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Author(s)	Malik, Luke
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# How to Classify Philosophical Theories of Metaphor into Cognitivist and Non-Cognitivist Classes

Luke Malik  
malik.luke.cme@osaka-u.ac.jp  
lukemalikosaka@gmail.com

## Abstract

This paper proposes a new way to classify philosophical theories of metaphor into cognitivist and non-cognitivist camps. Older methods seem to fail. For example, non-cognitivist theories of ethics imply that ethical sentences or statements do not express literal propositional content. But non-cognitivist theories of metaphor need not hold that metaphorical sentences or utterances express literal propositional content. A positivist theory of metaphor may associate sentences used metaphorically with literal propositional content. Donald Davidson's theory of metaphor requires that sentences and the metaphorical utterances that they are used to make express literal propositional content. Both types of theory have been called non-cognitivist. This may suggest that non-cognitivist theories of metaphor should associate metaphorical sentences or utterances with literal propositional content uniquely. But some cognitivist theories of metaphor associate metaphorical sentences or utterances with literal propositional content alone. For example, Francois Recanati's phenomenological theory of metaphor. A well-known criterion differentiates non-cognitivist theories of metaphor by the claim that speakers do not intend to express determinate propositional thoughts when speaking metaphorically (Reimer-Camp 2006). This criterion is neither sufficient nor necessary for classifying non-cognitivist theories. Some cognitivist theories deny that speakers intend to express determinate thoughts when speaking metaphorically; some non-cognitivist writings suggest that the intention is not denied when speaking metaphorically. Given these problems with existing criteria, I offer an alternative. A theory of metaphor is a cognitivist theory of metaphor if and only if it associates the propositional content of a metaphorical sentence or utterance with extra-literal or extra-semantic content that is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively, and non-cognitivist otherwise. By considering a sample set of theories, I show that non-cognitivist theories can be differentiated from cognitivist theories of metaphor by the criterion I propose.

## Introduction

Theories of metaphor are sorted into non-cognitivist and cognitivist camps. To do this requires a criterion that distinguishes one kind of theory from the other. Ethical theories are also divided between non-cognitivist and cognitivist schools. There are criteria for doing this. For example, ethical theories are non-cognitivist if they deny ethical sentences or statements literal propositional content. This won't work for sorting theories of metaphor. As we shall see, non-cognitivist theories of metaphor need not deny metaphorical sentences or utterances literal propositional content. This may suggest that non-cognitivist theories assign no nonliteral propositional content to metaphorical sentences or utterances. But, as we shall see, this doesn't work either. Cognitivist theories need not associate metaphorical sentences or utterances with extra literal propositional content. A set of conditions for identifying non-cognitivist theories of metaphor has been provided by Reimer and Camp (2006). But, as we shall see, the conditions they associate with non-cognitivist theories do not distinguish them from cognitivist theories. They argue that non-cognitivist theories deny that speakers intend to convey a determinate propositional thought by speaking metaphorically. But this denial is neither necessary nor sufficient for distinguishing the theories in question. Not all cognitivist theories require an intention to deliver a determinate propositional thought when using metaphor, and not all non-cognitivists deny or need to deny that speakers intend to express determinate propositional thoughts by speaking metaphorically. A charitable re-reading of the criterion in question is considered below. It fails to provide sufficient conditions for non-cognitivism. Given these issues. I propose a new criterion. What distinguishes non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories is extra-literal or extra-semantic propositional content or meaning that is constructed, organised, or structured cognitively. Non-cognitivists deny such content. Cognitivists are for such content.

In order to introduce the criterion I propose, I consider a set of propositions. These are:

Some *sentences* used metaphorically have propositional content or meaning.

Some *sentences* used metaphorically have literal propositional content or meaning.

Some *sentences* used metaphorically have extra-literal propositional content or meaning.

A sentence's extra-literal propositional content or meaning is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively.

Metaphorical *utterances* have literal propositional content or meaning.

Metaphorical *utterances* have extra-literal propositional content or meaning.

Metaphorical *utterances* have extra-semantic propositional content or meaning.

Metaphorical *utterances* have extra-literal or extra-semantic propositional content or meaning that is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively.

I consider these propositions in relation to a sample set of theories, which I pre-classify as cognitivist or non-cognitivist. These are:

Positivism<sup>1</sup> (Non-cognitivism)

Davidson's Theory (Non-cognitivism)

Gricean Theory (Cognitivism)

Recanati's Phenomenological Theory of Metaphor<sup>2</sup> (Cognitivism)

Classic Interactionism (Cognitivism)<sup>3</sup>

Relating the propositions to the theories in question grounds the philosophical context. More importantly, it demonstrates that:

Claims (A) – (G) do not differentiate non-cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories.

Claims (A) – (G) differentiate non-cognitivist theories from other non-cognitivist theories.

Claims (A) – (G) differentiate cognitivist theories from other cognitivist theories.

Only claim (H) differentiates non-cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories correctly.

