lexicon. The only difference is that it also happens to be a dead metaphor. Of course, there is a very narrow level of open-endedness in these two examples.¹² The gap can be filled in purely linguistic terms, by meaning itself. Thus in the taxonomy, polysemes and homonyms would be grouped under the first category.

However, expressions such (9) and (10) would traditionally go under the second category because in determining the meaning of these expressions one cannot use their lexical knowledge. It is not the case that “pleasing” and “fetus” have several registered meanings in the lexicon, but rather ad hoc meanings are assigned to these words, through uses. So they require disambiguation at a pragmatic level. For a Gricean, what fills the gap in such cases would be speaker meaning and for Lepore

¹² Ambiguity and open-endedness are two distinct phenomena, characterized differently. Here I am using the term ambiguous, in the sense it is used in linguistics. An ambiguous expression is open-ended but not all open-ended expressions are ambiguous. I consider them to have a narrow level of open-endedness because there is a very limited range of interpretations such expressions generate.

and Stone (who replace semantics/pragmatics distinction with convention/imagination distinction) it would be the creative engagement of the hearer. In either case, semantics is not given a role in the process of understanding of figurative expressions. Nevertheless, there is also another view, which aims at filling this gap in semantic terms, without a direct appeal to the lexicon. I will begin the next section by exploring this view.

In this chapter, I will make an essential move against the widely accepted views regarding the gap. I will begin by exploring the possibility of the incoordination, between words and the ad hoc momentary meanings assigned to them by speakers, being retrieved at a semantic level and proceed by presenting a more radical understanding of literal content, which challenges assumptions regarding the determinate nature of such content.

There is a shared assumption that the only gap that exists with literal uses are cases such (7) and (8). However, literal language is filled with cases such as example (11), which initially appear to have a perfectly determinate content, but, in fact are open-ended when it comes to understanding. The word “painful”, just like many other words from the same group of *psychological state words*, that I will present in the second section, can be understood in many different ways. This characteristic of such expressions renders sentences expressing properties, personalities, evaluations and emotions ambiguous and imprecise. I will show that this particular side of literal language is not different from metaphorical language with respect to the processes of interpretation, especially in terms of particular kinds of knowledge and conventions governing those very processes.

2.1. A Sternian Perspective on Open-Endedness

Before determining where metaphor can be situated in this idea of the gap, we need to initially determine whether metaphorical expressions genuinely exhibit discordance between what is said and what is meant. Because clearly, for

Davidsonians, metaphor is not used to mean something (Davidson, 1978: 45).¹³ However, my own view accounts for the existence of metaphorical content and a distinction between two types of metaphor, each with its own individual and unique treatment requirements. I have already discussed that poetic metaphors are not a matter of meaning and I conceded some ground to the Davidsonian view in this respect. Such metaphors are not created to get across a certain proposition or information. So it is not appropriate to talk in terms of discordance between what is said and meant, when it comes to such cases. Poetic metaphors are objects of appreciation rather than understanding. Yet when it comes to some more ordinary metaphors, used in everyday discourse, the case is different. In such cases we can in fact think in terms of such discordance because the goal of participants is to communicate or to share information. They say something while they in fact mean another thing.

So having determined that with non-lexicalized ordinary metaphors we have this gap¹⁴, now we need to understand how it could be filled? In other words, how can we understand/interpret a metaphorical utterance of this type? One possibility at this point is accepting that it cannot be actually filled in the first place. But rather what happens is that it gets narrowed down through a set of constraints. Both our linguistic knowledge and some more general knowledge of the world generate a range of acceptable interpretations of the metaphor. All these acceptable interpretations are compatible with one another, in the sense that they lead us into a specific insight expressed by the metaphor.

In *Metaphor in Context*, Stern aims to develop a theory based on this idea. Yet the focus is on properties. According to him, the metaphorical interpretation of an expression generates various different salient properties that are associated with the metaphor (such “explode” from example (4), “freezer” and “sauna” from (6) or with

¹³ Other than what the words composing the metaphorical expression literally mean (Davidson, 1978: 45).

¹⁴ Once again it is crucial to notice that open-endedness exists with all kinds of metaphors. What I am essentially claiming is that only in this particular type of metaphor speaker actually means something, while poets or creative metaphor creators have purposes other than getting a meaning across.

“the sun” from the overly-used line of Shakespeare’s Romeo “Juliet is the Sun”¹⁵). Stern refers to these as *m-associated* properties, which are different from literal properties (2000: 113). When interpreting, for instance, Romeo’s line we would not understand Juliet as being a massive star but rather understand her as being crucial for Romeo or being life-giving and so on. How we identify an utterance as being metaphorical, and retrieve the metaphorical content is captured by Stern’s *Mthat* operator. Modeled on Kaplan’s *Dthat* operator for indexicals, *Mthat* is essentially a function that constrains such *m-associated* properties, congruent with both the semantic and pragmatic context, to produce the metaphorical content (Stern, 2000: 106, 115).

Stern explains the mechanics of this operator, particularly in terms of open-endedness, by claiming: “One character for a single metaphorical expression (type), say, ‘*Mthat*[‘is the sun’]’, determines different contents in the different contexts given different sets of presuppositions in which it is uttered” (Stern, 2000: 268). So a single metaphor can generate many different content in each context. Yet he also believes that this should not be regarded as a difficulty for the Davidsonian conception of semantics, which has finitistic requirements. Because in every one of these contexts, the interpretation/the content of the metaphorical expression would be fixed (Stern, 2000: 269).

