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**ELUCIDATING METAPHOR: PARAMETERS OF  
CREATION AND COMPREHENSION**

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## **Declaration**

This submission is my own work. Any quotation from, or description of, work of others is acknowledged herein by reference to the sources, whether published or unpublished.

Aikaterini-Sofia Panoutsou

Signature

To Mum

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to wholeheartedly thank my supervisors for their invaluable help and support all this time, and my family and friends for their love, patience and understanding.

## **Abstract**

The thesis attempts to provide a thorough and comprehensive account of the anatomy of metaphor, and the diversity of the parameters that affect its creation and comprehension. Specifically, it explores the reasons speakers utilise metaphorical utterances rather than their literal counterparts, as well as the processes that lead to the emergence of differentiating interpretations through their comprehension. In order to approach these matters, I will elucidate metaphor in relation to other fields that have already been touched upon in preceding research pursuing similar goals. One of them is exploring the relationship between conventional and novel metaphors and the factors that determine their nature. Drawing on existing work, I suggest that a clear cut distinction is not likely to be drawn between the two types of metaphor. My research will also elaborate Wilson and Carston's (2019) work on the non-propositional effects of metaphor creation and comprehension and the role of emotions: how they interact with cognition, but nonetheless manage to impose a heavy influence on our thought is investigated. I then suggest that the role of affect appears to be complementary to that of human creativity, ineffability, and mental imagery. Previous accounts of creativity will be discussed and how they apply to the matter of metaphor creation and comprehension, in conjunction with the apparent attempts of the human mind to create and interpret metaphors as a way to verbalize how they react and feel towards them. Finally, an attempt will be made to pinpoint the nature of so-called "mental images" that appear to arise in interlocutor's minds through metaphor processing, based on what has been suggested so far in existing literature. Conclusions drawn aim to provide a holistic overview of the workings of metaphor and machinations of the human mind during their processing, leaving room for further investigation.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Creativity, Affect, Relevance, Mental Images

## Abstract (Greek)

Η διατριβή επιχειρεί να δώσει μια διεξοδική και περιεκτική περιγραφή της ανατομίας της μεταφοράς και της ποικιλομορφίας των παραμέτρων που επηρεάζουν τη δημιουργία και την κατανόησή της. Συγκεκριμένα, διερευνά τους λόγους που οι ομιλητές χρησιμοποιούν μεταφορική γλώσσα παρά τους κυριολεκτικούς ομολόγους τους, καθώς και τις διαδικασίες που οδηγούν στην εμφάνιση διαφοροποιημένων ερμηνειών μέσω της κατανόησής τους. Προκειμένου να προσεγγίσω αυτά τα θέματα, θα διευκρινίσω τη μεταφορά σε σχέση με άλλους τομείς που έχουν ήδη θιγεί σύμφωνα με προηγούμενες έρευνες που επιδιώκουν παρόμοιους στόχους. Ένας από αυτούς είναι να διερευνήσει τη σχέση μεταξύ συμβατικών και νέων μεταφορών και των παραγόντων που καθορίζουν τη φύση τους. Βασισμένη σε παρούσες έρευνες, προτείνω ότι δεν είναι πιθανό να γίνει σαφής διάκριση μεταξύ των δύο τύπων μεταφοράς. Η έρευνά μου θα επεξεργαστεί επίσης το έργο των Wilson και Carston (2019) σχετικά με τις μη προταθείσες επιδράσεις της δημιουργίας και κατανόησης της μεταφοράς και του ρόλου των συναισθημάτων: πώς αλληλεπιδρούν με τη γνώση, αλλά ωστόσο καταφέρνουν να επηρεάσουν σημαντικά τη σκέψη μας. Τονίζω έπειτα ότι ο ρόλος της επιρροής φαίνεται να είναι συμπληρωματικός με εκείνον της ανθρώπινης δημιουργικότητας, της αναποτελεσματικότητας και της διανοητικής εικόνας. Θα συζητηθούν οι προηγούμενοι λογαριασμοί της δημιουργικότητας και πώς εφαρμόζονται στο θέμα της δημιουργίας και της κατανόησης της μεταφοράς, σε συνδυασμό με τις προφανείς προσπάθειες του ανθρώπου νου να δημιουργήσει και να ερμηνεύσει τις μεταφορές ως έναν τρόπο λεξιλογικής αντίδρασης και αίσθησης απέναντί τους. Τέλος, θα γίνει μια προσπάθεια να εντοπιστεί η φύση των λεγόμενων «διανοητικών εικόνων» που φαίνεται να προκύπτουν στο μυαλό του συνομιλητή μέσω της επεξεργασίας μεταφορών, με βάση αυτά που έχουν προταθεί μέχρι τώρα στην υπάρχουσα βιβλιογραφία. Τα συμπεράσματα που αντλούνται αποσκοπούν στην παροχή μιας ολιστικής επισκόπησης της λειτουργίας της μεταφοράς και των μηχανισμών του ανθρώπινου νου κατά τη διάρκεια της επεξεργασίας τους, αφήνοντας περιθώρια για περαιτέρω έρευνα.

**Λέξεις-κλειδιά:** Μεταφορά, Δημιουργικότητα, Αίσθηση, Συνάφεια, Ψυχικές Εικόνες

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## **Introduction**

Metaphors have permeated our speech habits for centuries, regardless of how much language has changed. Prevalent in art through poetry and literature, and inherent in our daily interactions, speakers have since long engaged both in their construction and comprehension. They have either been constructing them to communicate their thoughts and feelings, many times subconsciously, or they have been attempting to make sense of extended novel metaphor instances in art, discussing and comparing different interpretations with fellow interlocutors. Additionally, what could be argued is often overlooked is how the speaker perceives a metaphor, and the implications of yielding emotional reactions, which consequently leads to further creative constructions. Metaphors are the condiments of language; they enrich it, enhance it, and prevent it from being stagnant and predictable.

The remarkable linguistic existence of metaphor and their limitless potential for creative production is what motivated me to explore the machinations of metaphor, challenge some commonplace notions regarding their nature and their distinction between novel and conventional, and take a more in depth look to parameters of their creation and comprehension. These parameters have either been rigorously examined, or are in need of even further attention, like what Wilson and Carston (2019) have proposed as non-propositional effects, or the ever-perplexing issue of mental imagery. I will discuss how these notions could be complementary to what Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) have introduced as *cognitive effects*, defined as "...contextual effect(s) occurring in a cognitive system (e.g. an individual)" or more simply as "changes to an individual's beliefs." (1986/1995: 265). The theoretical framework my work will follow will be Sperber and Wilson's (1986/1995) Relevance Theory, in which speakers appear to show the tendency to seek information that is of utmost relevance. I will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Why are speakers driven to create metaphors? How do they materialize in speakers' minds and what are the factors that lead to their creation?

