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Article

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SEMANTIC MEANING AND CONTENT: THE INTRACTABILITY OF METAPHOR

SUMMARY: Davidson argues that metaphorical sentences express no propositional contents other than the explicit literal contents they express. He offers a causal account, on the one hand, as an explanation of the supposed additional content of a metaphor in terms of the effects metaphors have on hearers, and on the other hand, as a reason for the non-propositional nature of the "something more" that a metaphor is alleged to mean. Davidson's account is meant to restrict the semantic notions of meaning, content, and truth, to literal sentences. I argue that the Davidsonian causal account does not satisfactorily account for metaphor's figurativeness, speakers' assertion and hearers' uptake of metaphor, and our discursive practices of using metaphors in disagreements and argumentation. I offer a non-compositional analysis of a semantic account of metaphor within which one can make sense of the applicability of the notions of meaning and content to metaphor. This analysis shows that metaphorical sentences have meanings other than, and in addition to, their literal meanings and what speakers can use them to mean.

KEYWORDS: metaphor, compositionality, Davidson, meaning, content, causal account.

1. INTRODUCTION

Semanticists who have worked on the semantic notions of meaning, content, truth and assertion have had to grapple with the phenomenon of figurative language in general and metaphor in particular. Some of them have engaged with the following questions: Do metaphorical sentences have contents other than, or in addition to, the literal contents they express? If metaphorical sentences have

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any such non-literal contents, are these contents propositional in nature? How do metaphorical sentences come to have such additional (propositional) contents? And, how do users of metaphors—speakers and hearers—associate, derive, or capture, these additional contents? An adequate semantic theory or a semantic account of our linguistic practices has to provide an answer to the above questions by either explaining away and dispensing with the issue of metaphor, that it is not amenable to the semantic notions properly understood, or that the semantic notions are not appropriately applicable to the phenomenon of metaphor, or that the senses in which the semantic notions are applicable to metaphor are different from those in which they are applicable to ordinary literal uses of language.

Let us consider an intuitive story of how the notions of meaning, content, and truth are indispensable to thinking about metaphor. In the sentence, "Gabriele is a crocodile—he is impulsive and angry, he changes like the wind", the first part of the sentence—"Gabriele is a crocodile"—is a metaphor;[1] and the second part—"he is impulsive and angry, he changes like the wind"—is considered variously as the content, meaning, interpretation, or paraphrase of the content of the metaphor. The metaphor is about a subject and a predication of a property to the subject, the predicate presents us with a description of the subject—it is an attribution of a particular property to the referent of the subject term of the metaphor. The metaphorical statement has a semantic value—it is true or false if the subject "fits" the description, or if it is the way in which it is being described. Taken literally then, the description is false (on the assumption that Gabriele is human and not a crocodile) but since the statement *is* a metaphor (or is being used as a metaphor), it is the second part of the remark—the paraphrase—which gives the interpretation of the property being attributed to Gabriele in literal terms that confers truth (or falsity) on the metaphor. That is, the metaphorical statement has truth value, and the truth value is derived from, and dependent upon, the truth or falsity of the corresponding interpretation or paraphrase of the metaphor. In this example then, the description of Gabriele as a crocodile is true if it is true that Gabriele is impulsive and angry and changes like the wind. This intuitive story is unpersuasive to Donald Davidson and other theorists who are sympathetic to his account of metaphorical meaning and content.

I discuss in this paper Davidson's treatment of the meaning and content of metaphorical sentences. Davidson maintains that metaphorical sentences express no propositional contents other than the explicit literal contents they express. He offers a causal account, on the one hand, as an explanation of the supposed additional content of a metaphor in terms of the effects metaphors have on hearers, and on the other hand, as a reason for the non-propositional nature of the "something more" that a metaphor is alleged to mean. In the analysis of the Davidsonian position, I will argue that what metaphors cause us to do, and the effects they

[1] Another way of talking about the sentence is to say that it is being used *as* a metaphor. The sentence itself could also be another figure of speech like irony or overstatement, or simply an insult, although both the linguistic and the non-linguistic contexts will disambiguate the particular use.

have on us, does not preclude their having contents that can be propositional in nature. I will point out two primary defects of the causal account proposed by Davidson: one, it combines the theses of literalism and compositionality to the analysis of metaphor and in so doing mischaracterizes metaphors as having only literal meanings;[2] and two, it presents a one-sided perspective on the use of metaphors in terms of the effects they have on hearers, and, thereby, fails to appreciate the value in the making of metaphors when hearers become speakers. The use of metaphors in disagreements, deductive and inductive arguments, and the possibility of retracting metaphorical utterances, making of inferences from metaphors—all these practices establish one crucial thing: contra Davidson, metaphors could have contents that are propositional in nature.

2. AGAINST PROPOSITIONAL CONTENTS OF METAPHORS

The causal theorist (Davidson, 1979; Rorty, 1979; 1987; 1989; Reimer, 2001; Lepore & Stone, 2010) is motivated to restrict the semantic notions of meaning and truth to the more familiar literal uses of language. She is averse to both revising her ontological commitments, and broadening the use of truth and meaning, to include, or apply to, metaphorical and other figurative uses of language. Literal uses of language can be evaluated for truth partly because there are generally accepted ways for fixing the contents and propositions expressed by literal sentences (or utterances), and partly because, unlike in the case of metaphorical sentences, literal truth conditions, usually, can be assigned to sentences irrespective of the particular contexts in which they are used. Every metaphorical claim or sentence, when construed literally, has a literal content or expresses a literal proposition. The causal theorist is of the view that the literal content or the proposition the metaphor literally expresses is the only content possessed or proposition expressed by a metaphor; the non-literal aspect of a metaphor is nothing propositional. This view implies that metaphors do not have propositional contents in addition to their literal contents, and hence, metaphorical sentences *qua* metaphors cannot be truth-evaluable. This presents a bit of a puzzle: on the one hand, in virtue of being a metaphor, a metaphorical sentence is meaningful and has a non-literal content, and yet the metaphor itself is non-truth-evaluable; and

[2] I have pointed out in a previous paper (Kwesi, 2018a) that the theses of literalism and compositionality are often linked with another thesis, representationalism, to support the view that the relevant criterion of truth is the capacity to represent states of affairs as they really are. For instance, Cooper, a defender of Davidson's view, has made these remarks: "The notion of truth, as we normally understand it, is used to appraise utterances in terms of what they achieve. A true statement is one which successfully achieves what statements generally aim to achieve—telling how things really are. To employ the notion of truth in the appraisal of metaphor, therefore, wrongly suggests that metaphors, too, have the dominant aim of getting us to see how things actually are" (1986, p. 250). I argued there that the combined theses of literalism and representationalism do not support the view that metaphors are not truth-evaluable.

on the other hand, a metaphor has or expresses only a literal proposition which makes the metaphor either literally true or false, and thereby, making the metaphor truth-evaluable. The causal theorist argues for the second part of the puzzle by showing that

i. the words of a metaphor have only literal meanings, and, therefore, the metaphorical sentences they compose only have literal meanings; and

ii. in light of (i), metaphorical sentences have literal truth conditions which makes most, if not all, metaphors patently or literally false.

For the first part of the puzzle, she supports her position by arguing that

iii. the supposed additional non-literal meaning or content of a metaphor is not propositional in nature;

iv. this non-propositional meaning of the metaphor is merely the effects metaphors have on their recipients; and

v. a metaphorical sentence does not have a single definite content or meaning; rather, it has many, and perhaps, an infinite number of contents.