The crucial implication of such a view on properties is that there is a range of interpretations, that are acceptable, for a metaphorical expression. We cannot paraphrase it in one sentence but there are acceptable interpretations and unacceptable ones and they are not up to our creativity. We are constrained by the literal meaning of the metaphor and the wide set of salient properties associated with it. To illustrate, the metaphorical expression “to be a fetus” in (10) could be interpreted as “being in the process of growth”, “developing fundamentally”, “not entered the market yet”, “not clear whether it will grow successfully” and so on. These are among some of the acceptable interpretations, which are also *m-associated* properties of being a fetus. If metaphorical interpretation were just up to

¹⁵ This would be a poetic metaphor and for the reasons I have discussed previously, it would be much more fruitful to focus on ordinary metaphors. However I just wanted to include it as it has an important role in Stern’s own discussion.

the creativity of the hearer then (10) could have been understood as the startup “being trapped”, “being unnamed” and so on. I suspect that one would choose this particular metaphor to express the latter list of properties, when there are so many other ways in which they can do so.

When it comes to context and the analogousness of metaphor and pure indexicals, it seems as though the product of Stern’s motivation does not turn out to be a pure semantic theory. By grounding Kaplan’s theory of indexicals (which was aimed at providing us with a function that determined, with predictability, content from context) into Stalnakerian pragmatic presupposition and context, Stern’s account of Mthat moves away from predictability or computability. In the end, we still do not get a clear picture on what are the particular semantic rules governing the metaphorical interpretation. We just know that they somehow exist. So the analogousness of pure indexicals and metaphor does not hold.

I believe that the notion of range of acceptable interpretations is an idea worth extending and developing. For Stern, the idea of the restriction actually indicates that the range of acceptable metaphorical interpretations are not open-ended or even endless. However for a majority, including Davidsonians, this would still imply that they are open-ended. This poses no difficulty for my own view. In fact, we can just accept that this kind of interpretation is open-ended. But then we also need to revisit our conception of literal meaning, completely. And by literal meaning, I do not actually think only in terms of broad indexicals. The issue is much broader than gradeability. I actually think of many different types of expressions that exist in literal language. Because if we accept that having a range of possibilities entails open-endedness for metaphor then we also need to accept the same for literal language. Why should we stop at the non-literal in terms of open-endedness and not subsume the literal content?

2.2. A Threat To Determinate Literal Content

It appears as though there is only a small range of expression whose literal content can be regarded as being ambiguous. Polysemes, homonyms and possibly broad

indexicals belong to this group. Now, I want to see how far we can expand this scope of ambiguity of literal content. The intuition shared among many, including Lepore and Stone, is that non-literal content is open-ended. If we accept that figurative language is open-ended then we need to address the question of how closed literal language is? I want to begin by considering (11) together with the following examples:

(12) Samuel is funny.

(13) I know bananas are good for your health.

(14) My dad hates the rafflesia he planted last year.

(15) William is not pleased with the results.

Notice how the words “painful”, “funny”, “to know”, “good”, “to hate” and “to be pleased” are very similar to metaphors, in terms of open-endedness. Their meanings initially seem to be dependent on the particularities of the exact occasion where these utterances were made, of what kind of speakers were in front of us and so on. So by just looking at these sentences in isolation, we would not immediately understand what being funny or knowing a fruit being good for your health means.

I want to focus on some of these examples and further illustrate my point on why these statements do not have a fixed content. In (11) the divorce can be painful in different senses. For instance, it can mean that the legal procedure’s complexity has been exhausting for Jane, which in turn lead the speaker to describe the experience as being painful. It might also be the case that separation has been causing Jane to emotionally feel pain. There are different ways of interpret this utterance. Yet, regardless of these, one can still question what painful means really.

The situation is not different in (15) either. William not being pleased can mean that his expectations were not met, he is disappointed or, without any prior expectations, he simply feels unhappy. Lastly, just imagine a conversation between you and your friend. Suppose your friend utters (14). You might just respond by saying “I can’t blame him that plant smells horrible!” But your friend might just protest, and say “No, the smell doesn’t bother him at all. It is just that he has to

dedicate a lot of his time and effort to take care of one single plant which truly bothers him.” You can never know if this person hates his rafflesia in the same sense he hates pedophiles. The word “hate” is highly ambiguous in this respect.

The upshot is that there are many words whose content is open-ended in terms of the plurality of interpretations they generate. We cannot really know precisely what these expressions mean by solely relying on our lexical knowledge. It is also not the case that we just need context to reach to a determinate meaning but even within the same context there can be multiple acceptable interpretation as well as unacceptable ones. And so far I have only given an intuitive explanation for this side of language. Now, I want to focus on the existing literature recognizing such words and demonstrate how there is a need for an alternative for explaining the open-endedness of both literal and non-literal content.

2.2.1 Epistemic Contextualism

“To know” and its treatment under epistemic contextualism is a good place to start. From a broad perspective, EC is the view that regards cognate words, particularly the verb “to know”, to be context-sensitive. Yet it should be noted that, being interested in knowledge attributes, many epistemologists’ primary interests, in their contextual analysis of cognate words are not language-laden. Therefore their understanding of context-sensitivity is often not connected to content itself but rather to other extra-linguistic entities in relation to truth conditions. For instance, proponents of EC, such as DeRose (1999) and Cohen (1999), connect this issue to *standards*. DeRose categorizes standards into low and high ones and claims that the meaning of “to know” would change in a knowledge statement uttered at a context in which higher standard are operating and lower standard are operating¹⁶ (DeRose, 1999: 206). What he refers to as high standards of knowledge can be regarded as extreme cases (such as a discussion regarding BIV scenario), which are not relevant to ordinary contexts (1999: 188). DeRose’s account, on its own, does not seem to be helpful for explaining cases such as (13). However an extension of this notion of

¹⁶ This claim constitutes just a small portion of her general epistemic argument against radical skepticism concerning knowledge attributes.

standard may still be worth considering. Cohen's account of EC can be helpful at this point. Making some connections between knowledge ascription standards and language, he argues that (1999: 61):

On this model, we view the context as determining a standard at which the proposition involving the knowledge relation gets evaluated. So we could think of knowledge as a three-place relation between a person, a proposition, and a standard [...] The standards are determined by some complicated function of speaker intentions, listener expectations, presuppositions of the conversation, salience relations, etc., by what David Lewis calls the conversational score.