- How do speakers reach the various interpretations in their comprehension and what determines whether a metaphor will end up being conventionalized or considered as novel?

On the basis of these questions, the suggestions mentioned so far will be built upon as follows. Chapter one is divided in two parts. The first is concerned with the origins of metaphorical language and attempts are made to examine some initial reasons as to why speakers were led to stray off literal language to communicate. I also discuss metaphor under the lens of Relevance Theory and explain how metaphor comprehension is interpreted according to its principles. The second involves a comparative analysis of novel and conventional metaphors, before showcasing the effect culture and communicative usefulness have in their categories being better described as interrelated, since there is always a possibility an instance of one category to go closer to the other.

In Chapter 2 I start examining the role of affect in metaphor processing, so as to prepare the ground for their importance in my consequent discussions. Chapter 3 explores existing literature regarding the workings of human creativity, examines its dependence on culture, communicative usefulness and affect, and how these findings apply to metaphor processing. In Chapter 4 I suggest that mental imagery should be considered as a crucial part of metaphor processing and I attempt to provide a tentative definition based on the images' relation with memory, personal experiences, and emotions. Finally, in chapter 5 I first suggest that a possible reasoning for extended novel metaphorical creation is the need to verbalize the so-called *descriptive ineffability*, occurring when “speakers are never fully satisfied when they paraphrase expressive content using descriptive, i.e., nonexpressive terms” (Potts, 2007: 166), or to put it more simply, content that is “extremely difficult to pin down in conceptual terms” (Blakemore, 2011: 3538) I also highlight that motivation behind metaphorical creation and comprehension is not always necessarily social, but a personal matter.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Metaphor**

### **1.1. Metaphor: a retrospective**

#### *1.1.1 Origins*

The main aims of this thesis regarding the exploration of metaphor and its processes leads us back to when metaphor was first recorded. Dominguez (2015) suggests that metaphoric use in language emerged from the need of human communication to evolve and become more efficient through the introduction of visual aids, such as accompanying symbols, metonymies, and comparisons (A is similar to B). Being able to correlate two different images to evoke communicative meaning is indicative of the early humans' inclination to use ways other than literal language to get their point across, just as verbal communication improved upon the use of nonverbal and body language. In addition, similar to how communication itself must have initially been a highly adaptive fact, the same could stand for metaphorical use. Forceville, Hekkert and Tan's (2006) findings suggest that the human's unique ability to metaphorize is a highly adaptive trait and could have given the first humans who did so an evolutionary advantage. Metaphorical use could have also come involuntarily and as a natural result of common human communicative behavior. According to Tendahl and Gibbs (2008), metaphor motivation belies in recurring sensorimotor patterns of experience that are continually enacted in neural processes during the time of thinking, speaking and understanding. In that regard, Kecskes (2013) positions salience, which is dependent upon prior experience, as the prime factor for word selection and utterance formation. So it could be seen how the emergence of metaphorical use is a result of speakers needing to satisfy their communicative

intentions<sup>1</sup> in an optimal way but also as something that should not be regarded as something distinct and separate from ordinary speech behavior.

Another aspect regarding the origins of metaphor is how intrinsically social it is, and how from this early on matters of conventionalization of metaphor should be considered. A speech community achieving understanding of a particular chunk of metaphoric language contributes in its unison, by gaining what Johnson describes as “shared understanding”, meaning the cognitive effects that a linguistic community shares (Johnson, 1987: 206). Dominguez (2015: 252) suggests a possible monophyletic origin of metaphor, in which a particular group of speakers “discovered” metaphor by accident, and then spread to other populations. But taking into consideration the aforementioned claims about metaphoric use being a natural occurrence of language, it could be argued that metaphorical use was more likely to arise in any speech community, with its spread being equally probable. Besides fulfilling their communicative needs, the early uses of metaphor could have also very well taken place because speakers might have wanted to choose another form of self expression when it came to setting free their inner mental machinations. So this demonstrates the importance of taking ineffability into account when discussing the parameters that affect metaphor processing.

Initially dominant theories of metaphor, explain that speakers need to flout the conversational maxims of communication (Grice, 1975) or rules of speech acts (Searle, 1993) leading to the consequence of metaphor needing supplementary cognitive effort to process compared to literal discourse. However, findings by Carston (2010) which suggest that speed of comprehension depends on whether the metaphor’s nature is fully propositional or not, lead us to reject the established suggestion that literal meaning should be accessed first. Gibbs’ (1994) claims that metaphorical language does not require greater processing cost in comparison to literal, suggesting that human thought is inherently metaphorical and in our everyday communication metaphors are readily understandable as with their literal counterparts. Cross-examining that with findings that have labeled the search for relevance as the basic instinct for human cognition (Zipf, 1949) and an evolved

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<sup>1</sup> Defined by Bara (2010: 82) as “the intention to communicate something, plus the intention that that intention to communicate that particular something be recognized as such.”

outcome of a human's inclination to achieve greater efficiency in cognition (Sperber and Wilson, 2002), I am led to adopt and analyze the relevance theoretic perspective on metaphor for my study, developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995), which orbits around the communicative role of metaphor, leaving more space to examine and develop different parameters that might influence the mental processes regarding metaphor creation and comprehension. This would not be as plausible if we had to deal with the rigid conceptual mappings of source and target domains of the Cognitive Linguistic perspective (Gibbs and Tendahl, 2008).

### *1.1.2. Metaphor and Relevance Theory*

Wilson and Sperber (2008: 87) view human communication as first and foremost inferential communication. They claim that “the goal of inferential pragmatics is to provide an explanation on how the hearer comes to understand the speaker's meaning”. This is made possible by the expectations of relevance being precise and predictable enough, so as to effectively guide the hearer towards what the speaker intended to convey. (Wilson and Sperber, 2004: 607). They also state that speakers not only use linguistic content to get their message across but also a diverse set of actions (such as gestures of speech and writings), that are “manifestly intended to attract an addressee's attention and convey some content” (2008: 86). These actions are called ostensive stimuli, in which utterances could be said to be synonymous. Before I reach the claim regarding the diverse variables that should be considered during metaphor comprehension, I will first present metaphor comprehension at the conceptual level. The relevance-driven approach rests on two basic principles. The Cognitive Principle states that: ‘Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance’ (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995: 260). New inputs to cognitive processes interact with information that is already mentally-represented and lead to *positive cognitive effects* in the form of true implications, warranted strengthenings or contradictions of existing assumptions. The second, Communicative Principle of Relevance is based on the claim that speaker's utterances' main purpose is attracting the attention of a possible hearer, which in turn creates expectations of relevance: ‘Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.’(Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995: 260) The prime motivation for listeners to process and attempt to

comprehend metaphors according to relevance theory has to do with achieving optimal relevance. Optimal relevance could be achieved through the use of *ad-hoc concepts*, initially defined by Wilson and Carston (2007: 2) as an “occasion-specific sense, based on interaction among encoded concepts, contextual information and pragmatic expectations or principles.” In relevance-theoretic terms, Carston (2010: 301) claims that they are “just like other cases of loose use, for which a word’s standing linguistic meaning is pragmatically adjusted or modulated during comprehension.”

