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Metaphorical Utterances and Category Mistakes

Luke Malik¹

Introduction

Ofra Magidor (2009, 2013, 2017) has presented a number of arguments that purport to show that category mistakes are meaningful. Most recently, in 2017, she presented two arguments (among others) that she claims produce this conclusion. She bases her conclusions, for each of these arguments, on assumptions that posit an intimate relationship between category mistakes and metaphorical utterances. One argument is based on the non-cognitivist approach to metaphor. The second argument is based on the cognitivist approach to metaphor and it comes in three flavours based on the work of: Paul Grice (1989), Josef Stern (2000, 2006), and Francois Recanati (2001, 2004). In this paper, I would like to introduce the first (non-cognitivist) argument. It is fruitful to introduce this argument for the following reason: the argument assumes that some metaphorical utterances constitute category mistakes and it is this assumption that I wish to challenge. Since this assumption also seems to figure in Magidor's cognitivist arguments for category mistakes, there should be consequences for those arguments, too. Furthermore, I hope that we can learn more about the nature of the relationship between category mistakes and metaphor through our inquiry. Last, understanding the problems with Magidor's first argument suggests how it may be strengthened. However, this last project is not my concern here and will merely be mentioned in my concluding remarks.

The paper proceeds in the following manner: First, I provide a condition that looks like it is entailed by both category mistakes and metaphors. This is, therefore, a necessary condition on category mistakes. Part of its job is to rule out utterances we might confuse for category mistakes. The other part of its job is to allow us a position from which to blur the distinction between category mistakes and metaphorical utterances, as Magidor would have us do. Second, I introduce Magidor's argument based on Donald Davidson's non-cognitivist understanding of metaphor. I, then, present a number of considerations that seem to undermine Magidor's argument. The emphasis is on showing that: *there are no metaphorical utterances that are category mistakes and there are no category mistakes that are metaphorical utterances*. I end by suggesting that there is a way to strengthen Magidor's argument.

Category Mistakes

Definitions of category mistakes are rare. Authors usually rely upon shared intuitions and examples. So, for example, Magidor (2014) starts her monograph on category mistakes without providing a formal definition of a category mistake. She justifies this by arguing that even without a formal definition there is a lot that can be learned about these kinds of error. We are introduced to category mistakes in her work through examples which are meant to combine with our intuitions. Again, Gilbert Ryle (2009) who popularised the analytic use of category mistakes in his influential analysis of mental phenomena did not provide us with a formal definition but relied on examples and our intuitions to introduce them. Perhaps, the first thinker to talk of them directly at the beginning of the 20th century (though not by name), was Edmund Husserl (2001). He put them forward for phenomenological analysis, but provided no formal definition. In part, I will follow this line insofar as I will not attempt to give *sufficient* conditions for a category mistake and will start by providing a set of examples. However, following this, I will augment my examples with what I take to be a *necessary* condition for category mistakes.

First, then, let me introduce some examples:

- (1) Saturday is in bed (Ryle 1937)
- (2) Colourless green ideas sleep furiously (Chomsky 1957)
- (3) Relativity eats breakfast (Magidor 2009)

These are standard and well known examples of sentences that we may commonly call category mistakes and that, I hope, meet our intuitions.

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Second, let me next introduce the condition on category mistakes that I hope will augment these examples and our intuitions about them. As said, such a condition has the virtue of allowing us a reason to say that the use of an arbitrary sentence is not a category mistake should the need arise. The condition draws upon Nelson Goodman's (1976) notion of a schema. A schema, S , is a set of *related* predicates, F , G , H , etc. Each predicate denotes a set of objects which do not intersect (relativized to, at the least, time). Examples of schemata are the colour-schema; temperature-schemata (Celsius, Fahrenheit, etc.); height-schemata (centimetres and metres, feet and inches, etc.); and so on.²

Using this notion of schema, I think, the following is a necessary condition on category mistakes for a simple subject-predicate sentence:

(C) If “ A is F ” is a simple subject-predicate sentence and S is a schema, A is a subject term, and F is a predicate that belongs to S , and F' is any other predicate that belongs to S , and all terms refer in some possible worlds, then an utterance of ‘ A is F ’ involves a category mistake only if A denotes an object that fails to fall under F or F' for all substitutes of F' from S in all possible worlds.³

For short, I am going to refer to this condition as the schematic-trespass condition—this is because subject terms, like A above, seem to be associated with predicates of schema that they should not be associated with according to (C). The condition allows us to distinguish various sets of utterances which may look like category mistakes but which are not. Consider, for example, the following:

- (4) Water is mortal
- (5) Whales are fish
- (6) The Present Queen of France is 5ft 11inches
- (7) Square circles are blue
- (8) Joe is a monomeric-polymer

(4) looks like a category mistake, and, indeed, it is not ruled out by (C). (5) may look like a category mistake, but is ruled out by (C) since whales fall under predicates of the scheme to which the predicate ‘fish’ belongs—the scheme that classifies animals. (6) is not a category mistake because in some world it is true (that is we can imagine a context of use in which the terms of (6) refer). (7) is not a category mistake because it contains a subject term that doesn’t refer in any world. (8) is not a category mistake because it contains a predicate term that does not refer in any world.⁴

However, let us note, the condition does not distinguish utterances we might think are category mistakes *and* metaphorical. Consider:

- (9) Time crawls

This is a sentence that may look like a category mistake and it involves a schematic-trespass. Therefore, we cannot rule it out as a category mistake *by* (C). Obviously, (9) has a standard metaphorical use. Thus, we have an example of a sentence that looks like it will result in a category mistake yet is used to make metaphorical utterance. This brings us to Magidor’s argument for the meaningfulness of category mistakes, which relies on the coexistence of category mistakes with metaphorical utterances.

Magidor: The Non-Cognitivist Approach to Metaphor and Category Mistakes

² Cf. Pap, A. 1960.

³ Cf. Malik (2018, forthcoming). Alternative phrasing may exchange the expression “possible world(s)” with “possible context(s) of use”.

⁴ The schematic-trespass condition, (C), rules these sentences out matching my intuitions about what we want to characterise as a category mistakes. If your intuitions are different, the condition in question can be altered to meet them.

Magidor divides accounts of metaphor into cognitivist and non-cognitivist accounts. Non-cognitivist accounts claim that there are *no metaphorical meanings* and if an utterance that contains a metaphor has any meaning at all, *it is the literal meaning alone*. The view is attributed to Donald Davidson (1978). Magidor puts it like this:

According to non-cognitivism, originally proposed by Donald Davidson, while utterances of metaphors can certainly have a communicative purpose and produce various effects in hearers, these effects are not achieved via the expression of a metaphorical meaning. According to Davidson, the only content that is expressed by an utterance of a metaphor is its literal one, and it is grasp of this literal meaning or content that produces in hearers various metaphorical effects such as conjuring various associations or drawing attention to various likenesses (Magidor 2017: 67).

One way, then, to look upon Davidson's theory of metaphor is to see it as a single-meaning theory of metaphor as opposed to a double-meaning theory of metaphor. A single-meaning theory of metaphor associates one and only one meaning with a sentence that is used metaphorically: the literal meaning. A double-meaning theory of metaphor associates two meanings with a sentence that is used metaphorically: the literal meaning *and* the metaphorical meaning. Denying metaphorical meaning to the use of a sentence used for a metaphorical purpose, for Davidson, is to deny dual meanings to a sentence or the instance of its use. But, as Magidor rightly contends, this does not deny that that sentence or its use generates effects—associations and likenesses—that extend beyond the literal meaning of the sentence in question. Indeed, the literality that Davidson insists upon can be found in cognitivist approaches to metaphor—which rely on literal meaning to generate the types of effect mentioned. An example is Martinich (1984) who develops a distinctly Gricean approach to metaphor. So, for example, with an explicit nod to Davidson, Martinich emphasises that when moving from conventional sentence meaning to metaphorical utterance meaning, reference to literal meaning is a requisite. More recent contemporary cognitivists seem to reject both kinds of *philosophical* theory at certain levels. For example, such accounts may: (a) reject non-cognitivism by accepting *metaphorical* meanings; yet, (b) reject *classical philosophical* cognitivism for taking metaphorical meanings as *secondary meanings* (cf. Glucksberg 2008). However, it is not my intention to compare and contrast Davidson's theory in any more detail, here. Rather, it is Magidor's use of it that I wish to outline.