It appears as though, on this model, the notion of standard gets reduced to individuals' level. In other words Cohen's account allows the meaning of "to know" vary not only across low and high standard contexts but also across particular standards of conversations and particular conversational participants. So this smaller scale conception of standard, compared to DeRose's, is more applicable to ordinary cases such as (13).

So in the light of these, it can be said that the meaning of "I know bananas are good for your health" is not determined by individual meanings of the words composing this utterance. Even without a skeptical scenario present, the meaning of "to know" can vary. (13) uttered by a dietician to her patient, and by mother to her child would be understood differently. Just as patient X and patient Y would understand their dieticians' exact same utterance of (13) differently. So compositionality principle and truth-theoretic semantics is not sufficient for us to retrieve the meaning of this expression.¹⁷ And, as I have sketched, this is not a specific case for cognate words either. Retrieving the meaning of "good" requires as much appeal to this notion of standard as cognate words require.

The issue that I am after is much larger than being an issue of knowledge per se. Now the question seems to be the following: If applied to words such as "painful", "funny", "to know", "good", "to hate" etc., can the notion of standard, EC provides us with, be deployed with an explanatory role in the linguistic analysis of open-ended terms? This application already exists in some view within philosophy of

¹⁷ As there is no fixed meaning to retrieve but rather an acceptable range of interpretations.

language. I want to dedicate the next sub-section to explore this application, together with other alternatives.

2.2.2. Contextualism and Relativism

The recognition of the indeterminate nature of words such as “to know”, “good” etc. exceeds the literature of EC. In fact, together with demonstratives and indexicals, they could be regarded as being among the main targets of (as well as motivating cases for) contextualists¹⁸. Of course, contextualism is often, initially, understood in relation to epistemic problems, especially in solving skeptical puzzles and so on. However we also have these applications within philosophy of language dealing with questions outside epistemology.

Although there is very little consensus among proponents of this view, what brings them together is this notion of context sensitivity. How this notion gets deployed, and the role its given really depends on the particularities of the contextualists’ interests and motivations. Leaving a more radical version of contextualism aside, the rest can be said to be interested in the following challenge: How one can determine the truth conditions of sentences containing such words? In many cases, this view can clearly posit a threat to the truth-theoretic conception of meaning, as well as to compositionality principle.

There is even a more complex challenge for semantic contextualism: What is it that varies across context? Is it the content itself or is it some extra-linguistic element that is involved in our process of truth-evaluation? With regards to this question, it appears as though there are a few different ways a contextualist can go. Those who decide to go the extra-linguistic element way (at the logical level), include additional variables/functions to the evaluation process, such as standard. The intuition is that, just as there is a standard of knowledge, such as the ones that proponents of EC are committed to, respectively there must be standards of

¹⁸ Just to be precise with the terminology, it would be more accurate to state that not all contextualists are equally interested in, or motivated by, indexicals or demonstratives. Such interests usually indicate a theory’s focus on semantic context-dependence.

knowledge, aesthetics, morality and so forth. Thus expressions containing words, whose content depends on such standards, cannot have determinate meaning because these standards are not determinate in the first place.

Such attempts at explaining these words' open-endedness, in relation to standards, is not limited to semantic contextualism either. Cappelen's content relativism, as well as Macfarlane's assessment relativism are also aimed at solving issues related to varying contextual parameters (such as standards) with tastes predicates, as well as other context-sensitive linguistic forms. What is interesting with such theories is the role given to interpreters. Interpreters are accounted for fixing the content of an expression through their assessment. For instance, a content relativist would be committed to the following view: "Relative to one interpreter, an utterance of 'A is yummy' can express the proposition *that A is yummy by standard S*, and relative to another interpreter it can express the proposition *that A is yummy relative to standard S** (where S and S* are the standards fixed in the interpreters' respective contexts)" (Cappelen, 2008: 24). This view on literal content is reminiscent of Lepore and Stone's notion of creative engagement with regards to non-literal content.¹⁹ Literal, or non-literal, it seems absurd to regard language and communication to be working in this manner. It would not be good model of language, or communication, when a speaker cannot express themselves or really assign any sort of content to their words.

Now, reminding that my interests are not related to truth-aptness or language at the logical level per se, contextualism, relativism or any view of this sort²⁰ does not seem to be fit for exploring the kind of open-endedness I have exemplified in the previous section. My take on this subject matter should neither be regarded as radical contextualism nor skepticism. I am not claiming that there is no determinate content associated with any utterance, literal or metaphorical, and everything is disintegrating in this acid of context. Clearly, there are many expressions that have perfectly determinate content such as those reporting actions. There is no open-endedness in an utterance such as "I went hiking yesterday". Rather I am claiming

¹⁹ Of course, in Lepore and Stone's view literal meaning was fixed and determinate.

²⁰ Particular labelling of these theories might differ.

that any linguistic unit that expresses *psychological states* is subject to this kind of open-endedness.²¹ So my radical claim is that such utterances, whether literal or metaphorical, are doomed to be open-ended, not because of their particular semantic properties but rather because of the very nature of this kind of subject matter. The imprecision of the discourse, about this subject matter, is caused by the absence of a refined and specialised vocabulary, which we can use to describe these states. It does not matter if I express someone's personality, an emotional response I give to a certain experience, a property something has and so forth by metaphorical or literal language. This expression will not be determinate but there will be a certain range of possible understanding on the part of the hearer.

To elaborate more on this position in contrast with some of the views I have outlined we can revisit one of the examples from the previous section. I will extend the example slightly by providing additional elements:

Context: A conversation among three teachers regarding their mutual student Samuel

S: "Samuel is funny."