But how do hearers know they have achieved optimal relevance? Sperber and Wilson (2008: 88) identified two degrees: (a) the greater the *cognitive effects* achieved by processing an input, the greater its relevance. (b) the smaller the *processing effort* required to achieve these effects, the greater the relevance. So, the hearer, following a train of thought requiring the least processing effort, will stop when the interpretation they have arrived at, via order of accessibility, meets the expectations of relevance that are raised by the utterance itself through the evidence the speaker manifests in it. This coincides with Carston’s (2002: 47) claim that a speaker’s linguistic choices, within the limits of their knowledge and preferences, are in accordance of the hearer’s assumptions that will be recovered the most swiftly, providing encoded meaning that is just what is needed for the hearer’s inferential processes to be directed towards their intended meaning. Consider the metaphor “Joel is a fox.” The concept FOX will spawn an ordered array of assumptions, from which the hearer will select ones that satisfy the expectations of relevance created by the utterance most effectively (e.g. sly, cunning, deceitful, untrustworthy etc. rather than their physical characteristics). Thus, we are presented with the lexically encoded concept FOX, an animal, and the speaker’s intended meaning, which is the ad-hoc concept FOX\* that broadened the lexically encoded meaning which includes people with specific characteristics that are often attributed to this animal. Black (1955) refers to these evoked assumptions that lead the speaker to the relevant interpretation as the “system of associated commonplaces” (Black, 1955: 288). This system not only includes a concept’s encyclopedic knowledge, but also “half-truths or downright mistakes.” (Black, 1955: 287), just like what we saw with the FOX concept evoking certain assumptions that didn’t involve its standard features, but rather, a set of stereotypical

properties. As Black claims: “[The] important thing for the metaphor's effectiveness is not that the commonplaces shall be true, but that they should be readily and freely evoked.” (Black, 1955: 287). This finding reinforces the effect culture could have on metaphor comprehension, implying that there can be different associated commonplaces found in each speech community. More on the effect of culture in metaphor processes will be discussed in the following chapter.

Furthermore, the apparent strong influence of cognitive knowledge on metaphor processing could be shown by the implication that someone who is ignorant on the stereotypical properties of foxes will most likely not grasp the speaker's intended meaning, along with observations by Blasko and Connine (1993: 305) that previous experience with a metaphor or a class of metaphor might facilitate later comprehension. The strength of cognitive constrictions will also be apparent on the role of affect, which will be discussed in chapter 2. In addition, the role of context in metaphor comprehension should not be omitted. Listeners tend to rely on speakers' organizing designs to obtain cues that permit them to make out what the speakers are attempting to do with language (Boswell, 1986). So in the case above, should the hearers have faced difficulty in their efforts to interpret the speaker's meaning, in order to reach optimal relevance, they would seek cues in the surrounding contextual environment. In a study by Bambini et al. (2014), participants recovered the meaning of literary metaphoric phrases more efficiently when they were presented in context (i.e. the text they were originally from) than when they were presented in isolation.

Relevance theory additionally provides a more comprehensive account on utterance (and by extension metaphor) comprehension by introducing the distinction between explicatures and implicatures, and how the hearer interacts with them so as to arrive at the speaker's intended meaning. Sperber and Wilson define explicatures as explicitly communicated assumptions that come as a result of pragmatic inference fleshing out encoded meanings. Their content consists of both linguistically encoded and contextually inferred conceptual features. (Wilson and Sperber, 1986/1995: 182) On the other hand, implicatures are also communicative assumptions which are not communicated explicitly. The difference lies in the fact that while inferring explicatures depends on accessing linguistically encoded material first and foremost, and fleshing out these semantic representations, implicatures are a product of the

interaction of said explicatures and independently accessed contextual assumptions. Distinguishing between explicatures and implicatures is not a matter of a binary opposition, but rather a continuum wherein while implicatures can always be more or less strongly communicated; explicatures can be more or less explicitly done so. Their interrelatedness is further enforced by the fact that explicatures are communicated only partly explicitly since their content also consists of concepts that are pragmatically inferred, and that explicatures have to contextually infer the implicit content. Specifically, Sperber and Wilson (2008: 92) suggest that “the explicatures of an utterance must be such that, together with the implicit premises of the utterance, they warrant the derivation of its implicit conclusions (where both implicit premises and implicit conclusions are kinds of implicature)”.

The account above provides an explanation of how this explicitly and implicitly communicated content fit in the process of metaphor comprehension. The hearer has to tentatively interpret both explicit and implicit content of the speaker’s intended meaning in parallel rather than sequentially, and stop this process when both contents are “mutually adjusted”, meaning that the explicit content has contextually implied the implicated conclusions and they have both satisfied the hearer’s expectations of relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 2008: 101). So it is made further evident on how the hearer needs to retrieve the appropriate data from the evoked system of associated commonplaces of a particular concept as well as take into consideration the contextual cues that would be needed so to reach a holistic interpretation that meets the expectations of relevance raised by the metaphor.

Having provided a tentatively comprehensive account of metaphor comprehension on utterance level, it is worth to note that by relevance, Sperber and Wilson (2008: 88) not only mean a property characteristic of utterances or any other ostensive stimuli, but any property that an input that belongs in a mental process might possess, be it sights, sounds, utterances, thoughts, memories, suppositions etc. They may all be relevant to an interlocutor at a given time. Focusing on this finding, I will examine how other parameters like emotions, the effect of culture and the intervention of mental images contribute in achieving optimal relevance. So even though relevance theorists do not consider metaphors exceptional, and “there is no

mechanism specific to metaphor, no interesting generalisation that applies only to them.” (Sperber and Wilson, 2008: 84) there is nonetheless great interest to take an in depth look at all the observed factors that seem to make their production and comprehension possible.