These conclusions support the criterion for distinguishing the theories in question that I propose and help to rule out alternatives. I end by briefly focusing on the conditions that Reimer-Camp (2006) associate with non-cognitivism. I demonstrate that they do not distinguish non-cognitivism from cognitivism correctly. The criterion that I propose is therefore the better alternative.

### **A Criterion for Distinguishing Cognitivist from Non-Cognitivist Theories of Metaphor**

We can identify a theory of metaphor as cognitivist using the criterion below.

*A theory of metaphor is a cognitivist theory of metaphor if and only if it associates the propositional content of a metaphorical sentence or utterance with extra-literal or extra-semantic content or meaning that is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively*

Alternatively, then;

*A theory of metaphor is a non-cognitivist theory of metaphor if and only if it does not associate the propositional content of a metaphorical sentence or utterance with extra-literal or extra-semantic content or meaning that is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively*

To understand the path to the criteria posited, it will be instructive to consider several claims that can be associated with various theories of metaphor. Essentially, these rule out other criteria for dividing non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories of metaphor and lead to the criteria above. They also introduce us to key themes in the theories examined that serve to demonstrate how inadequate the Reimer-Camp criterion for classifying non-cognitivist theories is.

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<sup>1</sup> Although there is no article or book length introduction to what I am calling a positivist theory of metaphor, we can use the writings of the positivists and the implications of their work to reconstruct such a theory.

<sup>2</sup> This theory is founded on certain sections of Recanati's book on literal meaning (Recanati 2024).

<sup>3</sup> The application of the "cognitivist" and "non-cognitivist" labels represents standard assumptions about the theories in question or the writings behind the constructions of those theories.

## Four Claims

Consider four claims.

Some *sentences* used metaphorically have propositional content or meaning

Some *sentences* used metaphorically have literal propositional content or meaning

Some *sentences* used metaphorically have extra-literal propositional content or meaning

That extra-literal propositional content or meaning is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively

We can understand the position that a sample set of theories take up in relation to the claims by looking at the following table. A tick signals that the claim is consistent with the theory in question, a cross signals that the proposition is not consistent with the theory in question.

Theory / Claim	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Positivism	✓	✓	✓	X
Davidson's	✓	✓	X	X
Gricean	✓	✓	X	X
Recanati's	X	X	X	X
Classic Interactionism	✓	✓	✓	✓

This association of claims with the theories is explained below.

**Positivism:** Positivism is consistent with claims (A) and (B). Positivists argue that some sentences used lyrically or poetically have cognitive content (Ayer 1936, p.14). Assuming that what is true of sentences used lyrically or poetically is true of sentences used metaphorically, some sentences used metaphorically have cognitive content. For positivists, sentences that have cognitive content have literal propositional content. Therefore, sentences used metaphorically which also have cognitive content have literal propositional content. An example might be “He is a pig,”<sup>4</sup> or “A pig is a pig.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, positivism is consistent with claims (A) and (B).

Positivism is consistent with claim (C) but not (D). Positivists deny that certain sentences have cognitive content and deny that they express literal propositional content. At the same time, they do allow these sentences to have meaning and sometimes even associate these sentences with prepositions (e.g. Carnap 1935, p.15). The meaning they associate with expressions that lack cognitive content is expressive meaning (Carnap 1931, pp.80-81). This kind of meaning takes the form of a tendency to express and produce affective and conative effects (Stevenson 1937, especially pp.22-23; Ayer 1936, p.68 and p.72; Carnap 1931, pp.80-81). It is extra-literal meaning in the sense that it is additional to a literal meaning we might associate with the expression in question. Stevenson uses the metaphorical expression “old maid” to exemplify this kind of meaning (Stevenson 1937, p.23). This suggests that metaphorical expressions such as sentences like “she is an old maid” can be associated with extra-literal meaning. Such meaning is not cognitive meaning. Therefore, positivism is consistent with (C) but inconsistent with (D).

**Donald Davidson:** Davidson's theory is consistent with (A) and (B) but not (C) and (D). Davidson holds that sentences have one and only one meaning spanning all contexts of use and that this is their literal meaning

<sup>4</sup> In the simplest terms possible, this sentence is verifiable and thus has cognitive content.

<sup>5</sup> This sentence is a tautology. So, for positivists, it has cognitive content.

(Davidson 1978, 2001). This meaning is associated with literal propositional content. All sentences that have meaning have literal meaning and literal propositional content. Moreover, sentences used metaphorically are required to have such content (Davidson 1978, 2001). By grasping the literal propositional content of a sentence used metaphorically, metaphorical effects are produced. These effects are cognitive effects (like picturing, imagining, etc.). Cognitive effects are necessary for metaphor (Davidson 1978, 2001). Ultimately, therefore, literal propositional content is necessary for metaphor.<sup>6</sup> This connects Davidson's theory to the first two claims. Just as importantly for Davidson is that there is no extra-propositional content (e.g. non-literal paraphrase) that is associated with a sentence used metaphorically and thus the question of how that content is concocted is irrelevant. That disconnects Davidson's theory from (C) and (D). Thus, Davidson's theory is consistent with the first two claims but not the latter two.