H1: "Yes, I love his humorous take on the assignments."

H2: "Don't forget how other students burst with laughter at his presence."

Notice how it is not the case that once (12) is situated in a context, it has determinate content and two different conversational participants understand it in the same way. From the responses given to S, there seems to be an agreement among participants. However the agreement, in this case, is not an indicator of content becoming fixed. After all, each participant understood "funny" in slightly differing ways, yet still managed to agree with one another. That is why I believe that the notion of having a range of acceptable is the best explanation we have. So in the most general sense, the contextualist thesis does not seem to be applying to this utterance. Now, in terms of specific arguments contextualists or relativists appeal to, I still do not believe that these arguments would be fruitful in shedding some light on this idea of acceptable range and open-endedness.

²¹ Regarding my particular labelling here, I need to emphasize that emotions, propositional attitudes as well as property attributions and taste-predicates are all included in "psychological states".

The arguments from varying standards across context and gradeability can be addressed together at this point. It appears as though they rely on similar assumptions regarding some kind of a propositional ellipsis. The idea is that evaluative expressions such (12) are not complete in the form they are uttered. So when an additional comparative proposition that expresses a relation or comparison, such as “for a 10 year old” or “compared to John” is added, then the content would become fixed. On the face of it, the more information one packs their expressions with²², the easier it gets to understand and evaluate that expression. Yet this does not always entail the content becoming determinate once additional information gets embedded in the expression or the proposition expressed by the very expression. Suppose that S uttered “Samuel is funny for a 10 year old” instead. I doubt that we are in a situation any better than the previous one in terms of determinacy. We still do not know how or in what sense he is funny precisely. Thus how the properties, associated with funniness, apply to Samuel is still open-ended.

Now, we may find this idea of ellipsis plausible in another sense. After all I began this chapter by grounding my discussion in the notion of different kinds of gaps. The way we communicate and speak is elliptical in nature. As Bach points out, “we generally speak loosely, omitting words that could have made what we meant more explicit and letting our audience fill in the gaps” (2000: 262). When this nature is considered, it must be the case we have evolved in such a way that allows us to intuitively fill these gaps, we have both with literal and non-literal content. Yet notice that such gaps can never be fully closed. Within the existing literature the view that really captures this feature of communication and language is *frames*.

²² Of course, not any information but relevant information.

CHAPTER 3

THE NOTION FRAMES AND DIFFERENT KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

I have started the previous chapter by exploring the gap between what is said and meant and ended it by briefly addressing the elliptical nature of ordinary discourse. Now, given these, I need to provide a plausible model of communication, which can truly give us some insights regarding how we achieve getting information across through speech and also understand what is said. Because, foremost, all of this discussion of open-endedness, the gap between what is said and meant, ellipsis and so on, can become persisting doubts as to whether we can really get information across, and share through communication. Even if such radical skeptical sentiments are left aside, I still need to give an account as to why communication can still be regarded as a process not solely governed by a set of pragmatic notions i.e. intentions, or the processes that pragmaticists rely on, such as free enrichment.

Before I proceed with illustrating how we can regard the process of understanding and interpretation to be governed by our linguistic knowledge, I need to clarify my position. One of the prominent aims of Lepore and Stone's, in *Imagination and Convention*, was to show us that many instances of language, understood as conversational implicatures, were actually equally explicable through conventions and imagination. In fact, in many cases they believed that such instances were purely a matter of linguistic conventions. Recall how their central thesis was revolving around the notion of predictability

and systematicity. They insist that the prominent way to ensure these conditions is by putting a great weight on linguistic conventions and replacing the Gricean notion of conversational implicatures by a nuanced account of language. On the other hand, my motivation for aiming to provide a linguistic account of communication is to show how the radical picture, I have presented in the previous chapter, does not have to lead us into extreme conclusions regarding indeterminacy. I believe that some of the fine lines in their theory, as well as in some traditional theories of language, need to be either loosened or redrawn.

3.1 Ellipsis and Open-Endedness

In order to give a response to potential criticisms my view can face, I want to return back to square one and illustrate why it would not be plausible to extend the notion of open-endedness to any utterance in language.

(16) Ludwig collects red stones for his collection.

The expressions above has a perfectly determinate content. We can understand it without being supplied with any additional information regarding context, the psychology of the speaker, their intentions and so on. As the meaning of the constituent parts of (16) and the compositionality principle itself would be sufficient on their own for us to understand it.

However, there might be worries regarding a few different aspects of this expression. Firstly, one may be inclined to undermine the alleged determinacy of (16) by claiming that we cannot know what kind of stones or what kind of a collection the speaker is talking about. Also there are many ways of collecting objects. For instance, we cannot immediately know whether Ludwig collects stones by going to mineral shows and buying from vendors there or he goes to the beach and picks them up from the ground. I do not believe that this first worry, is showing us that (16) is an open-ended expression or the speaker did not provide enough information for us to understand it immediately. The mode in which the subject collects stones or what kind of stones these are (not in

terms of colour but perhaps in terms of some other characteristic they have such as shape, texture and so on) or what kind of a collection is at stake is not relevant to the meaning of this expression. Neither it is to our understanding. Because what we understand is that these red stones make their way into Ludwig's collection. Him buying the stones, or picking them himself makes no difference on the outcome. The situation is not any different for the alleged lack of information regarding stones and the collection. Of course, with additional phrases or adjectives, (16) could become a sentence that delivers much more detailed information. Yet these details do not supply anything new to the sentence.