## **1.2 Novelty and Conventionality**

### *1.2.1 Comparison*

As we have already seen, Relevance Theory makes use of the terms “explicature” and “implicature” to provide a more comprehensive account for utterance comprehension, in which an implicature can be either strongly or weakly interpreted. Sperber and Wilson (2008:99) state:

The speaker may have in mind a specific implication on which the relevance of her utterance depends, and a strong intention that the hearer should derive it; in that case, it is strongly implicated. At the other extreme, she may have in mind a vague range of possible implications with roughly similar import, any subset of which would contribute to the relevance of her utterance, and a weak intention, for any of the implications in that range, that the hearer should derive it; these are weak implicatures. (Sperber and Wilson, 2008:99)

The high and low strength of implicatures correspond to the understanding of conventional and novel metaphors respectively. Conventional metaphors have become a rudimentary part of our everyday interactions, while creative metaphors are an intrinsic part of the figurative speech, often thought to belong exclusively in the products of poetry and literature. Both categories are frequently perceived as situated on two extreme opposite ends, separate and distinct, employing different modes of processing. I argue against this claim, and suggest an interrelation in the creativity and conventionality of both, focusing on the claim that there exists a continuum among metaphors, ranging from extended, poetic ones, whose main feature is the ineffability that is prevalent in their creation and comprehension, to those that are conventionalized due to various factors, such as their possible spread in a speech community.

It is vital to first make the differences and similarities between novel and conventional metaphors clear. When it comes to novel metaphors, Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) describe them as expressions loosely used, and instead of yielding a precise and strongly implicated meaning like in the case of conventional metaphors, they instead convey a wide range of weak implicatures, which in turn renders creative metaphors unable to be paraphrased to a specific proposition so as to provide us with a plausible analysis about the speaker's explicit meaning (Sperber & Wilson, 2015). Interpretations are merely suitable ways to effectively grasp the speaker's intended meaning, what they actually want to convey, and not what they say. When such an interpretation successfully manages to explicitly present every possible aspect of what the speaker strongly implicated, then it is deemed a paraphrase. Otherwise, it is accepted that a specific explanation cannot be pinned down, and an attempt at exploring a range of possible closely associated meanings is instead going underway. In this case, we are referring to literary interpretations rather than paraphrases. Forceville and Clark (2014) have observed that there has been much more talk on the strength variance of implicatures than explicatures. This appears to be so because "variation in strength of implicatures is more often exploited for particular effects and because varying strength of implicatures is more salient in many contexts. (Forceville and Clark, 2014: 457). How strongly or weakly an implicature will be communicated depends solely on the strength of its manifestness by the speaker. In other words, by how strong the speaker's intention is for their intended meaning to be derived by the hearer. This is made apparent by the amount of evidence the speakers provide in the form of ostensive stimuli, which the hearers have to process along with contextual cues, so as to arrive at the intended meaning. As it has been partially touched upon, the weaker the speaker's intention is, the less evidence it provides, which results in a plurality of different interpretations, making it highly unlikely for the metaphor to be considered conventional.

Elaborating more on comprehension of the two kinds, a study by Blank (1988) suggests that while the recognition of a metaphor's novelty is recognized in the human mind as early as literal counterparts, the derivation of its meaning takes longer to process and is harder to infer. This could be related to George and Wiley's (2016) finding that the mental discarding mechanisms of metaphor-irrelevant aspects

of literal meaning is especially detected on processing demands related to novel metaphors. In the case of conventional metaphors, Genovesi (2019: 74) proposes a revised account of the Gricean model of metaphor in which metaphorical meaning depends less on literal meaning the more conventional the metaphor is, so hearers are concerned less with the role of literary meaning the more familiar and conventional a metaphor is. Moreover, on the matter of metaphor production, Benedek et al. (2014: 1) found that the production of creative metaphors was more strongly associated “with fluid intelligence and verbal fluency, pointing to the involvement of executive functions”, whereas the production of conventional metaphors involves general vocabulary knowledge. This demonstrates that conventional metaphors have become ordinary enough to appear as lexical entries, causing them to be immediately understood, while due to their abstract nature or due to lack of adequate context novel metaphors require more processing (Gregory & Mergler, 1990).

According to Carston’s (2010) processing modes, conventional metaphor processing falls within the first mode, in which the metaphorical meaning is being processed in a rapid, low-cost and online manner, with the encoded lexical content being accessed through the complementation of pragmatic enrichment. In such metaphors, the propositional meaning is easily paraphrased in a way it must fit the world the way it really is. The intention of the speaker is further enhanced by the literal content of the metaphor. The role of images plays a part in both processing modes, though in this first case it takes on much less time and effort to process the mental imagery that arises. More on the role of mental imagery in the processing of metaphor will be discussed in chapter 4. The second processing mode involves pragmatic implications being clearly separated from the encoded lexical meaning, since literal meaning is subjugated by slower more reflective inferences. Poetic metaphors take a higher cost of being processed and unlike the case of conventional metaphors; they correspond to an image of the world that has to fit the metaphorical language used.

Before I present my suggestion regarding the interrelatedness that could exist between the novelty and conventionality that is present in the variety of metaphor, it is important to argue about two primal factors that affect a metaphors longevity: culture and communicative usefulness, which will be shown to be complementary.

### *1.2.2 Culture and Communicative usefulness*

It is commonly known that not all metaphors have the same longevity. While some arise, develop gradually, and perish into irrelevance, others are described by Dominguez (2015: 241) as “living fossils”, meaning that even though they had very strong communicative strength in the past, they nonetheless don’t lose their usefulness when they enter a different communicative frame (Dominguez, Pineda and Mateu, 2014). Metaphors can communicate new ideas to a wide audience (Getz and Lubart, 1997) and ideas are like an epidemic: they proliferate and slowly stabilise (Sperber, 1996). Even novel ideas can still be made understood by being connected to a separate topic, revealing universal aspects of it, as metaphor in itself expresses the novel in familiar terms (Gordon, 1961). So it appears a big factor that would affect convention in creative metaphor and its spread and eventual prevalence is how communicatively useful will be. As Sperber and Claidière (2008: 2) suggest, “cultural information spreads across members of a population through their interactions, that is, through their producing, in their common environment, events and objects that carry information that others can pick up.” For this information to be exploited, learners must bring to bear on it not only general learning or imitation skills, but also domain-specific information and procedures already present in their minds. If specific interpretations of a novel metaphor are shared across a speech community, it is highly likely that it will reach its largest optimal core and become conventionalized. Coming back to Black’s system of associated commonplaces, he claims that what is important for a metaphor to be effective is not that the commonplaces involved will be true, but that “they should be readily and freely evoked.” (Black, 1955: 287) So it is evident that they may be different sets of “commonplaces” evoked from a particular concept in each culture, which is dependent by the ever shifting communicative frame.