**Grice and Gricean Theory:** Gricean theory shares much in common with Davidson's theory, but there are points of contrast. Grice's writings suggest that metaphorical utterances are meaningless, writing "[I]n nonconventional communications [which includes metaphor], utterers mean, without any dependence on the meaning of their utterances (*which usually have no meaning*)" (Grice 1991. P.138, my italics). Two possibilities present themselves: (a) despite the meaningless nature of the body of nonconventional utterances, the sentences used in nonconventional communications are meaningful; (b) the sentences that are used for nonconventional utterances are as meaningless as the utterances themselves. Metaphor is an exemplar of nonconventional communications. I therefore assume what is true of nonconventional communication is true of metaphor (in part or whole). That suggests that the sentences used to make metaphorical utterances are meaningful or as meaningless as the utterances that they are used to make. I tend to believe that the latter is true, Grice or Griceans do not hold that all sentences used metaphorically have literal propositional content (cf. Magidor 2009). John Searle, for example, wonders how the Chomsky sentence can produce a metaphorical interpretation when it is meaningless (Searle 1979, p. 77). When Martinich (1984) explains how he thinks metaphorical meaning is worked out, he uses the sentence "my love is a rose." In working out the metaphorical meaning, he does not reduce the meaning of the *sentence* to its literal sense; the trope "my love" is left unreduced.<sup>7</sup> It may be reduced, but the reduction and therefore the literal meaning of the *sentence* is not necessary to the metaphorical meaning of the utterance. But all this does not suggest that Griceans think that all sentences used metaphorically lack literal propositional content. I will assume they think that some do not. We can thus, with some qualification, connect Gricean theory to claims (A) and (B). Last, Griceans do hold that metaphorical utterances have some metaphorical propositional content (even if incomplete and indeterminate), but not that the sentences used to make them do. Thus, again, (C) is denied and (D) is irrelevant. Davidson and Grice therefore seem to agree on the relevant issues.

**Recanatian Theory:** Recanati's theory seems antagonistic to all the claims above. Recanati argues that sentence types lack complete, actual literal propositional content (Recanati 2004). Pure pragmatic processes are required to complete propositional content. Such content is literal propositional content (Recanati 2004). This is true even when an utterance is judged to be metaphorical. Recanati writes, "The paradigm case of nonliteral meaning is metaphor. Now metaphor, in its central varieties, I count as p-literal" (Recanati 2003, 116). P-literal meaning is the complete literal meaning of *an utterance*, not a sentence. Type literal (t-literal) meaning is associated with a sentence but, as said, it does not provide a complete, actual literal proposition (Recanati 2004). Thus, claim (A) should be denied by a Recanatian. Metaphoricity is a *felt* tension between the schematic sentence type (t-literal) meaning and the p-literal meaning of an utterance. Thus, Recanati writes, "The more noticeable the conflict, the more transparent the departure from t-literal meaning will be to the language users. Beyond a certain threshold, cases of sense extension will therefore count as special and nonliteral in the ordinary sense despite their p-literal character" (Recanati 2003, 118). But there is actually no special secondary meaning or further propositional content attached to the sentence or its metaphorical use on Recanati's account. All claims, therefore, are inconsistent with the interpretation of Recanati's phenomenological theory of metaphor. In essence, if (A) is denied, all other claims become moot.<sup>8</sup>

**Classic Interactionism:** In stark contrast to Recanati's theory, classic interactionism seems consistent with all the claims above. Expressions can be metaphorical without regard to contexts of use, users, intentions, etc. (Black 1954, p.277). In many cases, all we need to do is examine the expression relative to a sentence to

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<sup>6</sup> The argument simplified: Metaphor requires cognitive effects. Cognitive effects require literal content. Therefore, metaphor requires literal content.

<sup>7</sup> "My love" seems to be metonymic.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps, t-literal meaning could be associated with a complete literal proposition. But Recanati does not think that this is required and outlines a number of positions that may not take up this perspective.

determine it is metaphorical (Black 1954, p.277) Sentences are no different. Having said this, in some cases, we need to consider the context in order to recognise the metaphor. Sentences containing metaphorical expressions can be ambiguous between literal and metaphorical meaning. In many cases, such sentences when taken literally are contradictory or absurd (Black 1954, p.287). However, if we follow Richards, since metaphorical expressions can be both literal *and* metaphorical (Richards 1936, p.118), some sentences may be irreducibly ambiguous. That is, sentences may have both literal and metaphorical meaning at one and the same time. All this suggests interactionists may accept both (A) and (B).