Davidson's anti-truth account of metaphor gives expression to the tenets (i)—(v) above. Davidson's (1979) main claim (as he himself calls the "thesis" of his paper) is that "metaphor means what the words, in their most literal interpretation mean, and nothing more" (p. 30). This thesis is borne out of a commitment to two views about language: literalism and compositionality. Davidson's literalism acknowledges a distinction between the literal and metaphorical uses of language, but claims that sentences can only have ordinary literal meaning and truth, and that a distinction between the literal and the metaphorical does not entail that metaphorical sentences have "special" meaning and truth in addition to their literal senses and truth. What metaphors mean, and what their truth values are, are no different from their assessment from a literal point of view. In his commitment to compositionality, Davidson is of the view that the meaning of a sentence is determined from the meanings of the individual words that compose it. If a metaphor can only be explained by appealing to the literal meanings of the words that compose it, then for Davidson "sentences in which metaphors occur are true or false in a normal, literal way, for if the words in them don't have special meanings, sentences don't have special truth" (p. 39). Combining his literalist and compositionalist views, Davidson's claim is that the words of a metaphorical sentence have no special meanings other than their ordinary literal meanings, and hence the sentences they compose only have literal meanings.

In view of the fact that metaphorical sentences only have literal meanings and literal truth conditions, metaphorical sentences have no contents except the contents that they literally express. This is why most metaphors are literally false, if not absurd. That metaphors have no contents (except what they literally express)

implies that there is nothing else that is communicated or conveyed by the use of metaphor, nothing else propositional that can be grasped and evaluated as true or false. Davidson entreats us to give up "the idea that a metaphor carries a message, that it has a content or meaning (except, of course, its literal meaning)" and see the supposed content of metaphor as "something about the *effects* metaphors have on us" (p. 43). A metaphor can provoke thoughts and ideas in us, it can make us attend to some likeness and similarities between two things, it can cause us to notice something in a different way, but all these are effects metaphors have on us: metaphors "make us appreciate some fact—but not by standing for, or expressing, the fact" (p. 44). Davidson's denial of the cognitive claims of metaphor presents us with an account of metaphor that is causal in nature: it is a causal account in the sense that it explains metaphor both in terms of what it causes us to do and the effects it has on us. In this cause-effect view, metaphor has no content other than what it literally means and expresses, which is usually false or absurd; if we mistakenly think that there is an additional figurative or metaphorical content to a metaphor, it is merely because we are confusing effect with content. What metaphor directs our attention to, what it makes us see, cannot be propositional in character; for as Davidson exclaims: "seeing *as* is not seeing *that*" (p. 45). In this regard, Davidson likens metaphor to a joke or a dream or "a bump on the head"—these acts have effects on us by making us come to notice or observe some fact without their expressing those facts. Metaphors can lead one to see something as, but not that; they can intimate, nudge, or poke one to view something in a different way, but intimation is not the same as meaning; they can cause one to have certain beliefs, but they do not express those beliefs;[3] like jokes and bumps on the head, they can have effects on others, but such effects are not propositional elements that can be evaluated on the basis of semantical notions like meaning, truth and reference.

Davidson argues also that our inability to paraphrase or decide exactly what the content of a metaphor is, is not primarily because metaphors are non-paraphraseable, but because there is no content to be paraphrased or expressed. He thinks 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; we are merely focusing on the effects metaphor has on us. He writes:

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

[3] By causing us to form certain beliefs that such-and-such is the case, there is something "propositional" about metaphor, that is, the acquisition of propositional attitudes. But the Davidsonian contention is that the metaphorical sentence *itself* does not express the proposition that such-and-such is the case; the metaphor itself does not make a statement or communicate something that is propositional.

> is not propositional in character. When we try to say what a metaphor "means", we soon realize there is no end to what we want to mention. (1979, p. 44)

Davidson's line of thought has been expanded by Lepore & Stone (2010) in their thesis statement that "though metaphors can issue in distinctive cognitive and discourse effects, they do so *without* issuing in metaphorical meaning and truth, and so, *without* metaphorical communication" (p. 166). Like Davidson, they take a pragmatic view of metaphor as involving some sort of speaker intentions and not c o m m u n i c a t e d m e a n i n g. They argue that metaphor should be catalogued among practices such as "hinting, joking, trash-talking, flirting, and flattering" (p. 166). By joking, one aims to cause certain effects in one's audience rather than to assert something that can be appraised for truth. And metaphor is no different from jokes. An interlocutor may use a metaphor with the intention that his hearers see a particular point but this point "is not a property of the metaphor itself" (p. 173). Lepore and Stone contend that "interlocutors use their metaphorical discourse not to assert and deny propositions, but to develop imagery and to pursue a shared understanding" and that "such practices can account for our interactions in using metaphor, without appealing to metaphorical meaning or metaphorical truth" (p. 177). In effect, they argue for distinguishing "metaphorical thinking—developing imagery, seeing one thing as another, noticing similarities—from merely grasping a proposition, namely the one that is speaker meant, brought about through an intention to present information through coordination or intention recognition" (p. 178).

For Richard Rorty, Davidson's causal account enables us to see the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical not as two sorts of meaning or truth but a distinction between "familiar and unfamiliar uses of noises and marks" (1989, p. 17). The literal is the regular and familiar uses of language that are marked by predictability and a generally accepted procedure for determining meaning and truth. The metaphorical, Rorty thinks, is an unfamiliar noise—a use of familiar words in unfamiliar ways. As an unfamiliar noise, metaphor has no fixed place in the language game. Uttering a metaphorical sentence is not to say something true or false; it is not to say something that has a meaning. Rather, uttering a metaphor only produces an effect in one's audience and causes them to have certain beliefs or act in certain ways. In one characterization of metaphor, Rorty has this to say:

> Tossing a metaphor into a conversation is like suddenly breaking off the conversation long enough to make a face, or pulling a photograph out of your pocket and displaying it, or pointing at a feature of the surroundings, or slapping your interlocutor's face, or kissing him. Tossing a metaphor into a text is like using italics, or illustrations, or odd punctuation or formats. All these are ways of *producing effects* on your interlocutor or your reader, but not ways of conveying a message. To none of these is it appropriate to respond with "What exactly are you trying to say?" If one had wanted to say something—if one had wanted to utter a sentence with a meaning—one would presumably have done so. (1989, p. 18, italics mine)

In another characterization, Rorty likens metaphor to thunderclaps and birdsong to make the same point. A novel metaphor is like the noises of a bird we are not acquainted with. The noise c a u s e s us to believe that there is, for instance, a quetzal in the forest. But the noise itself does not convey the information nor express the fact that there is a quetzal in the forest. In the same way, a metaphor causes us to change our beliefs and desires without representing or expressing any facts of the world. According to Rorty, we should see metaphor in its functions as

> causes of our ability to do lots of other things—e.g., be more sophisticated and interesting people, emancipate ourselves from tradition, transvaluate our values, gain or lose religious faith—without having to interpret these latter abilities as functions of increased cognitive ability. (1987, p. 284–285)

Rorty, therefore, allows metaphors to have functions, that is, to be causes of beliefs, just as Davidson endows metaphor with the ability to direct our attention to notice similarities between things. Yet, these functions of metaphor are not to be interpreted as conveying any message that will add to our knowledge.

Both Rorty and Davidson rely on a distinction between "cause of belief" and "justification of belief" (or "reason for belief") and argue that it is a conflation of this distinction that seems to give some credence to the cognitive claims of metaphor. As it pertains in sensory observations of birdsong and other unfamiliar noises, we can draw a distinction between the unfamiliar noise as a stimulus to knowledge and the claim that it conveyed that knowledge. The noise is merely a stimulus to knowledge or a cause of the belief that there is a bird in the forest, but it is not a reason for, nor a justification of, the belief or information that there is a bird in the forest. What causes belief and knowledge is not necessarily that which expresses or conveys belief and knowledge. Metaphor as an unfamiliar noise belongs not to cognition but to stimulus. It has a place in a causal scheme of things, but it does not have in addition a place in a pattern of justification of beliefs. By confining the interpretation and meaning of metaphor to the literal and explaining away the supposed additional content of a metaphor in terms of the effects metaphors have on us, Davidson, Rorty, Lepore and Stone, and others, limit the semantic notions of truth, meaning and content to regular and literal uses of language.