The complementary nature of the effect that culture and communicative usefulness have on whether a metaphor will be spread and conventionalized is optimally described on Marti Dominguez’s article “On the Origin of Metaphors” (2015), which examined the birth and consequent spread of a slew of novel metaphors that arose

from cartoons made to honor the memory of the cartoonists from the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*. Dominguez provides a comparative account between metaphor and meme, going by Musolff (2008) who equates the efficiency of a metaphor to a meme, defined as “a sociocultural unit that can evolve via differential replication” (Croft, 2000). At what degree a meme will be replicated depends on its capacity for transmission, which is in turn directly dependent on the knowledge of the members of a speech community who share it and on the characteristics of each respective culture that the meme has appeared in (Weng, Flammini, Vespignani, and Menczer, 2012). This suggestion goes in line with what has already been mentioned in section 1.1. regarding the cognitive restrictions that affect metaphor comprehension.<sup>2</sup> So it could be agreed that metaphor behaves similarly to a meme. Even though I expressed my opposition towards Dominguez’s claim about a monophyletic scenario regarding the origin of metaphors as a whole, I nonetheless welcome this alternative reasoning for the production of new metaphors, which truly highlights how detrimental metaphors are to effectively communicate speakers’ (or in this case, illustrators) stance for a groundbreaking cultural event to a particular speech community. Specifically, Dominguez states:

[W]hen a communicative niche appears, due to a shocking cultural event that attracts the attention of the media, new metaphors arise to communicate and spread the information more efficiently. They are subject to a strong selection, adaptation, and exclusion process. (Dominguez, 2015: 247-248)

The metaphors evoked by the cartoons created following the murder of the cartoonists (“PENCIL IS A WEAPON”, “PENCIL IS FREEDOM” among others) transmitted the cartoonists’ message that pencils are a more powerful weapon than those of the terrorists. The importance of the metaphors’ communicative usefulness is particularly accentuated by the abundance of metaphors that came to be and by how fast the intended information was communicated. Dominguez (2015: 247) observes that “Different metaphors compete and the fittest occupy a place in the collective imagination, gradually forcing others aside.” This process resembles the relevance theory perspective on metaphors, in which only optimally relevant

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<sup>2</sup> Lack of knowledge on a particular concept’s associated commonplaces makes metaphor comprehension particularly difficult.

information prevails so that hearers can reach the speaker's intended meaning. The subjects of the study, the cartoonists, by utilizing every aspect of the "pencil" concept and exploring every possible scenario generated a diverse group of obscure, which would not have a comprehensible meaning before the day of the crime. This finding belies a lot of implications for the strong connection that a cultural event holds with emotional investment, creativity and ineffability, which will be further touched upon in consequent chapters. The first metaphors that arose had to do with standard associations with the pencil, which quickly paved the way for a great number of diverse communicative possibilities to get their message across, and their longevity entirely depended on the public's feedback on them. These metaphors consequently inspire even more new metaphors, which can all only be understood in the newly spawned communicative frame, and are subtypes of those few original metaphors. Gibbs and Cameron (2008: 65) correctly underline the importance of the interaction between the individual cognition and the social. It is indeed evident then at how the spread and potential conventionalization of a metaphor is strongly dependent on the distinctive features of each culture and how it best represents how a particular community wants to communicate their attitude and feelings, be it for a particular cultural event or not.

### *1.2.3 Interrelatedness*

As previously mentioned, novel and conventional metaphors are frequently considered to belong to two distinct categories which are situated on directly opposite ends of a spectrum. However, many studies have shown indications that blur this perceived distinction. While it has been argued that a metaphor being either conventional or novel could depend entirely on whether its contextual meaning is found in the dictionary (Semino, 2008: 19), Giora (1999) claims that in the case a word has two meanings retrievable directly from the lexicon, the meaning which is more popular, or more prototypical, or more frequently used in a certain community is more salient. This claim could very well extend to novel metaphorical meaning and account for its eventual conversion to a lexical entry. Considering the dead metaphor "can't hold a candle" to somebody, the imagery of its original rendition was based on historical context, referring to apprentices who used to hold candles up

for their masters to see what they were working on. If you are not even good enough to hold up the candle, you are nowhere near in the same league. So if you can't hold a candle to someone, you are saying that you are vastly inferior to that person in terms of skill or talent. This metaphor would seem very abstract to speech communities of immediate consequent ages, which would need additional contextual information to reach its metaphorical meaning, but through its prime shared interpretation, it has since been converted to a lexical entry. It could be said that it resembles what Nietzsche (1997: 92) describes as "Worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the senses". Despite occurrences and claims such as the aforementioned, it has nevertheless been argued that even a highly conventionalized metaphor has not lost its impact. Kövecses (2002) suggests that "The 'dead metaphor' account misses an important point: namely, that what is deeply entrenched, hardly noticed, and thus effortlessly used is most active in our thought. The metaphors . . . may be highly conventional and effortlessly used, but this does not mean that they have lost their vigor in thought and that they are dead. On the contrary, they are 'alive' in the most important sense—they govern our thought—they are 'metaphors we live by.'" McArthur (1992: 665) similarly notes that "The deadness of a metaphor and its status as a cliché are relative matters. Hearing for the first time that 'life is no bed of roses,' someone might be swept away by its aptness and vigor." From the above accounts, a complementary account between novelty and conventionality can be drawn, as nothing is rigid and separate.

I have described how new metaphors can emerge as a reaction to unexpected occurrences of cultural events, and how their state is subject to change so as to fit the ever-shifting communicative frames of a particular speech community. Moreover, how the reception of a metaphor is similarly dependent on the distinct features of a culture. These accounts reinforce the suggestion that novel and conventional metaphors should not be regarded as two isolated categories, but that many subsidiaries of both exist that can either become conventionalized or not lose their relevance in a particular frame. Having said this, since a metaphor's content does not only include a variety of propositions but imagistic and evocative elements as well. These complementary elements that will be shown to have a crucial role in both metaphor production and comprehension will be discussed in the following chapters.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Metaphor and Affect**

#### **2.1. The role of Affect**

Theoretical approaches to metaphor have advanced to the point where it would be empirically wrong for one to say that emotions play no significant part in the production and comprehension of metaphors. Citron (2012: 217) observes that stimuli which cause high emotional arousal require less time and effort to be attended to and evaluated by the addressee. This is connected to the finding that emotionally charged words have a great effect on implicit and more automatic stages of lexical access, which could have a connection to more efficient metaphor comprehension, since Citron (2012: 223) goes on to say that emotions facilitate word processing pre-lexically, that is, before the lexical meaning is activated, or when it has been processed to the minimum. Research conducted by Ifantidou (2019) in which unknown words metaphorically used had to be understood by EFL learners, it was found that the meanings provided were emotionally charged. This was due to the surrounding context leading the participants to evoke past experiences that had to do with specific facts, which in turn saw the spawning of implications related to a slew of negative emotions<sup>3</sup>. It is those emotions that greatly facilitated comprehension of those unknown words, whose propositional meaning could not be recovered. Reaffirming these findings, Ifantidou and Hatzidaki (2019: 79) propose that the role of images and emotions is of utmost importance to the understanding of metaphor and the recovery of propositional effects.