Interactionists also seem to accept (C) and (D). Metaphorical sentences are composed of two elements: at least one component is metaphorical and at least one is literal. The first is the “focus” of a metaphorical sentence (Black 1954, p.276). The second constitutes the “frame” of the metaphorical sentence (Black 1954, p.276). Focus and frame interact in producing the metaphorical meaning of the sentence. The metaphorical focus is irreducible to literal substitution. Therefore, metaphorical sentences themselves are irreducible to literal sentences, substitutions, or paraphrases. Most importantly, the meaning of a metaphorical focal point is the result of two thoughts of different things active together (Richards 1936, p.95; Black 1954, p.285). Indeed, that is why interactionist metaphorical meaning cannot be reduced literally (Black 1954, p.286). New extensions and new meanings are created in the metaphorical context (Black 1954, p.286). Interactionist metaphorical meaning is intellectual and produces cognitive content (lots of it), but, of course, as said, it is not cognitive content that is reducible to a literal substitution or paraphrase. Indeed, literal substitution and paraphrase produces a loss of metaphorical cognitive content (Black p.293). At the sentential level, it is a loss of sentence meaning. Metaphorical sentence meaning, therefore, is both extra-literal and constructed cognitively, giving us (C) and (D). Interactionists therefore accept all the listed claims.

**Interim Conclusions:** We can draw the following conclusions:

The claims (A) - (D) do not differentiate non-cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories (e.g. Davidson’s and Grice’s share all claims in common).

The claims (A) - (D) do differentiate non-cognitivist theories from non-cognitivist theories (e.g. positivism is differentiated from Davidson’s theory since positivists allow for extra-literal (non-cognitive) meaning).

The claims (A) - (D) do differentiate cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories (e.g. Recanati’s theory is differentiated from classic interactionism, they share exactly *no* claims in common).

Most importantly, we can conclude that the claims (A) to (D) do not provide sufficient conditions for differentiating non-cognitivism from cognitivism. Let’s consider several further claims this time with respect to metaphorical utterances.

#### **Four Further Claims**

Consider the claims below.

Metaphorical *utterances* have literal propositional content or meaning

Metaphorical *utterances* have extra-literal propositional content or meaning

Metaphorical *utterances* have extra-semantic propositional content or meaning

Metaphorical *utterances* have extra-literal or extra-semantic propositional content or meaning that is constructed, structured, or organised cognitively

Again, we may understand the position that a sample of theories take up in relation to this second set of claims by looking at the table below. A tick signals a theory is consistent with the claim in question, a cross signals that it is not.

Theory / Claim	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)
Positivism	X	✓	✓	X
Davidson's	✓	X	X	X
Gricean	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recanati's	✓	X	✓	✓
Classic Interactionism	✓	✓	X	✓

This association of claims with theories is explained below.

**Positivism:** Positivists deny (E) and (H), but may accept (F) and (G). In order to show this, I will assume that when positivists speak about “lyrical verse” and “metaphysical propositions,” they are speaking about utterances. Thus, when Carnap writes that a lyric including the expression “sunshine,” (e.g. “You are my sunshine”) includes expressions that are not being used literally, Carnap is speaking about the *utterance* of the sentence (here “You are my sunshine”) and the relevant constituents (Carnap 1935, p. 29). According to positivists, then, this type of utterance is literally meaningless, which means it lacks literal propositional content.<sup>9</sup> They have a different kind of meaning, expressive meaning. This meaning attaches to the sentence and its constituent parts and an utterer uses it to express that meaning allowing us to associate the utterance itself with the extra-literal meaning. It is not just extra-literal meaning, but it is also extra-semantic meaning. According to Carnap, semantics abstracts away from use (Carnap 1942, p.9). The meaning we are associating with metaphorical utterances is not cognitive meaning but expressive meaning associated with tendencies to produce affective and conative effects (Ayer 1936; Carnap 1931; Stevenson 1937). Thus, though the inner two claims are consistent with a positivist theory of metaphor, the outer two are not.

**Donald Davidson:** Only one claim is consistent with Davidson’s theory of metaphor. We have seen that sentences used metaphorically have literal propositional content. This is because literal meaning is necessary for metaphorical effects and metaphorical effects are necessary for metaphor. By the same reasoning, metaphorical utterances express literal propositional content. Just as importantly, metaphorical utterances are devoid of any other kind of propositional content or meaning. The utterance is not associated with any other kind of extra-literal or extra-semantic content or meaning. Thus, the final claim must be denied too. As a consequence, Davidson’s theory therefore only has room for (E).

**Grice and Gricean Theory:** All claims may be consistent with Gricean theory, though (E) is accepted with qualification. As cited above, Grice associates nonconventional communications with utterances that *usually* lack meaning. I believe this is to say that nonconventional utterances usually lack literal propositional content. Nonconventional communications include metaphorical utterances. Metaphorical utterances are examples of nonconventional communication. Because it is the *usual* case with nonconventional communications, it is reasonable to presume that most metaphorical utterances lack meaning. Thus, (E) is accepted for Gricean theories with qualification. At the same time, for a Gricean, metaphorical utterances also express metaphorical propositional content (if incomplete and indeterminate), which is worked out and supported by an inferential process (Grice 1975; Martinich 1984; Searle 1979). It is worked out cognitively and produces cognitive content, a whole new proposition (Searle 1979) or an indeterminate, incomplete proposition (Grice 1975, p.58; Martinich 1984, p.44; Sperber and Wilson 2015, p.120). This content is extra-literal propositional, cognitive content because it is extra to any literal propositional content associated with the utterance in question and it is worked out cognitively. All claims are accordingly consistent with Grice’s theory.