3. Analysis and Critique of the Causal Account of Metaphorical Content

Davidson's account of metaphor has been discussed extensively in the literature, mostly in two main directions: there are those who criticize his literalist account and argue for the cognitive claims of metaphor, especially Black (1979; 1993), Goodman (1979), Leddy (1983), Hesse (1987; 1988), Farrell (1987), Moran (1989), Camp (2006a; 2006c; 2008), Johnson (2008), and most works in cognitive linguistics; and there are others who have defended his account, partic-

ularly, Davies (1982), Davies (1984), Rorty (1987; 1989), Cooper (1986), Reimer (2001), Lepore & Stone (2010; 2015). The critique of the Davidsonian account in the literature has primarily focused on showing that there is a cognitive dimension (Black, 1979) or a propositional dimension (Moran, 1989; Camp, 2006a; 2006b; 2008) to metaphor. This propositional aspect of a metaphor is usually derived from, or associated with, the intentions of the speaker—what the speaker means by uttering a metaphor (Searle, 1979).

The critique of the account I offer here is partly diagnostic, intended to reveal the ways in which the Davidsonian tenets (i)—(v) above are flawed and untenable; and it is partly prescriptive, meant to provide evidence that metaphorical sentences have propositional contents. The analysis pursued here is to show how Davidson's account does not adequately and satisfactorily deal with the issue of the meaning and content of metaphor. It is often regarded as implied by Davidson's account that once one accepts his central thesis that a metaphor has no additional meaning and truth-value other than its literal meaning and truth-value then one is committed to seeing metaphor only in terms of its functions—in terms of its causes and effects. However, the inference from literalism—"only literal meaning"—to a causal explanation—"only causal role"—is not a logically necessary one. It is possible to accept Davidson's central thesis without adducing a causal explanation for how metaphor works, and more importantly, without singling out a causal explanation as the only explanation one could give to metaphor. Similarly, the conclusion that metaphors have no propositional contents cannot be premised on the fact that metaphors have causes and effects on their users. It is possible to accept a causal explanation of how metaphors work—that is, that they cause us to acquire certain beliefs, that they direct our attention to see similarities between two things, etc.—and posit that they have propositional contents in addition to their causal role. In other words, that metaphors have causes and effects does not preclude their having propositional contents. Metaphors do have functions, they do cause us to do certain things, they have effects on us; but their having functions and effects is not a reason for, nor a limitation of, their capacity to be something else, or have something more—something propositional.

3.1. Metaphor and Compositionality

Davidson's ultimate position on metaphor is that metaphorical sentences have only literal meanings and hence only literal truth conditions. This position is as a result of combining his thesis of literalism—that the words of a metaphor have only literal meanings—with compositionality—that the meaning of a sentence is derived from the meanings of the individual words that compose it. That is, if the words of a metaphor have only literal meanings then metaphorical sentences have only literal meanings. However, this analysis is flawed: the mistake lies in the conjunction of the two theses—literalism plus compositionality—to generate the solution that metaphorical sentences have only literal meanings:

Literalism (L) + Compositionality (C) = Literal Meaning (LM)

To see the flaw, we have to take a critical look at the two principles of literalism and compositionality. Compositionality is regarded as one of the essential properties of language which is used to explain, among other things, our linguistic and cognitive abilities to learn a language by learning the meaning of a finite number of expressions and yet be able to produce and understand an infinite number of meaningful sentences (Davidson, 1967, 1984; Fodor & Lepore, 2002; Pagin & Westerstahl, 2010a; 2010b). On one definition, the principle of compositionality is the claim that "the meaning of a complex expression is determined by its structure and the meanings of its constituents" (Szabo, 2010, p. 255). This determination of the meaning of the complex expression is usually construed in functional terms; that is, "the meaning of the complex expression is a function of the meanings of its parts and the mode of composition by which it has been obtained from these parts" (Kracht, 2011, p. 57). Compositionality is a semantic phenomenon, for it determines the semantic value of a complex from the values of its constituents, thereby constraining the relevant factors involved in the determination of meaning. In a strict sense of compositionality, what is necessary and sufficient for determining the semantic value (meaning, content, denotation) of a complex expression is the semantic information and contribution derived from the parts of the complex expression and its mode of composition. This is akin to what Dever (2008) has called the "semantic closure" constraint of the principle of compositionality.

However, it has been questioned in various ways in the literature as to whether the meaning or content of a complex expression is determined purely from the semantic values of, or the semantic information provided by, its constituents and their mode of composition. This questioning arises out of the observation that the meaning or content of an expression is underdetermined by the semantic information provided by the parts of the expression, and that, there are certain constituents of the meaning of an expression that are provided purely on pragmatic grounds, usually by a process of "free pragmatic enrichment" (Carston, 1988; 2002; Recanati, 2004; Sperber & Wilson, 1995; Hall, 2009). The utterances of "I have had breakfast" and "It is raining" have their truth-evaluable contents <I have had breakfast *this morning*> and <It is raining *in Cape Town*> respectively, where the time (of breakfast) and the location (of rain) are freely pragmatically supplied by the context of the utterance. These additional constituents of the meaning or content of an expression are not traceable overtly or covertly to the encoded meanings of the parts of the expression; they are provided and constrained by purely pragmatic factors.[4] Generalizing from this observation, con-

[4] Some semanticists like Stanley (2000; 2002), and King & Stanley (2005) have argued that indexicality and other contextual factors can be traced to the logical form of the expressions which suggests that the so-called free pragmatic enrichments are constrained semantically. Lasersohn (2012) has argued that the context-sensitivity nature of most expressions and the fact that speakers rely on pragmatics to arrive at the contents of cer-

textualists and pragmatists argue that the intuitive meaning and content of an expression cannot be given solely by a compositional semantics.

Compositionality itself as a principle for the determination of the semantic value of a complex expression does not discriminate between literal and non-literal meaning even though it seems to presuppose literal meaning. All that is required for compositionality is that the meaning of the complex be a function of the meanings of its parts and their mode of composition. This does not imply that the kind of meaning[5] of the complex be determined from a function of its parts and the ways in which they are composed. That is, compositionality does not specify or stipulate that the meaning-type of the complex be derived from those of its units. The requirement that the meanings of complex expressions be literal because their units are literal is an additional constraint on the meaning of complex expressions. Up to this point we had noted that compositionality requires that the meaning of the complex expression is a function of both

(a) the meanings of its constituents, and

(b) their mode of composition.

Now, there is a further constraint on the meaning of complex expressions or sentences in general in relation to the parts that compose them:

(c) the kind of meaning (or the meaning-type) of the complex expression is a function of the meaning-types of its constituents.

This additional constraint (c) is what informs the literalism of Davidson's account of metaphor.

We should distinguish between two strands of literalism: word-literalism (L_w) and sentence-literalism (L_s). Davidson actually argued for word-literalism, indicating that words themselves do not have "extra" or non-literal meanings, and by extension, he argued for sentence-literalism through a compositional analysis. The fact that Davidson argued for word-literalism has been observed also by Farrell (1987) who shows that in his essay on metaphor, Davidson hardly treats metaphor at the sentential level; rather, he treats it at the level of word meaning. At the beginning of his paper where he states his main thesis, Davidson writes: "This paper is concerned with what metaphors mean, and its thesis is that metaphors mean what the *words*, in their most literal interpretation, mean, and nothing more" (1979, pp. 29–30, emphasis mine). He again writes that "my disagreement is with the explanation of how metaphor works its wonders. To anticipate: I depend on the distinction between what words mean and what they are

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tain expressions do not undermine, but are compatible with, the principle of compositionality.

