

Metaphor is a pervasive feature of language. We use metaphor to talk about the world in both familiar and innovative ways, and in contexts ranging from everyday conversation to literature and scientific theorizing. However, metaphor poses serious challenges for standard theories of meaning, because it seems to straddle so many important boundaries: between language and thought, between semantics and pragmatics, between rational communication and mere causal association.

As *pragmatic* theorists (e.g., Searle, Martinich) recognize, in speaking metaphorically we exploit the conventional meaning of the words uttered in order to undertake a speech act with a distinct propositional content. Whether an utterance is metaphorical at all, and if so, what its metaphorical content is, depend more on the speaker's intentions than on the conventional meaning of the words uttered. An account of metaphor must therefore uncover the psychological principles on which metaphor operates: what patterns of thought enable hearers to recover the speaker's intended content? What features of these patterns distinguish metaphor from other uses of language? However, existing pragmatic accounts fail to deliver substantive answers to their own questions. They also fail to account for the role of the *non*-propositional effects that metaphors can produce: we often use metaphor to make our hearers 'see' the topic under discussion 'in a new light', and to feel about it in a new way. Because pragmatic theories ignore these effects, they do an especially bad job of accounting for the power of rich, poetic metaphors. *Noncognitivist* theorists (e.g., Davidson, Reimer) focus on just these effects, but they wrongly deny that metaphors have any propositional content, and so they cannot account for conversational uses of metaphor.

In my dissertation, I develop a pragmatic theory that delivers a substantive account of the psychological principles on which metaphor operates. Where noncognitivists take 'seeing-as' to be the final *product* of metaphorical comprehension, I argue that it is the *means* by which speakers intend that their hearers recover their metaphorical, propositional content. However, any theory that invokes 'seeing-as' must be explicit about just what this notion amounts to. This is especially imperative given that talk of 'seeing-as' is itself metaphorical: Juliet is not visually presented to us when we 'see' her as the sun; and we cannot see life, even in our mind's eye, as "but a walking shadow." In chapter 2, I examine the perceptual phenomenon of seeing-as in order to elucidate its counterpart in thought. Crucially, when we see something in a new way, a concept or thought re-structures, and does not merely exist alongside, the perception itself. To make sense of the analogous phenomenon in thought, we thus need to identify an appropriate type of structured mental representation, and to determine how it too can be restructured. In chapter 3, I develop the notion of a *characterization* of an individual or kind. Characterizations are distinguished from concepts in at least three key respects: they include additional experiential and encyclopedic information; they include non-truth-conditional elements, such as emotions; and their elements vary in prominence and centrality. In chapter 4, I describe how an aspect, *F*, can re-structure one's characterization of an individual *a*, by highlighting features in *a*'s characterization that can be matched in certain ways to prominent or central features in *F*'s characterization.

In chapter 5, I put this account of aspectual thought to work on a theory of metaphorical communication. In particular, I show that my account can treat the full range of metaphors, from ‘ordinary’ to ‘poetic’. This single distinction is the product of at least four independent variables: a metaphor’s conversational weight, the ease with which its content can be accessed by other linguistic means, the resonance and novelty of the aspect it generates, and the speaker’s commitment to the aptness of the generating aspect itself. Attending to these variables allows us to understand why ordinary conversational metaphors are efficient vehicles for communicating determinate contents. It allows us to understand the open-endedness of rich, poetic metaphors. And it allows us to understand how these very different effects are manifestations of the same process of comprehension.

In chapter 6, I apply these lessons to the vexed question of whether metaphors can be paraphrased, and to the more general question of what metaphor can teach us about language and the mind generally. Metaphor brings our attention to patterns of thought which philosophers often ignore, but which play an important role in our everyday engagement with the world around us. Once we recognize the role these patterns of thought play in the comprehension of metaphor, we can see that they often play a role in literal communication as well.