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<sup>9</sup> Similarly, consider “He is a pig.” Though the sentence may be associated with literal propositional content abstracted from use, the utterance of the sentence may be literally meaningless *contingent* on its use.

**Recanati:** A theory of metaphor based on Recanati's writings is consistent with all claims except for (F). For Recanati literal propositional content is associated with an utterance. We saw this labelled p-literal content above. It doesn't matter that the utterance is made metaphorically. More importantly, there is no further extra-literal content to speak of. For example, no inferential content (Recanati 2004, p.76.) So, for example, the metaphorical utterance "the ATM swallowed my bank card" has literal proposition content alone. Given this position, (F) is denied. Nevertheless, the literal propositional content that such a sentence has *is* extra-semantic content that is cognitively determined, not semantically fixed or complete (Recanati 2004, e.g. see pp.23-38). In conclusion, then, though (F) is rejected, (E), (G) and (H) get a tick.

**Classic Interactionism:** Classic interactionism is inconsistent with proposition (G) alone. Based on Richards's (1936) writing, I have assumed a sentence may be both literal and metaphorical. Likewise, I assume that its utterance can be both literal and metaphorical too. Such an utterance therefore may have literal propositional content or metaphorical propositional content. For example, if I point at my pet wolf and say "he is a real wolf," the expression "wolf" may refer literally or metaphorically or both, filtering imputed commonplace or made-up wolf-like attributes to my literal wolf.<sup>10</sup> Max Black tells us that interactionism provides a semantic theory of metaphor (Black 1954, p.276). Thus, metaphorical propositional content considered to be extra-literal content is semantic content. Last, given interactionist meaning is determined cognitively, the utterances in question are determined cognitively. Extra-literal, though not extra-semantic, metaphorical content therefore is cognitively determined content. Thus, apart from (G), all other claims are consistent with classic interactionism.

**Final Conclusions:** We can draw the following conclusions:

The claims (E) to (G) do not differentiate non-cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories (e.g. Positivism agrees with various cognitivist theories with respect to claims (F) and (G)).

The claims (E) to (G) differentiate non-cognitivist theories from non-cognitivist theories (e.g. Positivism and Davidson's theory are in opposition to each other in toto).

The claims (E) to (G) differentiate cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories (e.g. Recanati's theory differs from Classic Interactionism with respect to (F) and (G)).

Claim (H) differentiates non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories correctly.

Thus, we have arrived at a way to distinguish non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories. This supports the criterion provided above, what matters to distinguishing cognitivist from non-cognitivist theories of metaphor is how the extra-literal or extra-semantic content associated with a metaphor is rendered. Since only a sample set of theories have been considered, I present my criterion as a hypothesis to be judged against other theories of metaphor, for example, conceptual metaphor theory. That theory allows for metaphorical sentences to possess literal meaning alone, yet allows it to be metaphorically structured and organised at the cognitive level. The correct distinction is between the literal and the figurative, not the literal and metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). I think the hypothesis will not be falsified by the aforementioned theory or any other theory.

### **Conventional Wisdom**

There are already published conditions that look like they might be used to distinguish non-cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories. The most prominent is put forward by Reimer and Camp (2006). They write.

The central claim of [non-cognitivist] theorists is that a sentence used metaphorically has no distinctive cognitive content aside from its literal content Non-cognitivists thus resemble Griceans in denying that the words uttered themselves have any special meaning. They depart from Griceans, though, in also denying that there is any determinate propositional thought which the speaker intends to communicate by means of those words. (Reimer-Camp 2006, 857).

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<sup>10</sup> A Davidsonian might object by saying the sentence or its utterance is a pun. But this assumes that puns and metaphors are mutually exclusive. "I knead dough to make bread" includes a number of (underlined) puns (homophonic and homographic). The puns on "dough" and "bread" involve a literal use/sense (e.g. to denote a fermented dough product) and a metaphorical use/sense (e.g. to denote money).



So, non-cognitivists are distinguished from cognitivists, like Griceans, because they:

Deny that sentences used metaphorically have cognitive content apart from their literal content, and

Deny that there is any determinate propositional thought that a speaker speaking metaphorically intends to communicate by means of their words

Of course, (a) cannot serve as a wedge between non-cognitivism and cognitivism alone, as the authors acknowledge, because Griceans make the same claim. But the second denial is also dubious.

Griceans do not associate metaphors with *determinate* propositional thoughts.

First, as we have already noted, Griceans do not think that metaphors produce determinate implicatures (Allott 2018, Grice 1975, p.58; Martinich 1984, p.44; Sperber and Wilson 2015, p.120). The propositions associated with metaphorical utterances are indeterminate and incomplete. Since implicatures reflect the thoughts the speaker intends to communicate by speaking metaphorically, such thoughts are not themselves determinate propositional thoughts. They are indeterminate, incomplete propositional thoughts and they are indeterminate, incomplete propositional thoughts that the speaker intends to communicate by speaking metaphorically.