[5] By "*kinds* of meaning" I mean meaning-types such as literal meaning, metaphorical meaning, symbolic meaning, etc.

used to do" (p. 31). And when he discusses and rejects other views on metaphor, Davidson has these things to say: "The idea, then, is that in metaphor certain words take on new, or what are often called "extended" meanings" (p. 32); "Perhaps, then, we can explain metaphor as a kind of ambiguity: in the context of a metaphor, certain words have either a new or an original meaning" (p. 32); "I have been making the point by contrasting learning a new use for an old word with using a word already understood" (p. 37). And after discussing a number of views, Davidson concludes:

> The argument so far has led to the conclusion that as much of metaphor as can be explained in terms of meaning may, and indeed must, be explained by appeal to the literal meanings of words. A consequence is that the sentences in which metaphors occur are true or false in a normal, literal way, for if the words in them don't have special meanings, sentences don't have special truth. (1979, p. 39)

As Farrell points out, Davidson's focus on the word instead of the sentence "serves his strategy in the article" for "he interprets his opponents to be making a claim that metaphorical meanings constitute an extra layer of *word* meanings, and consequently, that metaphor is analogous to ambiguity, in that a word may have two different meanings" (1987, p. 637).[6] So, Davidson inveighs against positing additional metaphorical or figurative meanings to the words that compose a metaphor and then argues that since the words do not have extra meanings other than what they mean literally, metaphorical sentences only have literal meanings. In doing so, Davidson rescues semantics from accounts based on extended word-meanings and also from the multiplicity of meaning and truth with respect to the words in a metaphor. Now, so long as we are dealing with the words of a metaphorical sentence, Davidson's account seems plausible.

A point of departure with Davidson here is that both his attack on the theories, and the theories he was attacking, miss one crucial point about metaphor: a metaphor is not necessarily a metaphor because a word has been used metaphorically or in an unfamiliar way. It is only when we take the word, be it the focal word of the metaphorical sentence, as the unit of analysis that we worry as to whether the word has an "extended" meaning or reference. Indeed, words in every sentence have no "extra" meanings other than what they mean literally, but their composition into sentences marks an important difference between figurative and literal sentences. That is, word-literalism does not imply sentence-literalism when the expressions in question have been construed metaphorically or figuratively. It is one thing to say that the words in a metaphor only have literal meanings and

[6] In Davidson's general theory of meaning, however, word and sentence meaning go hand in hand. For him, other than a semantic theory being compositional, it must also be interpretative, in the sense that it should be possible for the theory to be used to understand speakers and their linguistic behaviour. Since a theory of meaning is a theory of truth for Davidson, one constructs a systematic truth theory from both the meanings of the words and sentences of a language.

another thing to say that the metaphorical sentence has only a literal meaning or interpretation. One can endorse the claim that the words of a metaphor have no special, extra, non-literal meanings without further endorsing the claim that the metaphorical sentences composed out of the individual words have literal meanings. Idiomatic expressions are paradigmatic cases of counter-examples not only to compositionality in general but more particularly to the constraint (c) on the meanings of complex expressions or sentences in general which requires that the meaning-type of the constituents transfer to the meaning-type of the complex expression.

Idioms are generally considered to be expressions whose meanings are conventionalized in the sense that "their meaning or use can't be predicted, or at least entirely predicted, on the basis of a knowledge of the independent conventions that determine the use of their constituents when they appear in isolation from one another" (Nunberg, Sag, & Wasow, 1994, p. 492). An idiomatic expression defies the principle of compositionality in that the meaning of the idiomatic expression is not determined by a compositional function of the meanings of its constituents (Chomsky, 1965; 1980; Katz, 1973; Kracht, 2011).[7] The meanings of idiomatic expressions like "kick the bucket" and "take the bull by the horns" are not determined by the meanings of their component parts despite their having syntactic structures. Interestingly also, the words of these idiomatic expressions do not acquire extra meanings other than their literal meanings, but the idiomatic meanings of the expressions are not dependent on the literal meanings of the words even where their composition into a whole fails. That is, in spite of the fact that the parts do not compose into a whole in determining their idiomatic meanings, the idiomaticity of the expressions is not a function of the idiomaticity of the words that make them up.[8] In other words, if the constraint of the meaning of complex expressions (c) holds, then when the expressions are given idiomatic meanings this should result from the constituent words having idiomatic meanings (just as when they are interpreted literally, the words should have their literal meanings at play). But although the expressions have idiomatic meanings their constituent words do not acquire any extra meanings other than their literal

[7] Nunberg, Sag, & Wasow (1994) have shown that not all idiomatic expressions are non-compositional. They distinguish idiomatically combining expressions like "pull strings" whose meanings could be distributed among its parts, from idiomatic phrases like "kick the bucket" which do not distribute their meanings to their parts. My concern in the main is with idiomatic phrases.

[8] One could point out that this is so because idioms are lexicalized expressions that should be treated as single words. However, this view is unattractive. As Titone and Connine point out, "there is evidence showing that idioms possess a great deal of internal sematic structure. Idioms are modifiable with adjectives or relative clauses (e.g. "She did not spill any of those precious beans"), and parts of idioms may be quantified (e.g., "She didn't spill a single bean"), emphasized through topicalization (e.g., "She didn't spill the beans yesterday, but spilled them today") without disrupting comprehension or awareness of their idiomaticity" (Titone & Connine, 1999, p. 1659).

meanings, and hence, the constraint on the meaning of complex expressions (c) cannot be accurate.

The point here is that we can allow that the words that compose any figurative expression maintain their literal meanings, but this concession does not imply that figurative expressions only have literal meanings. This is because the analysis and interpretation of a figure of speech like an idiom starts rather at the phrasal or sentential level. An idiom obviously is different from a metaphor—a metaphorical expression can be live and novel in characterizing one thing in terms of another thing, while an idiom is a set phrase whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of the words that make it up, and whose usage is characteristic of a group of people. A significant difference between a metaphor and an idiom is that unlike an idiom, an understanding of the literal meanings of the words in a metaphor aids in the interpretation of the metaphor. However, the analysis and interpretation of metaphor takes a cue from idioms: a metaphorical sentence can have a meaning, a meaning other than what it literally means even though the words that compose the metaphor as Davidson has strongly argued only have literal meanings.[9] How does this cash out?

In any context of use, both metaphorical sentences and idiomatic expressions can be understood and interpreted literally. Compare the idiom "she kicked the bucket" to the metaphor "Gabriele is a crocodile." When we combine the literalist thesis with compositionality "she kicked the bucket" just means that she kicked the bucket, and similarly, "Gabriele is a crocodile" means that Gabriele is a crocodile. Construed figuratively, it seems okay to say that "she kicked the bucket" means that she is dead. Or perhaps, we should say that in an appropriate context, one utters "she kicked the bucket" to mean that she is dead. "That she is dead" becomes the content or the proposition asserted by the idiom-user. (This is quite different from the effect the idiom might have on an audience, if any.) If the sentence "she kicked the bucket" could mean both she kicked the bucket and she is dead then we can say that the sentence has two meanings depending on the use to which it is put: used literally, it has the meaning (LM) that she kicked the bucket, and used figuratively (as an idiomatic expression), it has the meaning (MM) that she is dead. The difference between LM and MM lies in the role

[9] It is possible for one to argue that idiomatic expressions are not necessarily breaches of compositionality, and that the cases of idioms neither affect nor make compositionality false. The rule of compositionality is meant to apply to non-idiomatic uses of language. This argument seems right. But the point here is not that the rule of compositionality is breached or made false by idiomatic expressions. The point rather is that idiomatic expressions, in being figurative expressions, do not require that their meanings imply that the words that make up the expressions also acquire figurative meanings. This suggests that the meaning of a figure of a speech does not imply that the words of that figure of speech have figurative meanings or applications. So, in the case of idioms, their meanings do not depend on the meanings of the words that compose them, and there is no further requirement that the words should have figurative meanings. This is the principle that I am claiming holds in the case of metaphors.

compositionality plays in the determination of the meaning of the sentence: whereas LM results from the meanings of the individual words of the sentence, MM does not; MM is not worked out from the meanings of the individual words of the figurative expression.