Once Magidor has introduced Davidson's theory, she *very* quickly concludes that the theory shows that category mistakes are meaningful:

The crucial point for current purposes is that on Davidson's view, what brings about the metaphorical effect is grasp of the literal meaning of the sentence. This entails that in order for a sentence to be used successfully as a metaphor, it must be literally meaningful. But this entails that metaphors which constitute category mistakes must also be literally meaningful, contrary to the meaningless view (Magidor 2017: 67).

To add more detail to Magidor's presentation, we might speak in the following terms: First of all, of course, it cannot be assumed that all utterances that are metaphorical are utterances that involve category mistakes. There are examples of utterances that express metaphors that do not involve any kind of category mistake—utterances that could be or could have been true (we will see some examples later). Second, it cannot follow that because utterances that express metaphors are literally meaningful that *all* sentences that contain category mistakes are meaningful. This does not follow on the grounds that some sentences that contain category mistakes are not metaphors. For example, as presented in Magidor (2009):

(10) Relativity eats breakfast.

She asks us not to take this sentence metaphorically. If this is possible, which it seems to be, this suggests that, indeed, there are sentences that may involve category mistakes but fail to be metaphorical.

On the other hand, there are non-obvious category mistakes, which are not easily diagnosed. These only meet with our attention after some kind of close analysis—for example, after we find that a paradox,

contradiction, or absurdity has emerged. Ryle (2009) turned his attention to this type of category mistake in his book *The Concept of Mind*. Whether or not Ryle was correct to think that statements like the following:

(11)Minds and bodies exist (Ryle 2009)

include latent category mistakes, I do not think it is implausible to think that non-obvious category mistakes do exist. In many cases, if not all, I presume that such mistakes are not obvious because we think of the sentences and the utterances that express them as possibly or actually true—(11) would be a case in point for many of us if it were actually a category mistake. In any case, I will take it that that not all category mistakes are metaphorical if any are and, hence, that not all category mistakes can be shown by Magidor's argument to be meaningful if any can.

To get back to Magidor's argument, Magidor says, “metaphors which constitute category mistakes must also be literally meaningful”. That suggests that Magidor thinks there are some sentences that are used to express metaphors that are also category mistakes. Taking all we've said on board, her argument might be reconstructed like this:

1. Utterances expressing metaphors are either false, true, or category mistakes.
2. Utterances expressing metaphors are literally meaningful.
3. Therefore, utterances that express metaphors that are neither false nor true are category mistakes and literally meaningful.

The assumption is that it is possible for utterances that express metaphors to contain category mistakes. I will dispute this assumption. It is argued here that if an utterance expresses a metaphor it *cannot* constitute a category mistake and vice versa. The set of utterances that are both metaphorical and category mistakes is, therefore, empty.

Thesis and Form of Argument

We want to show:

(Thesis) If an utterance expresses a metaphor, it *cannot* involve a category mistake; and if an utterance involves a category mistake, it *cannot* express a metaphor.

To judge whether the thesis can be held, it will be helpful to point to some differences between utterances that involve category mistakes and utterances that express metaphors. These differences must be differences that mean category mistakes and metaphorical utterances are, actually, mutually exclusive in respect of those differences. The form an argument needs to take in order to defend the thesis will look something like this:

1. Metaphors entail *F*
2. Category mistakes entail the negation of *F*
3. Therefore, metaphors entail the absence of category mistakes and vice versa.

Below a number of differences are examined to see if such an argument can be developed. This will ground the major claim of this article.