To elaborate more on relevance, there is information that is essential for us to understand what is said and there is also information that provides additional level of specification to our understanding. In this example, the hearer understands that there are some salient stones that are collectable, such as aventurine, carnelian, jasper etc. Considering hyponymic relations (specification of the types), if the particular name of the stones were given in (16), hearer's understanding of it would only get more specified, but not change. I do not regard this kind of specification as being relevant to our understanding, for this case. On the other hand, one might question, how are we to understand if Ludwig collects kidney stones or carnelians? Now, this would create a massive shift in our understanding of the whole sentence. However this alternative understanding is not posing any threat to determinacy of (16). A competent speaker's linguistic knowledge allows them to have good conception of lexical relations. The hypernym of kidney stones would not be stones, whereas that of carnelian would be. A competent and cooperative speaker would be aware of this. Therefore, such an absurd alternative should not lead us into considering (16) to be an open-ended expression.

Second worry concerns the meaning of "red". This word can be understood in different ways. Coral, vermillion or burgundy are all shades of red and they clearly look different than one another. Regardless of this fact though, we still can refer to all of these shades as "red". So until this point, it does not seem that

we have a strong indication of open-endedness. In fact, as pointed out previously, this is really the natural organisation of language. However this worry can get quite interesting. Assume that upon hearing (16) you give Ludwig a red stone you found. He might politely refuse to take it and say “I collect red stones only.” How could it be possible that you and Ludwig understand red differently, if this word has a single determinate meaning? I believe that there are few different aspects of this situation to consider. Ludwig must actually be collecting stones that are a specific shade of red. The speaker who uttered (16) fails to get this information across.²³ However he still says something true. Now on the other hand, Ludwig, who is so attentive about the colour, is probably not that attentive with his use of language. Either he is not a very competent user of English, (I am postulating this with the assumption that he can tell the difference between different tones of red but does not have enough knowledge of the words corresponding to those tones, to use it) or he has some issues with his social competence. (He is being uncooperative or unfriendly). If he were to respond to your offer, by saying “I only collect vermillion coloured stones” then this problem would no longer persist. Thus neither “red” nor “collect” is open-ended.

Now, I want to address a worry similar to the one concerning the meaning of “collect”. Consider the following expression, which I am borrowing from Searle:²⁴

(17) I opened the door.

Those who are suspicious about how much a sentence can deliver meaning semantically, without the aid of pragmatic processes, would argue that the verb “to open” can be used in different senses. For this reason, we cannot really understand in what sense the door is opened in (17) as many things, i.e. eyes, doors, wounds, books etc., aside from doors can be opened. (Searle, 1983: 147).

²³ Yet this is not an indication of social or linguistic competence by any means. The speaker just does not over-specify the colour.

²⁴ A very similar example has been used by Searle, both in *Intentionality* and *The Rediscovery of the Mind*.

This example is different than (16) because the different ways of collecting do not cause any difference in the direct object of the verb.²⁵ The different understandings also would not cause a shift in the meaning of the expression. Whereas in (17), if we understand the door to be opened as a wound or book would be, then there is a change in the direct object of the verb “open” and the speaker actually would be failing in reporting this change.

However, I believe that, for most of the situations a speaker utters (17), that expression itself would be sufficient for the hearer to understand the manner in which the door was opened. The speaker does not have to make the sense of the verb explicit, by providing any additional phrases because it is pretty explicit already, because we assume a certain frame. I will elaborate on this idea in the next section. For now, it is crucial to notice that we do not need context. If we look at this sentence in isolation, we would still understand how door was opened. I believe that as ordinary speakers we have a good conception of how things are in the world, how doors are opened in a manner different than how wounds are opened.

Nevertheless, idiosyncratic experiences exist. A peculiar situation may require a door to be really opened, as a wound would be. Assume that you have a double-pane glass door at home and your little niece somehow managed to push a tiny toy into the door. In reporting what happened next, you would not just say that “the technician opened to door” you would rather say “the technician opened the door by making an incision with a glass-cutter.”

This example illustrates two important features of how we talk: omissions²⁶ exist in language because of the preliminary information we all have. And hearers have access to the propositions or additional information that are omitted from the sentence itself, by virtue of a very fundamental, basic knowledge they have, about the world and how things are in it. Now, this second point may appear to be supporting some pragmatic views. For instance in his discussion of this example Searle states that: “The literal utterance of the

²⁵ Stones remain intact and they are added to the collection.

²⁶ Perhaps better to say, what some consider to be omissions.

sentence ‘Open the door’ requires for its understanding more than the semantic content of the component expressions and the rules for their combination into sentences” (Searle, 1983: 146). I actually agree with Searle, in a very precise sense: truth-theoretic semantics, on its own, is really not helpful for us to understand these additional pieces of information. The problem seems to be caused not by truth-theoretic semantics’ deficiency in accounting for such information. But I believe that it is rather the case that such information is regarded as being additional, in the first place, because of truth-theoretic semantics. I believe that such information, at word level, should be regarded as being already embedded in language.

3.2 Fillmore’s Notion of Frames

Many pieces of information that seem like small details actually play a very big role in the process of understanding. And it is not always us, speakers, who deploy our words with such additional information²⁷ but it is the words themselves, which already contain such additional information. This is not a novel idea of course, and it is best explained through Fillmore’s notion of *frames*.

I feel inclined to give this brief disclaimer before I begin my discussion. Fillmore was a linguist and, in terms of its style, his work can be regarded as a part of linguistics tradition. Especially the articles I will use in this section have a more empirical approach than argumentative. Therefore, the way I explain and use his notion of frames is mostly my own reconstruction of his theory.

The notion of frames is used in many different areas from economics to cognitive science. Parallelisms between these uses, especially in terms of how frames are regarded as being organisers of experiences, are discernible. Fillmore, being one of the prominent precursors of this notion, regards frames to be not only organizers of experience but also “tools for the description and explanation of lexical and grammatical meaning” (Fillmore, 1985: 232). Thus,

²⁷ Of course, I am excluding some instances such as speech acts.

being a continuation (or even extension) of his case grammar (1968), the notion of frames play a fundamental role for Fillmore's understanding of semantics. The best way to understand these abstract entities is looking into how language is organized in non-linguistic ways.²⁸ Take your early education of language, for instance. Your teacher did not just throw random words at you with their meanings, but rather they presented you groups of words together, such as days of the week, colours, members of family, food and so on. These groups are frames. What brings words together, under one particular frame, is experiences. Or, perhaps, it is better to say that individual words belong to frames because "they are lexical representatives of some single coherent schematization of experience or knowledge" (Fillmore, 1985: 223).