Relevance theorists do not associate metaphors with determinate propositional thoughts

Second, relevance theorists, specifically Sperber and Wilson (2008, 2012) and Pilkington (2000), present a problem for Reimer and Camp. Relevance theorists distinguish implications from implicatures. An utterance, *u*, implies a set of propositions. For example, *u* implies *p*, *q*, *r*, *s*, etc. Some of these are strongly implied, say *p* and *q*. Some of these are weakly implied, say *r* and *s*. A speaker intends to use an utterance to *implicate* a set of these implications. These intended implications are implicatures of the utterance (Sperber and Wilson 2012, p. 117). A speaker has these in mind when speaking and a hearer assumes that a speaker expects and intends for these to be communicated to her (Sperber and Wilson 2012, p. 117). A speaker may intend to use an utterance to implicate one set of implications but not others, “[t]he strength of an implicature is determined by the manifest strength of the speaker’s intention that a specific implication should be derived (Sperber and Wilson 2012, p. 117). For example, a speaker may intend to use *u* to implicate *p* and *r*, but not be much concerned about implicating *q* and *s*. In this kind of case, a speaker strongly implicates *p* and *r*, but weakly implicates *q* and *s*. An interesting set of cases are those in which an utterance weakly implies a set of propositions that a speaker intends to weakly implicate. In these cases a speaker does not intend to communicate a specific implication, any subset of the weak implications will provide meaning (or relevance) to the utterance (Sperber and Wilson p. 117). A subset of implications may be represented by a proposition (the conjunction of implications). Thus, in the cases under discussion, a speaker does not intend to communicate a specific proposition and it is assumed and expected that they do not intend to. To repeat, such implicatures are what a speaker has in mind and intends to communicate. I assume we may therefore associate implicatures with propositional thoughts. Given this, we may conclude that a speaker does not intend to communicate a specific propositional thought and it is assumed and expected that they do not intend to. According to Sperber and Wilson, metaphor is particularly well suited to the task at hand (Sperber and Wilson 2012, p. 119). This leads to a last conclusion. A speaker does not intend to communicate a specific propositional thought and it is assumed and expected that they do not intend to and metaphor is particularly well suited to this kind of communicative act. It follows that non-cognitivism cannot be entailed by Reimer and Camp’s second condition. Relevance theorists, who are cognitivists, undermine the sufficiency of (b).

The considerations above demonstrate that (b) cannot be sufficient for non-cognitivism. The next set of considerations show that (b) doesn’t seem to be necessary for non-cognitivism either, since a non-cognitivist theory of metaphor may imply that speakers use metaphorical utterances to communicate determinate propositional thoughts.

### Positivist may associate metaphors with determinate propositional thoughts

Non-cognitivism may hold that a speaker *does* intend to communicate a determinate propositional thought by speaking metaphorically, for example, where that thought is associated with a non-cognitive propositional attitude. Carnap's theory of evaluative sentences deals with expressive meanings and statements of value as opposed to representative meanings and statements of truth (Schilpp 1963). He calls his theory "non-cognitivism" (Schilpp 1963, p.998) He associates expressive utterances and their meanings with optatives (Schilpp 1963, pp.1006-1007). He represents them like this: "utinam *p*" (Schilpp 1963, p.1003). "Utinam" represents an attitude and "*p*" a declarative sentence, which we may associate with a determinate proposition (Schilpp 1963, p.1003). The attitude in question is not a cognitive attitude, but it is a determinate non-cognitive propositional attitude. Since a positivist theory of metaphor can be assumed to associate expressive meanings with metaphorical utterances, we may suppose that metaphorical utterances are associated with optatives, as represented by Carnap, and that a speaker who speaks metaphorically intends to communicate the attitude in question i.e. she intends to communicate a determinate propositional thought by using the words that she does.<sup>11</sup> This, then, is one non-cognitivist theory that is consistent with the denial of (b).

### Davidson must associate metaphors with determinate propositional thoughts

Even Davidson's theory, it can be argued, is consistent with the denial of (b). Interpreting Davidson's theory of metaphor in line with his broader philosophical writings tends to suggest that a speaker who speaks metaphorically *must* communicate determinate propositional thoughts by the words he or she uses. The basis for such a conclusion is that Davidson thinks that *speech requires the communication of determinate intentions and beliefs* (Davidson 2001, p. 143, p. 144, p. 147, p. 155, p. 186, p. 195, p. 280). That is, it is a necessary condition for speech that it communicates or be taken to communicate determinate intentions and beliefs. Uttering a sentence metaphorically is speaking. Therefore, uttering a sentence metaphorically requires the communication of determinate intentions and beliefs. Intentions and beliefs are propositional attitudes (Davidson 2010, p.189; Mele 2003, p. 79). I assume that propositional attitudes are propositional thoughts. Therefore, uttering a sentence metaphorically entails the communication of determinate propositional thoughts. Reimer and Camp can, perhaps, object by arguing that even if a metaphorist communicates determinate propositional thoughts, it does not follow that the speaker *intends* to do so by the words that they use. This doesn't fit well with Davidson's philosophy.