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<sup>3</sup> The role of mental images will be discussed in the relevant chapter.

Following Carston's (2010: 300) initial proposition that in order for a metaphor to be fully understood, propositional effects such as concepts and thoughts are more often than not assisted by non-propositional effects like emotions and images, Wilson and Carston (2019: 2) go on to describe the latter effects' characteristic features:

- different audiences paraphrase them in rather different ways;
- no finite paraphrase captures all their nuances;
- they are often described as 'open-ended';
- they typically involve the activation of perceptual, emotional or sensorimotor mechanisms.

These features appear to correlate with the findings explored in the preceding chapter that different speech communities provide differing interpretations of metaphors, and whose reception of it will determine their longevity in the speech habits of a particular culture. Also, the fact that no particular paraphrase can capture their essence raises a connection with novel metaphors, since their comprehension operates similarly. So it would be sensible that non-propositional effects take on a much greater role in the understanding of novel metaphors. As it is apparent, this chapter is dedicated on the activation of emotional mechanisms. Getz and Lubart (1997: 286) in their study on the importance of emotions on metaphor similarly talk about idiosyncratic emotions organized by psychological factors, often called affective experiences or feelings, which are "multi-dimensional, conceptually rich, and cannot be described in terms of socially determined emotional categories". In a study by Wharton and de Saussure (2020), the above claims are elaborated further with the introduction of *affective effects*, which arise through the elicitation of an emotional state, and facilitate significantly what is worth paying attention to, thus being crucial in achieving optimal relevance. It is important to note their approach on perceiving emotions as involving the interaction between the *cognitive* element necessary for an emotion proper, as well as the *physiological* and *qualitative* elements involved in sensations and feelings. Isen (1987) similarly claims that when in an emotional state, people may notice stimuli in the environment that they would usually overlook, or they may interpret stimuli in novel ways due to their emotional perspective. Emotions are also instrumental in inspiring creative thought and praxis.

MacCormac (1986: 181) suggests that “the mark of a creative poet, scientist, or theologian arises from the individual's ability to change the normal way of conceiving of things and reconceiving them in a new conceptual system expressed in highly suggestive metaphoric language” and that “the creator of a metaphor must desire to proclaim a new insight or feeling, and knowledge of this desire may be conscious or unconscious”. Getz and Lubart (1987: 288) propose that emotions can elicit specific concepts that may contribute to creative thinking and “individualized, experientially acquired emotion is a key for finding a metaphorically relevant link between distant concepts or images”. These views mark the connection between emotions and creativity as inherent. More on this connection is touched upon in the following chapter.

We are coming back to Dominguez's (2015) research on the outburst of novel metaphors that spawned in the French media due to the unjust death of a group of cartoonists. I believe it is a prime example on how an interlocutor's (be it a speaker or a writer or an illustrator in the present case) urge to express their emotions about something they have been deeply affected by, leads them to rapid metaphor production. The cartoonists managed to transmit their rage, sorrow and bafflement effectively and at a very fast pace through their message that their pencils are a more powerful weapon than the ones of the terrorists. This message was widely accepted and embraced by readers, which is indicative of how strong the emotional impact of a cultural event can be. The strength and effectiveness of the lasting metaphor “PENCIL IS A WEAPON” is a testament on how crucial the parameter of affect is. The study also accentuates how a shift in the illustrators' emotional state directly affected the nature of the metaphors produced. Shortly after the advent of the attack, emotions among creators were tense and negative, with outrage and pain governing their creations, evident by the outbreak of military metaphors. But as some time passed, and tensions were not as high, the emergent communicative framework rotated around the “PENCIL IS FREEDOM” metaphor, which represents Western democratic values that are in opposition with the intents behind the attack. This communicative frame, defined by peace and quiet instead of fury and despair, managed to send the universal messages of hope and freedom of speech, with the visual metaphor of a pigeon holding a pencil instead of an olive branch standing in direct opposition to the pencil being depicted as a weapon of mass destruction.

## 2.2. Cognitive Restrictions

Affective effects are not alone in their influence over the comprehension of metaphors, but rather interact with cognitive effects, as the human mind is always geared towards relevance. These effects “guide” the listeners to pick up an utterance as metaphorical, so their impact is evident, as without them, we wouldn’t even be in the position to talk about comprehensions of meanings that are not even recognised by the listeners. Getz and Lubart (1997) argue that a reason for individual differences in creativity could be the proposition that listeners differ with regard to the acquisition of concepts and images in their memory system. Wharton and De Saussure (2020) seem to agree in their claim that only some aspects of knowledge are representational, adding that some sensations can only be talked about when experienced. For example, consider the metaphor:

(1) Happiness is the china shop. Love is the bull.  
(H.L. Mencken, *A Little Book in C Major*)

A listener who is not aware of the expression “a bull in a china shop” will fail to make an acceptable interpretation and extract the metaphorical meaning.

## Chapter 3

### Metaphor and Creativity

#### 3.1 Previous research

It can be agreed that every first instance of a particular word being used to refer to anything can be considered a metaphor. In this sense, all early instances of recorded metaphor started out as being considered novel. As soon as a speaker chooses to use figurative language rather than a stale literal utterance to describe someone or something, express an emotion, or to fulfill any communicative purpose, it ceases to be able to be perceived as common or conventional. But why are speakers driven to use figurative language, if they can immaculately achieve relevance through literal means? The answer to this question is irrevocably related to the human capacity for 'creativity' even though creativity poses no necessary use for communication to be effective or for our intentions to be understood. A great deal of existing research in the fields of psychology and philosophy among others has attempted to provide explanations for this question. It is worthy they be reviewed so as to get a more refined outlook on how creativity poses an important factor for the creation and comprehension of metaphors.

Regarding the origins of creativity, Bickerton (1995) proposes that the human capacity for creative thinking is a by-product of language. Boden (2004) classifies creativity as being either *historical*, meaning its novelty holds value to society, or *psychological*, with it concerning a particular individual. It is the latter that has gathered the most scientific interest, the examination of what is considered novel by a particular speaker going on to develop and expand as being considered novel on a

wider radius. Psychological creativity is described as being further divided into agent-neutral and agent-relative creativity. Agent-neutral creativity concerns the novelty of ideas, behaviours and products that are of value for an objective or for a communally agreed upon sense. Agent-relative psychological creativity concerns novelty for each respective agent.