Fillmore has a distinction between what refers to as *interactional frames* and *conceptual frames* (1976: 25). I understand the distinction simply in terms of cognitive/psychological and linguistic. So essentially frames play these two roles. When I say something, you have a way of conceptualising or reconceptualising your ways of seeing with the aid of this framing and then you also understand, semantically, what the message was. So the framing helps you not only in the conceptual work, which is the psychological way of looking at this, but it also helps you understand what I am saying. There is no need to maintain this distinction because in practice interactional and conceptual frames interact with each other.

Now, as far as the linguistic notion of frames is concerned, we have here interesting connections, perhaps a very close connection, to the theory of presupposition. However, frames are a rich notion, that are distinct from belief or the proposition that a speaker assumes for the sake of argument in the conversation. They make us understand what the speaker had in mind when making both metaphorical and literal assertions. And this is given to us not simply by our figuring out of what is going on in the conversation, but rather by the choice of words. The particular lexical choices are responsible for our understanding of an utterance or a conversation.

²⁸ When postulating this, what I mean by linguistic organisation is those grammatical groups such as verbs, adjectives, clauses and so forth.

For instance, the lexical presupposition triggered by “I opened the door” would be “the door was closed”. Yet the frame triggered²⁹ by the verb “open” and its direct object “door”, from this exact expression, would enable us to understand much more than this. It provides access to a richer and much more complex knowledge about the world, the particular situation etc. So we would understand that the instrument used for the act of opening must be a doorknob, door handle or a key.

It is worth considering that the previous comparison is based on only one type of presupposition trigger, and it may not be the best representative of the theory of presuppositions. As Fillmore himself mentions, individual lexical items triggering presuppositions has not been a particularly appealing idea to many (1982, 135), especially in a philosophical framework.³⁰ Although, there are some disagreements over different types of triggers, Karttunen lists 31 kinds of it, starting with definite descriptions, factive verbs, implicative verbs and so forth (as cited in Levinson, 1983: 181-184). What unites many of these different triggers is the definitional criterion that there would be constancy under negation (Levinson, 1983: 184).³¹ To illustrate:

(18) During World War I, Ronald Reagan’s birth mother dropped/didn’t drop³² his analogue watch into the sound hole of the acoustic guitar. (Fillmore, 1985)

Here, we have the temporal clause presupposition trigger “during”, existential presupposition triggers with the possessive phrase “Ronald Reagan’s birth mother” and “his analogue watch” as well as with definite description of “the

²⁹ Fillmore uses a different terminology in his series of papers on frames: “evoking” and “invoking”, which relies on the distinction he maintained between cognitive and linguistic frames. However in terms of how they function, these can be gathered under the notion of “triggering”.

³⁰ Fillmore had his own contribution to the theory presuppositions, especially in terms of his analysis of *verbs of judging*. In his influential paper “Verbs of Judging” (1971), he shows that certain verbs such as “accuse”, “criticise”, “blame”, “scold” and so on, are presupposition triggers as they allow us associate some fundamental presuppositional information with these individual lexical items, as well as with perspectives of speakers. However this view also has often been criticised.

³¹ It is worth mentioning that, this criterion can be problematic for some specific cases. It can give rise to some logical contradictions. This point has been widely discussed in earlier papers on the issue, such as those by Russell and Strawson.

³² I am displaying the negation in the way Levinson does.

sound of hole of the acoustic guitar”. It is crucial to notice that these presupposition triggers have a fundamental role in evaluating the truth condition of the proposition expressed by (18).

In terms of frame triggers, (18) has “World War I”, “birth mother”, “analogue watch” and “acoustic guitar” (1985: 239). These would not help us in evaluating the truth condition of this sentence, at least not in the sense truth-theoretic semantics aims. However, these triggers give us a complete understanding of the expression at hand. (18) cannot be uttered by someone in 1919, because of the particular framing of these designated objects did not exist at that time. There wasn’t a contrast between an analogue watch and a digital watch before the digital one was invented, or the counting frame of World War I did not start before World War II took place (Fillmore, 1985: 239). Although frame triggers and presupposition triggers can overlap, they have two distinct linguistic functions. This difference is also captured by Fillmore comparative discussion of U-semantics and T-semantics (1985: 230-232).

3.3. Metaphor, Frames and Semantic Knowledge

So far, I have explored the notion of frames and briefly illustrated how it can be used to explain the knowledge we have by words in literal language. Now I want to shift my focus back on to metaphor. I believe that there is an interesting connection between Fillmore’s notion of lexical choices and the process of identifying metaphors.

To better understand this notion we can look at one of his famous examples (Fillmore, 1982: 121):

Though the details are a bit tricky, the two English words shore and coast (not differently translatable in many languages) seem to differ from each other in that while the shore is the boundary between land and water from the water’s point of view, the coast is the boundary between land and water from land’s point of view. A trip that took four hours ‘from shore to shore’ is a trip across a body of water; a trip that took four hours ‘from coast to coast’ is a trip across a land mass. ‘We will soon reach the coast’ is a natural way to say something about a journey on land; ‘we will soon reach the

shore' is a natural way to say something about a sea journey. Our conception of these nuances derive from our recognition of different ways in which the words schematize the world.