A similar situation is what obtains in metaphor. In terms of LM, "Gabriele is a crocodile" means that Gabriele is a crocodile, which might seem false or absurd. But understood figuratively, it can have the MM meaning that Gabriele is impulsive and angry. What is interesting about the metaphorical case is that the MM meaning, while it does not result out of the composite of the literal meanings of the words (for then we will have LM), is linked in a peculiar way to the words of the sentence, not in terms of literal meaning, but usually, in terms of certain cultural and idiosyncratic features or connotations associated with the words of the metaphor. These cultural, religious, moral, aesthetic and idiosyncratic features we associate with certain words and phrases are, in an important sense, not part of what we will ordinarily call the literal meaning. It is not part of the literal meaning of Gabriele being a crocodile that he is impulsive and angry. This suggests that a determination of the meaning of the metaphor from a composite of the literal meanings of the words will mischaracterize the expression as a metaphor. In both the idiomatic and metaphorical cases, the words of the expressions retain their usual literal meanings, but a compositional determination of their meanings misses the point of their figurativeness; that is, apprehending their LM meanings is just to take the expressions literally.

The idiom, "she kicked the bucket" means she is dead, period. However, if we understand both metaphors and idioms as figurative devices which defy the laws of compositionality and constraint (c) resulting in metaphorical and idiomatic expressions having MM as characterized above, then it seems that we cannot think of the MM of a metaphor as merely a paraphrase (or effect or insight) and that of an idiomatic expression as a meaning or proposition. It is true that there could be more than one interpretation or meaning we could come up with for a metaphorical sentence; but this will not yield different kinds of meanings. There are only the two kinds of meanings here—LM and MM—depending on whether the meanings are calculated based on compositionality or not. Just as a literal sentence could be ambiguous or have multiple meanings under LM, so a metaphorical sentence could have a variety of meanings under MM; the various meanings under MM are all possible meanings that are partly determined and constrained by the contexts and circumstances in which the metaphorical sentence is used. The distinction between LM and MM in terms of whether they are faithful to the principle of compositionality can be used to mark a difference between metaphors and ambiguous sentences. The different meanings of an ambiguous sentence are all determined by a compositional analysis of the literal meanings of the words where either the different lexical meanings of the words are used in the analysis (as for instance in the case of "he went to the bank") or that the compositional structure is permuted (as in the case of "he killed the man with an umbrella"). Metaphors are not ambiguous either lexically or structurally.

For the different meanings of a metaphor belong to MM which does not entertain the use of compositional analysis.

So, in agreement with Davidson, the words in a metaphor, like those of most figurative expressions, retain their ordinary meanings and significations, but unlike Davidson, the meaning of a metaphorical sentence is not computed from the literal meanings of the words that make it up. Metaphors and other figurative expressions defy the principle of compositionality. Since the principle of compositionality does not apply in the case of metaphors, it implies that metaphorical sentences, contra Davidson, do not have only literal meanings and should not be evaluated with literal truth conditions. Does this imply that metaphorical sentences have additional meanings other than their literal meanings? This will amount to similarly asking whether an idiomatic expression has an additional meaning other than its literal meaning. Is the meaning that she is dead an additional meaning of the idiomatic expression "to kick the bucket"? It is obvious that the idiomatic meaning of "she kicked the bucket" just *is* that she is dead, because the sentence has been construed figuratively or idiomatically. And as we have seen, this meaning is the MM that is not a resultant of the compositional analysis of the words of the sentence. This MM is not a meaning in addition to the LM of the sentence, since the sentence has been construed figuratively. In the same vein, construing the sentence "Juliet is the sun" literally and realizing that the sentence is false or absurd is not an indictment on the sentence when it is construed metaphorically. The MM of the metaphor is not a meaning extra or additional to its LM, as if they are derived from the same analysis. What exists here is a meaning difference in kind, which reflects a difference in construal of the sentence: a sentence construed literally employs a compositional analysis in determining what it means literally; that same sentence construed metaphorically or figuratively, adopts a non-compositional analysis in determining what it means non-literally.

In summary, we have three models for associating meaning and content with metaphors in relation to the literal:

Table 1

Model	Word	Progress	Sentences
Model 1	Literal meanings Metaphorical meanings	Compositionality →	Literal meanings Metaphorical meanings
Model 2	Literal meanings	Compositionality →	Literal meanings
Model 3	Literal meanings Literal meanings	Compositionality → Non-compositionality	Literal meanings Metaphorical meanings

The first model is the view that Davidson attacks which posits that metaphors trade on the ambiguity of words, that words have literal and metaphorical senses, and hence metaphorical sentences have two meanings (Beardsley, 1962; 1978; Goodman, 1968; 1979). This model ought to explain how words come to acquire metaphorical meanings and how they are composed to form metaphorical meanings of sentences. A major problem for this model is how it can satisfactorily explain the phenomenon of dead metaphors: as Davidson puts it, when the dead metaphor "he was burned up" was active, "we would have pictured fire in the eyes or smoke coming out of the ears" (1978, p. 38). Davidson's own view is the second model which posits that words have only literal meanings and the sentences they compose also have only literal meanings. But this view is not able to satisfactorily explain how one comes to fail to grasp the metaphor even though one understands its literal meaning; and as I will show below, the view is also not able to account for how two people can disagree over the proposition expressed by a metaphor even in situations where the literal meaning of the metaphor seems irrelevant to the disagreement or where the two parties can engage in disagreements even though they agree on the literal meaning of the metaphor.

The view I have tried to formulate above is the third model which grants that words in a sentence have only literal meanings, but the meanings of the sentences they constitute are either literal or metaphorical depending on whether the meanings are derived from a compositional analysis or not. The affinity of metaphors with idioms that I drew above suggests that the non-compositional transition from literal-word-meaning to metaphorical meaning is a matter of sentence, as opposed to speaker, meaning. Speaker-meaning is a viable alternative route that is non-compositional in nature, but this route need not make any pronouncement about the literal-metaphorical status of the words of a metaphor. The third model pursued here is an affirmation of the fact that the words of a metaphor do not acquire mythical or mysterious non-literal meanings. But more im-

portantly, one can use an idiom to speaker-mean (SM) something other than its LM or MM; SM is pragmatic meaning and it arises in the use of both literal and figurative expressions and in our linguistic practices in general. This means that for literal sentences, we can have LM and SM as in the case of implicatures; and for figurative expressions we can also have LM and SM, as for instance in the cases of understatements and ironies. But SM alone does not establish that figurative expressions like idioms have, in addition to LM, MM which is semantic meaning. The model pursued here is that in addition to SM and LM, metaphorical expressions have MM, and this semantic meaning can be different from, or similar to, although not necessarily derived from, the pragmatic speaker-meaning.

3.2. The problem of Many Contents

A possible objection to the analysis above is that there is a kind of *definiteness* associated with literal meaning and content such that even if we allow both metaphors and idioms to have MM, that of the idiom is definite and given. We cannot appropriately talk of *the* meaning or *the* content of a metaphor as we do with an idiomatic expression. If there is no definite content to a metaphor, this will suggest that it is not a genuine linguistic item that we should be concerned with associating it with meaning and content. However, this objection is not well motivated. The point of the "inexhaustibility" (Cohen, 1975) of the interpretation of metaphor cannot, and should not, be construed as a defect of metaphor. It should also not be construed as the yardstick for attributing content to metaphor. Inability to paraphrase a particular metaphor and/or the indeterminacy of the right kind of paraphrase for a metaphor, are not in themselves indicators of the absence of any content that the metaphor might have. Rather, the ability to paraphrase (most) metaphors into propositional form is an indication that metaphors have contents.