Holistically, Davidson's theory of metaphor is best interpreted as implying that speakers who speak metaphorically intend to communicate determinate propositional thoughts when they speak. First, for Davidson, it is incumbent on an interpreter to interpret a speaker as a competent speaker and a rational agent and for the hearer to thereby organise the speaker's intentions, beliefs, and utterances accordingly (Davidson 1973; Davidson 1985, pp. 351-352; Davidson 2010, pp. 35-36; Ludwig 2003, pp. 16-18). This requires understanding the speaker's beliefs and intentions by the words that communicate his or her thoughts (Davidson 2001, p. 2008; Ludwig 2003, p. 5., pp. 31-32). This sits well with passages in Davidson's writings on metaphor. For example, Davidson implies that understanding the intentions of a speaker are important in distinguishing whether the speaker is speaking literally or metaphorically (Davidson 2001, p. 258; Ludwig 2003, pp.31-32)<sup>12</sup> and Davidson suggests that that explains why metaphors are so often patently false, absurd, or uninformative (Davidson 2001, p. 258). Therefore, it is consistent with Davidson's theory of metaphor to interpret a speaker who speaks metaphorically as a speaker who intends to communicate an intention by the words that they use. Simply put, that intention is the intention to be understood metaphorically and it is a determinate propositional thought (Davidson 1985, p. 346; Mele 2003, p. 79). Thus, a speaker who speaks metaphorically does intend to communicate a determinate propositional thought by the words that they use.

Non-cognitivist theories do not entail (b). We have seen that Carnap's non-cognitivism is consistent with the communication of determinate propositional thoughts associated with non-cognitive attitudes and intentions to communicate such thoughts by the words that they choose to communicate the aforementioned attitudes with. We have seen that Davidson's philosophy of metaphor when considered in the context of his philosophy

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<sup>11</sup> For example, a metaphorist may say "he is a pig" intending to communicate "utinam *he is a pig*," or, in other words, "would it be the case that you think that *he is a pig*," thereby, intending to communicate a determinate propositional thought in order to initiate affective and conative effects in the hearer.

<sup>12</sup> For example, a person who utters the sentence "She is a witch" is either speaking literally or metaphorically. Identifying the intention with which the sentence is uttered, which can be difficult, according to Davidson, reveals how the sentence was used (Davidson 2001, p. 258).

more broadly implies that rational and competent speakers intend to communicate determinate propositional thoughts, intentions to speak metaphorically, which are cognitive propositional attitudes, by the words that they use. It follows that (b) is not a necessary condition for non-cognitivist theories.

### A Last Attempt to Save the Reimer and Camp Conditions

Rather than reading Reimer and Camp literally, there may be a better way to interpret the passage above. What Reimer and Camp really want to say is that a non-cognitivist theory of metaphor implies that a metaphorist intends to communicate the literal proposition associated with the sentence used when speaking metaphorically but does not intend to communicate a specific kind of determinate propositional attitude to the literal proposition itself or an additional proposition that is to be associated with the sentence or its utterance. More specifically, the metaphorist does not intend to communicate that they believe that  $p$  nor that they believe that  $q$ , where  $p$  stands for the literal proposition and  $q$  an implied proposition or new metaphorical meaning. For example, when the metaphorist says “he is a pig,” he or she intends to communicate the literal proposition associated with the sentence but does not intend to communicate the *belief* that *he is a pig, he eats messily, he is cute*, etc. The hallmark, then, of a non-cognitivist theory of metaphor is that when a speaker uses a sentence,  $S$ , metaphorically:

the speaker does not intend to communicate the determinable belief that  $p$ , where  $p$  is a proposition associated with the literal meaning of  $S$  or what is said using  $S$ , and

the speaker does not intend to communicate the determinable belief that  $q$ , where  $q$  is a proposition implicated (implied, suggested, etc.) by  $p$ , or  $q$  is a completely new metaphorical proposition that emerges in the metaphorical context

But, put like this, it does nothing to distinguish cognitivists from non-cognitivists. Non-cognitivists may accept (c), but so can cognitivists. Following the distinction between representative and expressive meaning, positivists may argue that a speaker who speaks metaphorically does not intend to use his or her words representatively, but rather expressively. But cognitivists too would seem to accept (c). Griceans do not argue that a speaker speaking metaphorically communicates a belief associated with the literal meaning of the associated sentence or utterance. In metaphorical contexts, speakers merely make as if to say. Moreover, as we have seen, in many cases of nonconventional communication, nothing is said, since the associated utterance is nonsense. In such cases, there are no beliefs to communicate. Thus, (c) cannot itself be sufficient for non-cognitivism.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, it is unclear whether it is even necessary.