There is a crucial aspect of language to notice with this example. Although we rely on our linguistic competence to understand the difference between these two words, this difference is not at all captured by truth-theoretic semantics. According to truth-theoretic semantics if I say, as a sailor, "my ship is located 5 miles from the coast", I say something correct only maybe misleading. Whereas, according to Fillmore, if I say something like that, I have a problem with my semantic competence. I believe that we have a parallel case for metaphors.

Just as there is this difference between the use of "coast" and "shore", similarly there is a difference between the statement "Juliet is the sun" understood metaphorically and understood literally. This is because a statement, where Juliet is a proper name designating a person in the subject and the predicate expression is "is the sun", can never be uttered by someone who is talking about the sun, which we all know as the star. This would be uttered by someone who is attaching some kind of metaphorical meaning to the sun. You immediately recognize that just as you would immediately recognize, by virtue of your linguistic competence, that "we will soon reach the shore" is uttered by a person who is at the sea. Someone understanding "Juliet is the sun" as her being a star in the heavens is making the same kind of semantic error as the one who is talking about the coast, when they were in fact located in the sea.

Apart from the role frames play in metaphorical identification, they also can shed light on the process of interpretation. After all, these two processes cannot be separated from one another. Recall, the role of frame triggers in understanding literal content: They provide information regarding an experience, perspective, scene or any pattern that are not a part of the registered meaning of words constituting the expression at hand. This role is not different for the metaphorical content of ordinary metaphors. I will use the following comparison to illustrate:

(17) I opened the door.

(19) You opened your heart, I came home.³³

“Heart” and “home” in (19) are lexicalized metaphors, thus (to repeat once again) they are no longer active metaphors.³⁴ Yet the verb “open” has a metaphorical content, as you would not understand opening of the heart in the sense your vital organ would be opened by as a surgeon. Otherwise, to repeat once again, it would be a semantic error, on part of the hearer.

Notice that, the frames triggered by the verb “open” in (17) and (19) share some fundamental information regarding this act. The frame of opening, in any sense, would have an “agent liable to free the passage by means of action on the obstacle; an instrument serving to accomplish the action; and so on and so forth.[...] In the case of ‘opening a wound’, the inside is the interior of the wound, the outside is the exterior of the body, the moving object is the internal secretions of the wound, and so on” (Recanati, 2005: 187).³⁵ So one could interpret the metaphor in (19) as the subject and the speaker having an emotionally deep connection as a result of the subject leaving aside any kind of emotional obstacle (such as trust issues, fear and so forth). Of course, there is a range of acceptable interpretations but they would be all in accordance with one another, especially in terms of the subject, willingly, removing an obstacle and thereby providing entrance.

If we were to just understand constraints on metaphorical interpretation, in terms of dictionary meanings of words, then we would miss out an important aspect of it. In fact, as the registered meanings of words constitute only a

³³ This is originally a line from the lyrics of “Hey You” by Pink Floyd that I have edited.

³⁴ The relevant definitions of “heart” and “home” registered in the Oxford English Dictionary:
Heart: “The seat or repository of a person's inmost thoughts, feelings, inclinations, etc.: a person's inmost being; the depths of the soul; the soul, the spirit.”

Home: “A refuge, a sanctuary; a place or region to which one naturally belongs or where one feels at ease.”

³⁵ Recanati provides this analysis as a response an indexicalist would give. Also he takes these to be variables, which get assigned with contextual values. Thus uses it to make a completely different point.

portion of the information embedded in expressions, many turned to pragmatic accounts to explain metaphors. Yet the richness of frames, can be a plausible used to account for the variety of the interpretation of a single metaphorical expression, as well as constraints on it.

3.4 Social and Linguistic Knowledge

In the light of the rich notion of frames, and how it can contribute to our analysis of many instances of language (both literal and metaphorical), I want to finalize my critique of Lepore and Stone. They believe that for anything³⁶, that contributes to the understanding of a given utterance, to enter the conversational record (thus be public) it must be governed by linguistic conventions (2015: 264). Out of this criterion and an extensive analysis of many instances of communication, two main types of recategorisations emerged in *Imagination and Convention*. One showed us that those utterances, regarded as requiring inferential processes for understanding, could be actually understood by linguistic knowledge. And the other showed us that some alleged literal uses, such as hinting or suggesting, were actually understood by virtue of imaginative engagement.

As far as metaphors are concerned, we know that Lepore and Stone characterize the process of interpretation strictly in non-linguistic terms. They are committed to the view that there are *fixed* linguistic conventions and there are *loose* social conventions. So anything, such as general reasoning abilities, knowledge of the world and so forth, are regarded as being loose. In this sense Lepore and Stone would not be in favor of explaining the interpretive processes with our knowledge by frames. Firstly, it is because of the following complication: Although, frames are a part of our linguistic knowledge, it is not clear whether we use some of our more general reasoning abilities to uncover them. This particular problem is caused by coalescence of social knowledge and linguistic knowledge.

³⁶ Recall my criticism of the conversational record in Chapter I: We don't really know what is it that really gets on the record.

To elaborate, I want to use an example from Fillmore. Consider a grown man asking for pity in court because he is an orphan. From the linguistic meaning of the word we would know that an orphan is someone who has lost both of their parents. Fillmore states that “The category ORPHAN does not have ‘built into it’ any specification of age after which it is no longer relevant to speak of somebody as an orphan, because that understanding is a part of the background prototype” (1982: 118). So in this sense, this man is not saying anything wrong. However this case is odd, because this man is able to take care of himself, whereas this word would be used for those who would be unable to take care of themselves without their parents. So there is something more than our linguistic knowledge (at least understood strictly) that leads us into understanding this information. According to Fillmore: “It is that background information which determines the fact the word ORPHAN would not be appropriately used of such a boy, rather than information that is to be separately built into a description of the word’s meaning” (1982: 118). The background frame here contains a piece of information that could only be accessible to us by virtue of our social knowledge. Cases such as this one really undermine the isolation of linguistic knowledge.