If a metaphor expresses two or more propositions or if it has more than one interpretation, or if it can be paraphrased into more than one sentence, then it is not a matter of its having no content but that it has "many contents". A denial of the content of metaphor rests on the flawed principle that many contents mean no content at all; it is like when you say too much, you end up not saying anything at all. Although a metaphor says too much, it at least says something. And it is because it says something that we are able to give at least one paraphrase of it.

The objection that many contents imply no genuine linguistic item loses its sway when we consider treatments of vagueness and borderline predicates in the literature where vague sentences are made truth-evaluable by such methods as supervaluationism (Fine, 1975; Keefe, 2000; 2008; Cobreros, 2008). Vagueness is considered a semantic phenomenon[10] (Keefe, 2008; Cobreros, 2008) resulting

[10] Williamson (1994) for instance, regards vagueness as an epistemic phenomenon by treating the proposition a vague sentence expresses as a borderline case which is either true or false, but we are ignorant of which value it is.

from semantic indecision in the sense that "nothing in the world, either in the use or in any other factor relevant to the determination of the meaning of a vague predicate, *decides* which of the ways in which we could make precise the predicate is correct" (Cobreros, 2008, p. 292). Vague sentences are therefore considered to be indeterminate; they are neither true nor false. However, a supervaluational model can be applied to a vague sentence to make it either (determinately) true or false by means of an admissible precisification whereby the sentence is made more precise. In this way, the vague sentence is true if and only if it is true on all ways of making it precise, and false if and only if it is false on all ways of making it precise, and neither true nor false otherwise (Fine, 1975; Keefe, 2000; 2008). The point of supervaluationism in relation to vagueness is to show how a vague sentence or a multiple-referring expression can be made truth-evaluable and be accorded a definite truth value. If we can provide a semantics for vague sentences, then, despite the differences between metaphors and vague sentences which there might be, the indefiniteness objection to metaphors cannot be used to deny its capacity to be appraised for truth. For, on a supervaluational operation on a metaphor, one can take a metaphor to be true or false on all admissible ways of precisifying it, where the precisification could be in the form of literalizing or paraphrasing the metaphor. The claim here is that metaphors, like vague sentences and borderline cases, have contents which admit of many possible precisifications/paraphrases; and just as the many contents a vague sentence may have do not preclude it from being appraised for truth, it cannot be correct that metaphors' having many contents implies that they are not genuine linguistic items that can be truth-evaluable.

3.3. Metaphor from the Perspective of the Metaphor-Maker

Besides the rather disparaging remark about metaphor as a noise, both Rorty and Davidson explain metaphor with respect to the effects it has on the hearer. While this may be true—that is, metaphors have certain effects on hearers—the explanation is one-sided and inadequate: on the one hand, it gives no explanation of metaphor from the speaker's perspective; and on the other hand, the explanation it gives cannot effectively be extended to the maker of a metaphor. How is the speaker to understand her metaphorical utterance if she is merely making an unfamiliar noise? What effect is metaphor to have on the maker of the metaphor? How is the metaphor to cause a change in beliefs and desires if it is to be construed as merely a noise from the speaker's perspective? Talk of the effects of metaphor seems accurate when we are considering the role of metaphor from the point of view of the audience or hearer, but it seems inappropriate to suggest that the metaphor also causes certain effects in the one making it. The causal account of metaphor fails to note that there can be both internal and external noises. External noises may have effects on us and cause us to do certain things or behave in certain ways; but internal noises are internally generated, and hence the effects the noises may have on others may not necessarily apply to the generator of the

noise. In the case of metaphor, the effects metaphor is seen to produce do not apply to the maker of the metaphor. Hence, an account of metaphor that only explains metaphor in terms of noises and effects on the part of the audience is an inadequate one.

It is one thing to say that a metaphor can cause one to entertain certain beliefs and propositions, and another thing to say that a metaphor is an outward expression of the beliefs and propositions one has (or is) entertained (or entertaining). We can agree with Davidson and Rorty (for the sake of argument), that the sorts of things that a metaphor may cause one to entertain are not propositional in nature, but this agreement does not imply that the metaphor itself cannot express a proposition that has been entertained by the maker of the metaphor. One cannot use the non-propositional character of the sort of things a hearer is caused to entertain to deny the propositional character of the metaphorical statement that the speaker of the metaphor may assert. What a metaphor may be "used to do", what a metaphor may "cause" one to do or entertain, and the "effect" of what a metaphor may have on anyone, do not offer an analysis of, and cannot be used to explain, what a metaphor *is*.[11] What a metaphor is—a statement or utterance borne out of the beliefs and propositions conceived and entertained by a speaker—and what a metaphor may "suggest" or "point out", are also separate issues. One has to be cautious not to conflate, first, the essence and work of metaphor, and second, the analysis of metaphor from the perspectives of the hearer and speaker. We can delineate the activities of the speaker and hearer of a metaphor from the "work" of the metaphor itself. "Nudging", "poking" and "directing of attention", a metaphor can do, but this work of the metaphor does not say anything about whether metaphors can be associated with the expression of propositional contents. If we are interested in what a metaphor can be used to do, and the causes and effects associated with a metaphor, the analysis can begin from the metaphor itself and the force it has on hearers. If we are interested in the meaning or interpretation of a metaphor, if we are poised to give paraphrases of a metaphor, we can attempt this from the perspective of the hearer by developing strategies and mechanisms the hearer could use, although in most cases, this cannot be done adequately independently of the intentions of the speaker. But we cannot use our conclusions about the causes and effects of a metaphor on the hearer to posit certain assumptions about the making of the metaphor or about the essence of the metaphor itself.

Let us suppose with Davidson and Rorty that we should understand metaphor as *seeing* one thing *as* another thing. From a causal account then, we can explain how a metaphor (or perhaps the metaphor-maker) causes the hearer to see one thing as another thing. But we cannot appropriately explain by the account that

[11] Here, the distinction is between the functions and effects of metaphor on the one hand, and the constitution of metaphor on the other hand. The functions and effects may be used to elucidate what metaphor is, but they cannot stand for what constitutes a metaphor. Similarly, the things a metaphor may cause a hearer to entertain can be distinct from the thing—a proposition, perhaps—a metaphor may assert.

the speaker or the metaphor-maker is caused to see one thing as another thing. In fact, the seeing-*as* experience happens prior to the causes and effects that take place. The metaphor-maker is not caused to see anything by the metaphor and neither does the metaphor have any effect on the metaphor-maker; the metaphor rather reflects what the metaphor-maker has already seen or experienced.[12] A metaphor is like "a bump on the head" Davidson says, but on whose head? It cannot be on the head of the metaphor-maker. A metaphor is like "a joke" but who is to get the joke? It is not about whether the joke is funny or not—a comedian gets his own joke as he is the one making it. A causal account cannot explain the making of novel metaphors even if it can explain the reception of novel metaphors. Thinking of metaphors in terms of effects leaves out the production of metaphors even if the metaphor-maker is using the metaphor to bring out certain effects in others. A cause-effect approach to the understanding of metaphor cannot extend to the making, conception, and evaluation of metaphor.[13]

What causes and effects could there be when the metaphor-maker uses a metaphor in a soliloquy? We can make sense of how a metaphor-maker may attempt to bring about certain effects in his audience, and perhaps, where there is no audience, the intended effect may not be successful or applicable. But this presents a problem in the case of soliloquies where the metaphor-maker is his own audience, that is, in this case, the metaphor-maker utters the metaphor to himself rather than to a perceived audience. In this case, it does not seem right to suppose that the metaphor-maker utters a metaphor to bring about some effects in him or to cause himself to see certain insights. The making of a metaphor is an intentional action and it is not clear how a metaphor-maker nudges himself into noticing things when he utters a metaphor to himself. The causal theorist could ex-

[12] An interesting way of making this point is to take seriously the *is* (identity) of the metaphorical "x is y". The seeing-as view conceives of metaphor as a figure of speech in which the *is* metamorphosis into an *as* so that when the metaphor says that "x is y", it can be understood as seeing x as y. But I as defend in Kwesi (2018b), in metaphor, the metamorphosis is reversed: seeing x *as* y, that is, perceiving or creating a resemblance between x and y, involves a transformative process that changes an *as* into an *is* so that the metaphorical assertion of "x *is* y" is a resultant of the transformative process. The "x is y" is an identity statement, a fusion of the x and y into a new reality. The metaphor-maker asserts that "x is y" not consequently to be caused to see x *as* y, but rather the assertion represents an antecedent seeing of x *as* y that has now transfigured into the claim that x *is* y.