Attitudes

Consider the following three examples of metaphorical use from Davidson, Searle, and Martinich:

(12)Hemingway lost in Africa (Davidson 1978)
(13)Disraeli climbs the greasy pole (Searle 1981)
(14)She is a princess (Martinich 1984)

The first was a newspaper headline that expressed a metaphor but *became* true, according to Davidson.

The second expresses a metaphor but *could have been* true, according to John Searle. The last might be true *and* metaphorical *at the same time*, according to Martinich—he imagines Princess Grace talking about her daughter in that way. Martinich says that it is a struggle to think of examples like the aforementioned. Perhaps, though, this is a ubiquitous one:

(15) He is an animal.

In any case, what all this shows is that a sentence recognised as a metaphorical utterance need neither be necessarily false nor merely false. On the other hand, the aforementioned theorists claim that recognising or using a sentence to make a metaphorical utterance, does require one to *treat* it as if it were false. Turning now to category mistakes, while *recognising* that an utterance contains a category mistake requires, at the least, understanding that it is false, *making* a genuine category mistake does not—rather, speaking intuitively, it seems to me that making a genuine category mistake with a sentence requires treating that sentence as true. Thus, let S be a sentence that contains a schematic-trespass. If the intuition, aforementioned, is correct, then we can propose the following:

If a person, J , makes a category mistake by using S , then J is treating S as if it is true. If J uses S to say something metaphorically, then J is treating S as if it is false. If J cannot treat S as if it is both true *and* false at any given time, t , then when J uses S , J either makes a category mistake with S or says something metaphorically, but not both.

So, the question now becomes is it possible to treat a sentence as both true *and* false at a given time? And is this possible with sentences like S that contain schematic-trespasses that are related to making a category mistake and expressing metaphor? We can answer the first question in the affirmative, because we know that Hegelians and dialetheists treat some statements as true and false (e.g. Priest 1984). For example, for Priest the following sentence—known as a Liar sentence—will be both true *and* false:

(16)(16) is false.

If this sentence is true, then it is false; though if it is false, then it is true. We could assign an undefined value to (16) by allowing for a three-valued semantical analysis of that sentence (cf. Kripke 1975). The problem with that, however, is that it leads to similar outcomes for similar kinds of sentences, for example:

(17)(17) is false or undefined

If (17) is true, then it is false or undefined (i.e. not true); if (17) is false, then it is true (i.e. not false); if (17) is undefined, then it is true (i.e. defined) (cf. Rieger 2001). Based on similar lines of thought, Priest concludes this shows that (16) should be thought of as true *and* false. Priest takes the Liar as indicative of a broader class of sentence—those that just are true and false. Thus, we cannot provide a positive answer to the first question, which is what we would require in order to follow the form of our desired argument and draw a conclusion that would support the stated thesis.

The answer to the second question, I think, is not cut and dry. If it is negative, as I think it is, we will be able to say something like: It is not possible to *treat* what a sentence like S says as true *and* false when used to express a metaphor, rather *it must be treated as false*. Nor is it possible to *treat* what a sentence like S says as true *and* false when making a genuine category mistake, rather *it must be treated as true*. On that basis, attitudes to sentences are sufficient to distinguish metaphorical utterances from category mistakes in the way we want. However, if the answer to the second question above is even in part positive, we may seem to face difficulties. Consider the following sentence:

(18) Quadruplicity drinks procrastination (Russell 1940)

The perceived challenge may go like this:

1. So far as (18) is treated as if it is false, it is being used metaphorically

2. So far as (18) is treated as if it is true, it involves a category mistake
3. At a given time, t , (18) is treated as *both true and false*
4. Therefore, at t , (18) is used metaphorically *and* involves a category mistake.

The difficulty, I think, can be countered.