At this point, it is of note to draw distinctions between novelty and potential creative activity in animals and humans. The most mutually agreed upon account on the structure of psychological creativity is the “GENEXPLORE” model of creative cognition (Finke et al. 1992; Finke 1995; Ward et al. 1999). This account is most commonly recognized to be divided in two stages. The “generate” stage involves novel conceptions being created and entertained, and the “explore” stage in which these ideas are processed, evaluated by the speaker and utilized in relevant ways. The duality of this model is exactly what separates incidental originality recorded in animal behavior and the unique processes of human creative thought. It is one thing to possess the capability to generate novelty in a special domain, such as some animals appear to do, and another altogether to have the disposition to make use of these capabilities so as to be maximally relevant. The question that we are led to is how this disposition comes about. A finding suggests that creativity can be enhanced through the very conscious intention to be creative (Baumeister et al. 2007). So what causes speakers to gain this apparent conscious intention to generate and implement novel ideas?

Picciuto and Carruthers (2014) suggest that this disposition is made manifest in a culturally constructed framework. They claim that “Perhaps it depends upon cultural frameworks that reward creativity and that consequently instill in people the explicit goal of being creative” (2014: 9). In addition, drawing from previous research on the arbitrary relation between tradition and creativity, Gaut (2010) suggests that since the existence of traditions predates that of creativity, and traditions are inherently social, then creativity must be inherently social in a similar way. This sociocultural approach to the nature of creativity could provide a clear concrete distinction between animal novel behavior and human creativity. Since creative ideas and products such as works of art, inventions, and in our case, literary creations ranging from fictional

texts and poems to everyday uses of figurative language, are proven to be valuable to others, they therefore fall under the agent-neutral classification of psychological creativity, while a lot of animal novelty remains agent-relative. More importantly, this approach provides partial insight on why speakers are driven to create, interpret and share pieces of figurative language.

### **3.2 The effect of culture and society**

For an artistic, scientific, or technological creative product to be considered of “value”, it has to propose something original, and to achieve the validation and appreciation of the intended community of interest. Research has shown that the plausibility of a product being creative rests on the evaluation of a field of experts through the use of an array of standards “of the historically conditioned domain of activity” (Amabile; Csikszentmihalyi; Sawyer 117–54, as quoted in Gaut, 2010: 1037). I argue that the critique of a wider group in a community should also be accounted for, and not only that of those who are considered experts. If the scope of the evaluation of an artistic product is limited, the claim that creativity is inherently social is nullified. This could prove particularly true in the case of linguistic production.

What is considered “valuable” in the case of metaphor then? The answer could lie in the accounts of relevance theory, in which every piece of communication is geared towards optimal relevance. Speakers could resort to figurative language to fulfill their communicative needs most effectively, achieving optimal relevance through what they perceive to be the most accurate representations of their beliefs, thoughts and emotions. Similarly, per relevance theory, hearers recognize the intended communicated message through implicatures and then select, in other words choose to “adopt” and share the metaphors which they find represent similar beliefs, ideas and emotions to theirs. This selection is different per speech community and culture, an observation which results in a diverse spread of a variety of metaphors. Through this, we could assume that a valuable metaphor is one that is most communicatively useful. The differing selection of metaphors is directly linked to the aforementioned issue of the interrelatedness that exists between novelty and conventionality and the

factors that determine them. A specific variant of metaphor will spread across a community and become conventional due to that community's standards and needs, while another might stay stagnant and fall to obscurity in another. Nonetheless, it is apparent how individually created instances of metaphor that fulfill the agent's communicative needs (agent-relative psychological creativity), could go on to be agreed upon in a particular speech community (agent-neutral psychological creativity), and even reach the level of historical creativity, with the metaphor becoming conventionalized.

### **3.3. Creativity and affect**

But are culture and society the only factors that account for creative thinking and production? Picciuto and Carruthers (2014: 10) suggest that speakers are not entirely culturally driven to gain the disposition for creativity. Moreover, they claim that despite fluctuations in the rates of creative activity, it is nonetheless recorded in significant amounts in every culture. Then what could be shown to stand as a complementary factor for metaphor motivation? I suggest that this gap could be filled by the influence of affective effects in cognitive processes.

It could be likely that in many cases, it is not that creative thinking occurs consciously in the human mind, but subconsciously, either as a product of our emotional reactions to stimuli, or precisely as a way to describe how we feel about something. Instead of speakers being encouraged for more creative thinking through communal rewards, they instead create metaphors to fulfill their own communicative needs. It will then depend on the interlocutors on whether the metaphorical instance will be deemed useful, and consequently adopted, shared and spread. A similar point can be made for metaphor interpretation. In the case of novel metaphors, each loose interpretation that is in some accordance with the speaker's intended communicated meaning, is dependent on personal factors arising from the interaction of affective with cognitive effects, which could then become dominant based on their similarities. According to Aristotle (1105a 33–4, as quoted in Gaut, 2010: 1036), creative motivation is a matter of virtue, wherein virtuous actions will be taken for their own sake; motivation is thus “intrinsic, rather than instrumental”. Moreover, Cropley et

al. (2008) proposed that an act could be considered creative if it does not only showcase originality, but a tendency to fulfill the agent's purposes. The role of affect regarding creative motivation could be further enhanced by the role of ineffability, which will be examined in the last chapter. So it could be seen that a more comprehensive account that goes beyond sociocultural reasoning can be proposed regarding creative motivation.

### **3.4 Connection with metaphor processing**

Related work on the workings of creativity could prove to be insightful at a certain degree when it comes to the machinations of the human mind regarding metaphor processing. It has been suggested that a crucial requirement of creativity is conscious attention (Picciuto and Carruthers, 2014). Studies have shown that characteristics of creative individuals are their capability to be vigilant of irrelevant details, and simultaneously “maintain a range of activated representations that aren't obviously relevant to the task in hand” (2014: 21). In other words, being creative means being open and acceptive of a slew of diverse ideas, while suppressing more common and conventional ones without loss of focus. The same could be said to apply in metaphor processing. Speakers seem to be able to bypass the common and utmost relevant linguistic choices (literal expressions) to satisfy their communicative needs, and instead make connections between concrete and abstract concepts to generate metaphor. It is important to always take into account the prevalent role of affect that could manipulate the degree of agency in those choices together with the array of cognitive factors already discussed. This suggestion surpasses metaphor creation and consequently extends to how hearers interpret those metaphors, tracing the novel connections the speaker made in an attempt to reach their intended message. Additionally, Gaut (2010) summarizes that for an action to be identified as creative, it needs not to be accidental, not to stem from mechanical cognitive processes, and to have the capacity of being understood and evaluated. Once again, metaphor processing seems to fit under most of these prerequisites. Metaphorical creative motivation, be it conscious or not, always aims to serve the speaker's communicative purpose and metaphorical instances are in accord with the utterance the speaker desires to convey.