It is unclear whether (c) is necessary for non-cognitivism. This is because it is unclear whether Davidson accepts (c). Consider the following passage:

[I]t is clear that speech requires a multitude of finely discriminated intentions and beliefs. A person who asserts that perseverance keeps honour bright must, for example, represent himself as believing that perseverance keeps honour bright, and he must intend to represent himself as believing it (Davidson 2001, p.186).

Davidson believes that when a speaker asserts the proposition  $p$  by  $W$  (the words used to communicate  $p$ ), the speaker represents themselves as believing that  $p$  and *intends* to represent themselves as believing  $p$ . If representing oneself as believing that  $p$  and *intending* to represent oneself as believing  $p$  by using  $W$  entails communicating and *intending* to communicate the belief that  $p$  by  $W$ , then asserting  $p$  by  $W$  entails communicating and *intending* to communicate the belief that  $p$  by  $W$ . Metaphors make assertions (Davidson 2001, 259). Indeed, “perseverance keeps honour bright” is presumably metaphorical. It follows that metaphors entail communicating and *intending* to communicate the belief that  $p$  by  $W$ . This is inconsistent with (c). If it is inconsistent with (c) and Davidson’s theory of metaphor retains its non-cognitivist

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<sup>13</sup> Cognitivists may reject (c). That is, a cognitivist may hold that a speaker intends to communicate the determinable belief that  $p$ , where  $p$  is a proposition associated with the literal meaning of the metaphor. For example, Recanati may hold this since a metaphor expresses literal meaning. Conceptual metaphor theorists may hold so too. Since a sentence like “Kaline is in Texas” is both literal and metaphorical.

credentials, (c) cannot be necessary to non-cognitivism. Thus, (c) is not sufficient for non-cognitivism and it may not even be necessary for it.

On the other hand, even if (d) may be implied by non-cognitivism, it is not sufficient for it. To appreciate this, we may first note (d) does seem to be consistent with non-cognitivist theories. Davidson argues that a metaphor has one and only one propositional meaning, its literal meaning. Positivists allow for a second meaning, for example, “she is an old maid” has a literal meaning and an expressive meaning associated with a tendency to bring about affective and conative effects. The kind of expressive meaning in question explains metaphorical use. It does not entail propositional content. Thus, we might conclude that sentences used metaphorically have one and only one propositional meaning if meaningful, but that the metaphorical utterances that they are used for do not express such meanings since those utterances are used for expressive purposes alone. So non-cognitivist theories may imply (d). The problem is that cognitivists may accept (d) just as well as non-cognitivists and for reasons we have already introduced.

It does not seem that (d) can be sufficient for non-cognitivism. Griceans argue that metaphors produce indeterminate implicatures. Implicatures are beliefs (Davis 2019). Therefore, Gricean theory implies that metaphors convey indeterminate beliefs. Relevance theorists think that metaphor is well suited to conveying weak implicatures, which we have associated with sets of vague and indeterminate propositions and thoughts. Assuming some (even all) of these are beliefs, then a speaker who speaks metaphorically may intend to convey a set of vague and indeterminate beliefs by speaking metaphorically. Recanati is vociferous in contrasting the *literal* meanings that metaphors get across from implied or secondary meanings like implicatures (Recanati 2004, p. 76.). Thus, if speaking metaphorically conveys determinate beliefs, then the beliefs that are conveyed are attitudes to *literal propositions* that are *not implied*. Given these considerations, (d) cannot be a sufficient condition for non-cognitivism. The modification introduced above isn't sufficient for non-cognitivism.

For the reasons outlined, the conditions that Reimer and Camp use to isolate non-cognitivist theories of metaphor are neither sufficient nor necessary for non-cognitivist theories of metaphor. The charitable interpretation considered may produce a necessary criterion for non-cognitivism, but it does not produce a sufficient one. Hence, such conditions still do not differentiate non-cognitivist theories from cognitivist theories of metaphor. The proposal I put forward remains the better alternative.

## Conclusions

I argued that what distinguishes non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories is the association of metaphorical meanings with extra-literal or extra-semantic propositional content that is constructed, organised, or structured cognitively. To establish this, we have considered several claims in relation to non-cognitivist and cognitivist theories of metaphor. Most claims that we have considered are not sufficient to differentiate non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories. Most claims separate non-cognitivist from other non-cognitivist theories and separate cognitivist from other cognitivist theories. Only one claim sufficiently distinguishes non-cognitivist from cognitivist theories. This claim supports the criterion (and its counterpart) proposed by me. Not all theories of metaphor that may be imagined have been considered, but I think the criterion will not fall to counterexamples. Generally, this article has attempted to clarify a confusion in the philosophy of metaphor. There are other confusions to consider. For example, a Gricean theory of metaphor is often associated with an utterance that expresses a proposition with literal propositional content and sometimes with an implicature that is complete, determinate, and not itself metaphorical. Based on the writings of Grice and his interpreters, as seen, none of that seems true. Further work remains to be done in clarifying confusions in the philosophy of metaphor.

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