[13] Davidson could respond to the criticism in this paragraph by saying that although the speaker is not caused to do anything, the speaker uses a metaphor with the primary intention of producing certain effects in his hearers. And hence, the making, conception, and evaluation of metaphor can be understood in terms of the intention to produce effects and the subsequent success or effectiveness of those effects on hearers. However, this response is not satisfactory: it merely shifts the locus of the criticism to the effects on hearers. And, as I go on to argue in the next paragraph, this primary intention to produce effects is not applicable in cases where the speaker is speaking to himself alone. In soliloquies, it is not only that the speaker is not caused to make a metaphor, he also does not use a metaphor with the intention of producing an effect in himself.

plain that the soliloquist uses a metaphor *as* if there was an audience and that the absence of an existing audience does not imply that there are no causes and effects of the metaphor; it only shows that these effects do not act on anyone, but would if there were indeed existing audiences. This explanation may seem plausible in a particular kind of soliloquy. We can distinguish between two senses of soliloquies: in the one sense, a speaker makes a speech to himself with an audience in mind like in the cases of practicing a speech one is to give at a later date or when an actor on stage gives a monologue; in the other sense, the speaker has no intended or perceived audiences other than himself as in the cases of thinking out loud or making a note to oneself. It is the second of these senses that causes a problem for the causal account. Where there is a perceived audience, the maker of the metaphor may have certain beliefs about how his metaphorical utterance will affect his audience or the various effects his utterance might have. But the causal account is not able to explain where these beliefs come from and how they are generated. Where there are invisible or perceived audiences, and where there are no audiences at all (perhaps, other than the speaker himself) from the speaker's perspective, the causal account cannot satisfactorily explain how speakers deliberately utter metaphors to themselves.

4. THE SOCIAL PRACTICES OF USING METAPHORS

There are certain features of our use of metaphor that give us good reason to assume that metaphor has meaning and content rather than mere effects on us. Our shared communal practice of employing similar metaphors in everyday discourse attests to the fact that there is a meaning that is grasped and shared by all. Rarely are live metaphors confined to individual speakers in a community. The same active metaphors may be used by a number of speakers or writers in a particular linguistic community. An effect-based approach to metaphor only assumes that one is dazzled upon hearing a metaphor, that one is directed to notice certain similarities between two things. But even if we grant that this is the only business of metaphor—directing one's attention to notice similarities—the ability of two or more people using the same metaphor to enable others to notice the same similarities presupposes that there is a meaning and content of the metaphor that is shared by them.

If Davidson is right that what many people refer to as the content of a metaphor is merely an effect metaphor has on hearers, how can we predict that the same or a similar effect can occur each time a particular metaphor is used? How is the hearer able to grasp a metaphor, exploit it, and use it to produce similar effects on others? How can we judge which effect is appropriate or inappropriate to have in each context of use of the metaphor? If someone is banged on the head but feels no pain, he has a deviant reaction, yet we don't criticize him. But if a hearer fails to get the point of a metaphor—treating it as only having literal content or getting the wrong metaphorical interpretation—then he is apt for criticism. Causal patterns only have deviant instances; and causal deviance doesn't

warrant censure. Since receipt of a metaphor can, on occasion, warrant censure, it is not merely a causal phenomenon. The censure or criticism that is associated with metaphors is even more salient with respect to the making of metaphors. A principal feature of metaphors that was highlighted primarily by rhetoricians is the aesthetic or ornamental value of metaphors: metaphors are useful for embellishing speeches. Hence, rhetoricians developed rules and guidelines for making apt and poetic metaphors that will make speech pleasant. Hackneyed and trite metaphors, and metaphors that involved obscene language were criticized for being unpleasant to the ear, and the makers of such metaphors were seen to lack the artistic skills of making figures of speech. If metaphors are like "bumps on the head" as Davidson argued, the criticisms associated with metaphors will not be applicable; indeed, talk of using metaphors to embellish speech or appreciating metaphors for their aesthetic value will be meaningless. To the extent that some metaphors can be appraised as live, vivid, insightful, astute, and to the extent that some metaphors can be criticized as being banal, pale, unimaginative, metaphors are not merely causal prods; for nudges and pokes and prods are not inherently praised or criticized.

If we can meaningfully talk about grasping or understanding a metaphor, what is it that we grasp and understand? The effect? The content? Isn't the ability to grasp a particular metaphor and effectively use that metaphor in other contexts with the expectation that others understand and utilize that metaphor an indication of something more than effects at play? If metaphor only has a point or if it merely intimates one to see something in a certain way, we cannot conclude from this that grasping the point of a metaphor or being nudged to perceive certain similarities will result in one using the same metaphor to put across the same point or to nudge others to perceive the same similarities. It is very mysterious how one becomes aware of the effect of an utterance on him and whether that was the intended effect of the utterance, and that in using the same utterance he will be bringing about the same effect. Also, if all there is to metaphor is the effects it has on one, it is not clear whether the effects include the ability to pass on the same metaphor to achieve similar effects in others. And similarly, an effect-based account of metaphor cannot explain one's ability to teach and explain metaphors to others, for in teaching and explicating metaphors to others we do not just indicate what the causes and effects of metaphors are. Sameness of the effects of the metaphor on two people cannot account for their ability to use the metaphor to produce the same or similar effects. Meanings are such things that are transferrable; effects are generally not.

The difference in the abilities of two people to use the same metaphor can be attributed to their understanding—grasp of meaning—of the metaphor. To be able to use a metaphor in multiple contexts, to be able to use a metaphor to intend to achieve a different effect, marks the presence of understanding of the metaphor, such an understanding involves both the grasp of meaning and the ability to use the metaphor (Kwesi, 2019b). Meaning is, therefore, at stake in

both the ability to use a metaphor and the inability to use a metaphor in situations where one is aware of the effect of the metaphor.

In practice, hearers rarely ask for the meaning or interpretation of metaphors they freshly encounter; yet, they work out the meaning of those metaphors and employ the same metaphors in their own discourses with the expectation that other hearers will be able to work out what the metaphors mean. The capacity to work out what a novel metaphor means, unaided by the metaphor-maker, involves, at the very least, a kind of reflective comprehension of the effects of the metaphor. Hearers can become users of certain metaphors not only because of their ability to appreciate the point of metaphors or the similarities they are directed to perceive, but, more importantly, because they can reflect on, and understand, the content of metaphors. This observation is common to both literal and metaphorical uses of language. The crude causal account cannot adequately explain how hearers of metaphors can be become effective users of metaphors.

Another crucial feature of our practices of using metaphors is our capacity to use metaphors in arguments and engage in drawing certain inferences and implications from metaphorical sentences (Kwesi, 2018a; 2019a; 2019b). Consider these two arguments from Martinich (1996, p. 431, 435):

(1). "My love is a red rose.