So the main problem here is where to draw the line between social and linguistic. In Lepore and Stone’s theory, the line is a very fine one. When we consider everything we do with language and communication in general though, it does not seem plausible to have a line as strict as their theory requires.

The primacy of linguistic conventions and our knowledge of them, in Lepore and Stone’s theory cannot hold. Lepore and Stone characterize meaning in very strict terms, and assert that it “directly reports the speaker’s commitments and expectations in using an utterance” (2015: 216). As stated earlier, claiming that some utterances can simply be understood in terms of the knowledge we have by words, such as modal verbs for requests, is plausible. They illustrated that reliance on Gricean conversational implicatures can be replaced with our knowledge of word meanings, and this would give us a complete picture on how we get to understand those utterances. However, considering the diversity of the linguistic phenomena and examples they deal with in *Imagination and Convention*, the

explanation they want to rely on has many deficiencies in capturing how we really communicate. The question seems to be the following: Why did the primacy of meaning and linguistic knowledge create a deficient understanding of language and communication?

To begin with, we need to consider what would have made it successful. Lepore and Stone replaced many pragmatic principles that aimed at explaining issues, such as the gap between what is said and meant, either with conventions or with imagination. So for their account to be successful, it should have actually provided a more, if not equally, plausible explanation for such cases. Yet they did not do that. They presented an extensive semantic account for linguistic instances that relied on conventions and deprived those instances, characterized in terms of imaginative engagement, such as figurative and evocative uses, from a principled, linguistic knowledge based explanation. Consequently, they were unable to account for metaphors' communicatory role.

There were already many existing alternatives to this view that did not only recognized that communicating through figurative expressions was possible but also attempted to present some principles, which could be used to explain the mechanism governing such communicatory processes. In this respect, their notion of imagination did not successfully replace these views.

Now, in terms of their notion of convention, we are not in a better place either. If, as they claim, meaning and systematic linguistic rules were sufficient for us to understand anything, outside the scope of utterances requiring imaginative engagement, then we would not have faced the problem I pointed out in chapter two. Meaning of words such as "pleasing", "painful", "to hate" etc. was not sufficient for us to understand what was said.

Nevertheless, I believe that it is still possible to give primacy to linguistic knowledge, in a very specific sense, and provide a semantics-laden account of language and communication without mischaracterizing different instances of language or what such knowledge consists of. The deficiency of Lepore and

Stone's account is not caused by this primacy per se, but rather it is caused by a combination of different definitions, commitments and categorizations they have. I have already elaborated on some problems and suggested alternatives with the distinction between two types of metaphors and parallelism between open-endedness of metaphorical and literal content.

We need to extend the understanding of linguistic knowledge from registered meanings of words, and grammatical rules that are used to combine them, to all the information embedded in lexical items. Consequently, this requires us to acknowledge how social knowledge can be an essential part, a characteristic of meaning. On the face of it, it might appear as though Lepore and Stone's account had nothing against this point, as they also aimed at providing a somewhat broader definition for linguistic knowledge.³⁷ However it should not be forgotten that their definition has given crucial emphasis to predictability and systematicity and they believe that social knowledge did not have any of these.

Fillmore's frame-theoretical approach can fruitfully provide us with an account of such linguistic knowledge, which can be used for explaining many different instances within language and communication, but most importantly, I think, for explaining metaphors. Lepore and Stone cannot account for the role frames could be given to explain metaphors because recognizing the explanatory role frames can be deployed with requires recognition of metaphorical content. And Lepore and Stone's commitments and categorizations clearly violate this fundamental prerequisite.

³⁷ They characterized linguistic conventions in terms truth-conditional meaning, discourse relations, presupposition, and information structure (2015:88).

CONCLUSION

Metaphor guides our perception, gives us new insights and generates rich and creative effects. However, it also communicates propositions and carries information. The distinction between poetic/creative and ordinary metaphors captures these two separate roles of metaphorical content. Nevertheless, Davidsonian theories have been deficient in terms of capturing the latter role metaphors can have.

In this thesis, I focused on metaphors used in ordinary discourse and demonstrated that we can communicate with them, without violating linguistic conventions. Open-endedness of psychological state words, explored in chapter 2, is a prominent reason to reconsider the contrast drawn between literal and metaphorical content. Contrary to the Davidsonian view, there is a parallelism between these two types of content. However, this parallelism can lead one towards radical contextualist or skeptical arguments for explaining these instances. I am well aware that there are different ways of accepting open-endedness in a theory of language and communication, some more controversial than other. In this respect, I have deliberately chosen to characterize open-endedness in non-linguistic terms and claimed that the intrinsic imprecision of the discourse, about emotions, evaluations, property ascriptions and so on, is caused by the deficiency of our vocabulary. We just do not have a refined vocabulary to describe these states. And metaphors are concerned with these subject matters that, even in a perfect way, would be imprecise.

Yet this does not prevent us from communicating, sharing information, coordinating on this information and of course understanding what is said. It is just

that we do all of these communicative activities within a range. The Sternian notion of range of acceptable interpretations illustrates this point. In terms of interpretation, I claim that we don't interpret such expressions by virtue of our social knowledge containing intentions, general reasoning abilities and so on, but rather we do so by our linguistic knowledge. Our knowledge of individual lexical items restricts this range.

Frames are fruitful in terms of providing an explanation for the knowledge we have by words. They present a nuanced connection between our fundamental knowledge of the world, how things are, and individual lexical items, without strictly appealing to registered meanings of words. Considering the initial aims, in the development, of truth-theoretical semantics, it seems plausible to ground a theory of metaphors, as well as other types of open-endedness in ordinary discourse, in a version of semantics that actually aims at explaining communication. So it is not the case that Lepore and Stone only mischaracterized metaphors but rather, I believe, they mischaracterized some of the broader linguistic notions at play, in recovering content.

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