Acquiescing to Davidson, as Magidor would have us do, we may assume that: if we take (18) to be metaphorical, we will need to treat it as if it was false *but not true*—there is *nothing* in Davidson account of metaphor (or meaning) that suggests any other course of action. Then, we may modify the condition we set out above thus: let S be a sentence that contains a schematic-trespass. If, now, a person, J , makes a category mistake by using S , then J is treating S as if it is true, or true *and* false. If J uses S to say something metaphorically, then J is treating S as if it is false, or false *but not true*. Then:

- (a) If J cannot treat S as if it is both true *and* false at any given time, t , then when J uses S , J either makes a category mistake with S or says something metaphorically, but not both.
- (b) But, likewise, if J cannot treat S as if it is (i) both true *and* false, *and* (ii) false *but not true* at any given time, t , then when J uses S , J either makes a category mistake with S or says something metaphorically, but not both.

It is clear that even if the first claim (i.e. (a)) fails, the later claim (i.e. (b)) does not. Thus, *even if* (18) is treated as both true *and* false, *and* that involves a category mistake, we may still insist that category mistakes exclude metaphorical uses as metaphorical uses exclude category mistakes.⁵ It follows, then, that we have a reason to think that the thesis posted above is correct and Magidor's assumption is false.⁶

Phenomenology

Another reason to think that metaphorical utterances and utterances that contain category mistakes are different is phenomenological, that is, we experience each differently. We experience utterances when we understood them to be used metaphorically as meaningful or with clarity; but we experience utterances that are not used metaphorically, when we understand them to be category mistakes, as meaningless or with bafflement. Of course, we can assume with Ryle (2009) that there are non-obvious category mistakes, category errors we do not understand as errors. We can also assume the relevant uses are *not* taken metaphorically—for why would they be if we take them to be saying something that is merely literal and true. We may not experience these mistakes as meaningless or with bafflement, though, if we do, it is *not* because we understand them to be category mistakes. If so, so far as the use of a sentence S is taken to be either a metaphorical use or a use that culminates in a category mistake then: if S is understood metaphorically, it is experienced as meaningful or with clarity; if S is understood non-metaphorically, it is experienced as meaningless or found obscure. If S cannot be experienced as both meaningful/clear *and* meaningless/obscure, then S cannot be experienced as a metaphor *and* category mistake at the same time.

Perhaps, there is the possibility of supporting this thesis experimentally. First, for example, we may look at responses to metaphorical utterances and obvious category mistakes under controlled conditions, in order to establish a statistical difference. Second, if phenomenological meaning is embodied, as some authors contend, then there may be a real bodily difference between how metaphorical utterances are processed and how utterances that are understood as category mistakes are processed. Embodied-

⁵ I have to admit, it is difficult to think of conditions in which the antecedent conditions would prevail.

⁶ By way of clarification: All this is, of course, not to say that we cannot treat (18) as if it is false. For example, we may *suppose* it is false in order to derive a contradiction, etc. However, in this case we will not be making a category mistake. We may, further, *deny* the sentence is true, which may commit us to the truth of the negation of (18). In that case, I take it we *are* making a category mistakes, but it is a different category mistake from the one where (18) is taken to be true since, that is, it is a category mistake involving a different sentence (to wit. the negation of (18)). We might, as some have done for semantic reasons (Martin 1975; cf. Magidor 2009), treat (18) as if it is undefined; this, too, does not result in a category mistake—this may, however, beg the question against Magidor's argument, so it is best avoided.

phenomenology is, also, in principle, testable and, thus, the mooted difference verifiable (or falsifiable, as you like) (Cf. Gibbs, 2008)

Literal and Connotative Properties

Davidson thinks that metaphors necessarily make us attend to some likeness (Davidson 1978: 33). But he argues that metaphors and similes can be distinguished by the fact that metaphors are nearly always false but similes are *always* true (in the trivial sense that everything is like everything else under some aspect). We may add, a simile often helps to explain a metaphor (even when it is *merely* a perceived or conventional likeness). For example, consider:

- (19)Richard is a gorilla
- (20)Richard is like a gorilla

(19) is meant to suggest Richard is violent, aggressive, etc. But, according to Searle (1981) and Martinich (1984), gorillas are not *like* that. Still, (20) makes sense of (19) on the basis of a *perceived* or *conventional* association. We may try to capture this more fully in the following way:

- (21)Richard falls under some of the predicates (rightly or wrongly) that are often or conventionally associated with a gorilla

How about category mistakes? First of all, somewhat similarly to metaphorical utterances, category mistakes are necessarily false (if not meaningless), but any simile generated by a category mistake (see (23) below) is necessarily true. On the other hand, dissimilarly, such mistakes do not seem to direct us to some likeness. More to the point, I assume, similes and statements like (21) are no help in explaining more about the meaning of an utterance that involves a category mistake. So consider the following set of sentences:

- (22)Donald's idea is square
- (23)Donald's idea is like a square
- (24)Donald's idea falls under some of the predicates (rightly or wrongly) that are often or conventionally associated with a square

The sentences (23) and (24) won't help much in understanding (22) if (22) is being used in an attempt to make a *merely literal* and true statement about Donald's idea—which, as stated above, it seems a sentence that culminates in a non-obvious category mistake is attempting to do.

The difference between a metaphor and category mistake may, then, be presented in the following terms. Consider the term 'a square'. It has both a *merely* literal meaning as represented, in table.1, by its *essential properties* and, on the other hand, it has a set of stereotypical meanings as represented, in table.1, by its *connotations*. Now consider the sentence:

- (25)Milhous is a square

Table.1.

<i>... IS A SQUARE</i>	
ESSENTIAL PROPERTIES	<i>Connotations</i>
<i>A SHAPE WITH FOUR SIDES OF EQUAL LENGTH</i>	<i>Boring</i> <i>Conservative</i> <i>Lacking in difference</i> <i>Uniform</i>

We shall assume the sentence (25) is essentially *false*, for it is not possible for Milhous (assuming he is human) to be a (literal) square. We shall assume, next, even though, at the least, (25) is literally false, its metaphorical use tells us, as a kind of pragmatic imperative, to connect Milhous to some of the *connotative* terms but not to the *essential* meaning—or *prioritise* the former over the latter. We shall

further assume, even though (25) is literally false, a categorical use, again pragmatically, urges us to connect Milhous to the *essential* meanings and not to the *connotative* terms—or *prioritise* the former over the latter. Since the metaphorical use of (25) requires us to do something the categorical use of (25) prohibits and vice versa, and we can't do both at the same time, again, the presence of a metaphorical use of (25) should eliminate the categorical use, and the accompanying error, and vice versa.

This argument needn't be taken to show Davidson's general picture of metaphor is flawed. What we have said may be consistent with Davidson's approach to metaphor, for the *categorical* imperative may tell us to *stop* at the *literal meaning* or *prioritise* it (where the literal meaning = the essential meaning); the *metaphorical* imperative may tell us to *proceed* to, or prioritise, its *connotative* meanings, or associations and likenesses, *only after* recognition of the *literal sense*—since, perhaps, the former can only proceed after the latter. All this is consistent with Davidson's view and Magidor's presentation of it.

Failure and Success

Davidson says that a metaphor is never unsuccessful (Davidson 1978: 31). There are no metaphorical utterances that fail, there are just degrees of artistic success (Davidson 1978: 31). This is quite different for an assertion that involves a category mistake, for misuse is central to it; a category mistake is, after all, a *mistake*. So, we might say, *there are no category mistakes that succeed, there are just degrees of failure* (in that some category mistakes are obviously category mistakes but others are not so noticeable—which brings us nicely back into contact with Ryle's approach). We may build on this point in the following way. Let U = a metaphorical utterance and T = a category mistake. Suppose U and T share a sentential base, S , and suppose S contains a schematic-trespass. Then, it seems valid to say that U entails a schematic-trespass, and, likewise, it is valid to say T entails the same schematic-trespass. However, in the first case, the trespass *enables* communicative content; but, in the second case, the trespass *obscures* communicative content. It follows, given enabling communicative content and obfuscation of content exclude each other, that U excludes T as T excludes U . Thus, it follows, on a single occasion of use, the category mistake *or* the metaphorical use that is conveyed by S will take precedence at the expense of the other. Another way to make the point is that U has *success* conditions that amount to *failure* conditions for T contained in the *very structure of S*, where success entails the communication of content in virtue of the schematic-trespass, and failure entails the obfuscation of content just because of the schematic-trespass.