A red rose is beautiful, or sweet smelling, or highly valued…

Therefore, my love is beautiful, or sweet smelling, or highly valued…"[14]

(2). "No man is an island

Every island is separated from every other thing of its own kind, does not depend upon any other thing of its own kind for its existence or well-being, and is not diminished by the destruction of any other of its own kind; …

Therefore, no man is separated from every other thing of its own kind, does not depend upon any other thing of its own kind for its existence or well-being, and is not diminished by the destruction of any other of its own kind" (Martinich, 1996, p. 435).[15]

Martinich considers (1) a valid argument and (2) an invalid argument. We need not worry about the validity of the arguments containing metaphors; it is enough to see that metaphorical sentences can serve as premises in arguments;

[14] The ellipsis is intended to show the open-endedness of the metaphor

[15] Martinich, however, thinks that "no man is an island" is not a metaphor. For according to him, "every metaphorical proposition is false" (1996, p. 430) and "it is true and not false that no man is an island" (p. 435) although he concedes that Donne's line is a figure of speech. I regard it as a metaphor because I do not subscribe to the view that the identifying mark of a metaphor is literal falsity.

metaphorical sentences play a role in reasoning. As premises of arguments, they can serve as reasons and justifications for conclusions, and stand in need of reasons and justifications (Kwesi, 2019a). The observation that metaphors can serve as premises and conclusions of arguments and that we can draw inferences from the metaphors we put forward suggests that metaphors must have meanings and contents. In reasoning with metaphors, users and their audiences are able to make inferences from the metaphors and provide other statements (metaphorical and literal) that tend to extend and explicate further the meaning and import of the metaphors. Consider the popular Psalm 23 from the Bible:

> The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
>
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
>
> He leadeth me beside the still waters.
>
> He restoreth my soul:
>
> He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake.
>
> Yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
>
> I will fear no evil: for thou art with me,
>
> Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

What is going on here in the psalm is that the Psalmist starts with the metaphor "the lord is my shepherd" and provides inferences that we can draw from the metaphor: if the lord is my shepherd then I shall not want, he will lead me to green pastures, his rod and staff with comfort me, etc.[16] Tirrell (1989) has called this phenomenon the "extending of metaphor". "The Lord is my shepherd" in our example is for her the "initiating metaphor" and the other expressions as the "extensions" of the metaphor which together with the initiating metaphor form a "metaphorical network or chain". The Psalmist presents us with an inferential metaphorical network where we see that his not wanting and being led to green pastures follow from his initial metaphor that the lord is his shepherd. For Tirrell, understanding a metaphor amounts to being "able to make appropriate uses of its extensions" (p. 18). Sometimes, the metaphor-maker herself provides the various extensions of the metaphor which develop and explain the metaphor in more detail. An example Tirrell uses is from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* where Lady Capulet not only tells Juliet to "read o'er the volume of Young Paris' face" but extends her metaphor to provide better and further particulars of what is involved in this kind of reading:

[16] This does not suggest that the Psalmist himself is actually making these inferences and connections; it is enough for his audience and readers of the Bible to draw these connections as they ponder on the initial metaphor.

Read o'er the volume of Young Paris' face,

And find delight writ there with beauty's pen;

Examine every married lineament,

And see how one another lends content;

And what obscur'd in this fair volume lies

Find written in the margent of his eyes.

This precious book of love, this unbound lover,

To beautify him, only lacks a cover. (Act 1 Sc 3)

Tirrell herself stops short of saying that the extensions of the metaphor serve as unpacking the meaning and content of the metaphor; her interest is in showing how extended metaphors impact our understanding of metaphors. However controversial the relation between the original metaphor and its extensions could be, the possibility of providing extensions to a metaphor suggests that the original metaphor had a meaning and a content, for it does not sound intuitive to suggest that the effects of the metaphor were being extended. The meaning of a metaphor can be extended; its effects cannot be analogously extended.

A final feature about metaphor worth noting is that we can agree and disagree with, assent and dissent to, certain metaphorical utterances. Such agreements and disagreements reflect our understanding of metaphors—we cannot agree or disagree on a metaphor if we do not understand it. Also, if we can agree or disagree over a metaphorical sentence then it implies that the sentence has been recognized or identified as a metaphor, since a genuine disagreement cannot obtain between two people over a particular sentence if one construes the sentence metaphorically and the other understands it literally. The two people clearly agree about the statement as put forward literally, but disagreement only emerges when the sentence is considered metaphorically. For instance, where Tom asserts that "the vice-chancellor is a bulldozer" and Harry responds by saying that "No, that's not true", the use of "that" here refers to the proposition expressed by Tom's assertion. Harry's response here expresses his disagreement with the content of the assertion made by Tom.

If, as argued by Davidson and Reimer (2001), a metaphorical assertion like "the vice chancellor is a bulldozer" only has a literal content or expresses a literal proposition, Harry's response will be conversationally infelicitous or inappropriate. For, the metaphorical assertion is literally false and hence, responding to it by saying that "that's not true" or "that's false" is both inappropriate and uninformative. But if Harry is warranted in making his response, if he is understood to be denying the assertion made by Tom, and if his use of "that" refers to the proposition expressed by Tom's assertion, then it is plausible to suppose that there is a propositional content other than the literal content of Tom's assertion that Harry rejects here. The intuitive conflict in the dialogue between Tom and

Harry can be attributed to the content expressed by Tom's assertion that Harry disagrees with. In our practices of using metaphors we can have disagreements—disagreements not merely over the significance or effects of metaphors but the contents expressed by the metaphors. The notion of disagreement primarily involves an incompatibility in the attitudes of the disagreeing parties towards a particular proposition. And if disagreements can occur with metaphors then we can infer that metaphors must have contents for disagreements to be possible.

5. CONCLUSION

The above criticisms of the denial of the meaning and content of metaphors and the arguments we adduced in favour of metaphors having contents, suggest the following desiderata for a satisfactory account of metaphorical content:

1. *Non-compositionality*: The account should explain how the content of a metaphor is not arrived at by a compositional analysis, although, unlike that of an idiom, the content is connected to the meanings of the constituents that make it up.
2. *Figurativeness*: The account should explain the ways in which the metaphorical is distinct from the literal in terms of the derivation of their contents.
3. *Disagreement*: The account should be compatible with how there can be genuine disagreements involving metaphors.
4. *Assertion and Retraction*: The account should show speakers' ability to put forward claims and stand by those claims or retract earlier claims. It should also be able to explain how metaphors can serve as premises and conclusions of arguments.
5. *Inference and Extension:* The account should explain speakers' ability to make inferences from metaphorical claims and be able to extend and explicate original metaphors
6. *Use in Soliloquies*: The account should make sense of speakers' use of metaphors in monologues and in soliloquies where there are no intended audiences.
7. *Hearers' Uptake*: The account should be able to explain hearers' immediate understanding of metaphors and their ability to use the metaphors in other contexts to produce effects on their hearers.

We can conclude that the Davidsonian causal account of metaphor gets it right by arguing that the words in a metaphor do not have additional or extra meanings other than their literal meanings. The account also seems plausible in indicating that metaphor also "nudges", "provokes", and "intimates" us to do things in certain ways because they have effects on us. But for reasons given

above, the account is not favourable in its further thesis that metaphors having effects is opposed to their having content, meaning or truth. I have tried to show that one can accept the central thesis of the causal account of metaphor (when it is understood in terms of word-literalism) and still posit that metaphors have content and meaning. The fact that we can use/misuse metaphors, that we can understand/misunderstand metaphors, that we can agree/disagree with metaphors, and the fact that we do reason with metaphors in arguments and make inferences from metaphors—all go to show that associated with a metaphor is a propositional content that we can grasp and evaluate.

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