Conclusion

There are, then, sufficient reasons to think that category mistakes and metaphorical utterances are not only distinct, but the presence of a category mistake must exclude the presence of a metaphorical utterance, as the presence of a metaphorical utterance must exclude the presence of a category mistake, even if the two occurrences exploit the same sentential base.

Closing Remarks

But, perhaps, talking of a sentential base suggests there is another argument in the vicinity favourable to Magidor's conclusions. Again, let U = a metaphorical utterance and T = a category mistake. Suppose U and T share a sentential base, S , and suppose S contains a schematic-trespass. This implies that U entails a schematic-trespass, and that T entails the same schematic-trespass. At the same time, let S be literally meaningful just in case S *can* be used for U (not merely when it *is* used for U). Then, it follows that T is literally meaningful. This is the argument that Magidor should have made—or made explicit if it was the argument she was making. However, there are still obstacles to be overcome and clarifications to be made.

First, it might be that a single vehicle (sentential in this case) may deliver two distinct objects (metaphor and category mistake) each bearing inimical properties (meaningfulness and meaninglessness)—we have already argued for cases in which it is clear that a sentence, S , may deliver a metaphorical utterance at a time, t , and a category mistake at a second time, $t+$, where each instance or use of S bears inimical properties. These properties were related to the attitudes, the phenomenology, the practical requirements, and the success and failure conditions associated with sentences like S and their structure.

Second, a more general question remains—how do category mistakes fit into Davidson’s broader musings on language? A little more specifically: Is Davidson’s truth based theory of meaning compatible with category mistakes being meaningful? That is a pressing question. If a Davidson like theory of meaning—which is *very* particular (including, as it does, a Tarski based theory of truth at its foundation (Davidson 2001))—cannot accommodate category mistakes, then the strengthened argument will fail, for at best, a sentence, S , delivering a metaphorical utterance at time t and a category mistake at time t^+ will bear meaning at t but be meaningless at t^+ . At worst, if one holds that a sentence like S if meaningless at t^+ is meaningless at t , then Davidson’s theory of metaphor will be undercut. On the other hand, I suspect, if a decision on Davidson’s theory of meaning is needed before the strengthened argument can get going, and the theory does, indeed, turn out to accommodate category mistakes, the metaphorical use of a sentence like S will be entirely incidental to the strengthened argument above since Davidson’s theory of meaning *alone* will already have established that category mistakes are meaningful.

A last comment: We might develop our analysis of category mistakes by identifying category mistakes with the *uses* of a sentence like S , not directly with the structure of S . Rather, schematic trespassing is associated directly with the structure of S . Thus, it isn’t a sentence *per se* that is a category mistakes; it is the *use of a sentence*, like S , that, in the first instance, contains a schematic-trespass, and that, secondly, is *not used figuratively*. Perhaps, this provides sufficiency to the schematic trespass condition noted above. Perhaps, this also suggests that category mistakes do not emerge at the level of grammar—schematic trespasses do. Such structure allows for S to be used metaphorically, but it also allows for S to be misused categorically, and each use excludes the other, at any given time. If, further, sentences that contain schematic trespasses culminate sometimes in category mistakes slot into, for example, a Davidson like theory of meaning, then we may take them as *semantically meaningful* (whether they end up as metaphorical flourishes or categorical errors). What, then, really distinguishes the use of a sentence like S for a metaphor from a category mistake is, based on the above, how it is treated, how it is experienced, how its structure—in terms of the schematic-trespass—is treated, and what that implies or requires us to do. These may be considered pragmatic realities. All this may still be consistent with deeming an established category mistake as noise: *logically, practically, and phenomenologically meaningless*.

These are interesting lines of inquiry—none wholly supportive of Magidor. However, today’s inquiry was aimed at presenting arguments that demonstrate that the intersection of metaphorical utterances and category mistakes is empty. This, I take it, has been done.

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