### 3.5 Role of Imagination

It is worth making note of the crucial role of imagination in metaphor processing. Gaut (2014) draws a distinction between passive creativity and active creativity. In the former, novel ideas arise unprompted, while in the latter one investigates various alternative ideas when working towards a task or problem. Imagination is claimed to be the vehicle of active imagination. This distinction seems to show similarities with the aforementioned GENEXPLORE model, with creative ideas and projects being created versus them being evaluated and used in relevant ways. Metaphor processes seem to be cases of active creativity. An instance of figurative language that is left unsaid holds no value, for it never goes on to fulfill the communicative purpose of the speaker or be exposed to the judgment and evaluation of other interlocutors. Metaphors are continuously utilized to give an alternative outlook on how each speaker perceives the world around them, and if they are not made manifest/enunciated to prove that point across, then there is likely no immediate use in discussing their degree of creativity. Another account on the interrelatedness of creativity and imagination comes from Beaney's (2005) connection model, in which creativity consists of the creation of connections by way of using imagination to link two dissimilar domains; very similar to what occurs in metaphor processing. This approach is more reminiscent of the cognitive theory of metaphor, with matchmaking between abstract and familiar concepts taking place.

Kant's findings on the relation of creativity and imagination introduce the peculiar yet highly intriguing concept of aesthetic ideas, describing them as the "representation of imagination that occasions much thinking without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e. concept, to be adequate to it." (Ak. 5: 314, as quoted in Gaut, 2010: 1038). At first glance, Kant's definition could very well initially lead one to think about artistic creative creations, wherein a representation depicted in a work of art cannot be adequately described or confined under a specific concept. However, Kant's pieces of evidence for this term all originate from poetry, which could imply that by "aesthetic ideas" he means novel metaphors themselves. And that could very well be true. The relevance theory perspective of novel metaphors, describing them as loosely used expressions yielding a variety of weak

implicatures, and whose meaning cannot be exhausted in a single paraphrase, appears to go in line with what Kant suggests. Kolaiti (2019, 2020ab) suggests that the existence of artistic inputs does not only yield cognitive effects, but rather initiate an aesthetic response which is not propositional, but sensory and perceptual. Taking everything into account, we could conclude that the role of affective effects once again comes to the foreground, and accentuates their presence and interaction with creativity.

In this chapter I attempted to provide an account of creativity in relation to metaphor, starting from its origins and what it takes for one to be motivated leading to the workings of creativity and its relation with imagination. Existing literature and my provided suggestions have traced a link between creativity and the perspective of Relevance theory regarding metaphor processing, and the role of affect was repeatedly stressed. The following chapter will expand upon the factor of mental images and how they fit into the existing framework.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Metaphor and “Mental Images”**

#### **4.1. Contribution in Metaphor Processing**

Having examined the role of affective effects in processes involving metaphor production and comprehension, we now turn our focus to another composite of non-propositional effects which has been the object of highly perplexing thoughts in metaphor study: the elusive mental images. They are frequently brought up on interlocutors' accounts in an attempt to describe their impressions upon being exposed to a particular metaphor. Taking the metaphor “He was burned up” that has for a long time become dead, Davidson (1978: 38) states that when the metaphor was active, one would have pictured fire in the eyes or smoke coming out of the ears of the person in question. This claim is directly relevant with what I have previously mentioned regarding Nietzsche (1997: 92) describing dead metaphors as “powerless to affect the senses”. So it is directly apparent how mental images seem to activate the speakers and hearers' sensorimotor systems. Focusing on previous findings that novel metaphors take significantly longer to process and comprehend (Giora, 2003; Lai et al., 2009, as referenced in Wilson and Carston, 2019) and evoke more sensorimotor systems on the brain than conventional metaphors (Just, 2008; Desai et al., 2011 as referenced in Wilson and Carston,(2019), Wilson and Carston (2019) hypothesise that the higher cost of processing could very well be due to the brain being conscious of the evoked mental images. They are consequently used in order to

facilitate comprehension of an extended metaphor whose meaning is difficult to deduce at first glance. Carston's previous account of the two processing modes of metaphor (2010), similarly notes that the second processing mode, which is more costly and involves slower, more reflective processes, is most likely attributed to novel metaphors.

Carston also later reinforced his view that certain metaphors bring forth the activation of mental images that are steadily conceived by the addressees and greatly contribute for an array of propositions to be more strongly manifested, so as to reach optimal relevance. Consider the metaphor:

(2) Her mouth is a fountain of delight.

– Kate Chopin, *The Storm*

The visual imagery of the nominal “fountain” triggers sensorimotor simulations in the mind of the readers or hearers involving the sparkling coursing water of a forceful fountain, the perceptual movement of water rising and falling bringing the sense of coolness to the surface. This could lead us to certain interpretations about the writer's description of this part of the woman's body. It is important to note that further contextual cues from the surrounding linguistic environment are needed in order to reach more concrete conclusions, as the writer could either be referring to this woman's mouth as an object of lust or as a vehicle of her eloquence. This further shows the importance of context and a previously reported finding (Bambini et al., 2014) that novel metaphors presented in context yield higher percentages of understanding than when presented in isolation. Overall, Wilson and Carston (2019) suggest that mental images could be accepted as implicatures that are weakly communicated and which might play a very crucial role in a metaphor's interpretation process. In their article, they further argue that mental images cannot be similar to the other non-propositional effects in that they do not have the capacity to be part of the output of an inferential comprehension process aiming to capture a speaker's intended meaning. They further claim that mental images cannot be made manifest, though their function to invoke sensorimotor simulations is still manipulated by skillful language users through creative linguistic products. Through

this chapter, I will attempt to counter this claim, as I believe that an entity does not have to be made manifest to denote its presence and consequent role in a comprehension process.

Carrying on from this suggestion, I will explore the connections mental images have with emotions and their functions as carriers of personal experience. I am bringing up Carston's account wherein he describes the function of mental images as them bringing forth "emergent properties" that are otherwise not directly associated with elements pertaining to the literal meaning encoded in the concept of the metaphor, and he notes such properties to be emotions or experiences (Carston, 2010: 314). Such creative and imagistic uses of metaphor, in which the literal interpretation meshes with a variety of implications that come as a result of slowly and consciously reflecting on the mental images that have arisen (Carston, 2010: 307), seem to fall under Carston's aforementioned second mode of processing, which is often attributed to novel metaphors. Carston further claims that images are formed in our minds in parallel with literal meaning rather than after it has been decoded (2010: 314), and that said imagery seems to be the source of the affective dimension of many metaphors' effects (2010: 312).

Following Carston's suggestions, Ifantidou and Hatzidaki (2019) further suggest that mental imagery combined with the emotions they make manifest could prove useful in recovering propositional elements in places where it is not possible to be fully recovered (e.g. in the case of EFL material). What has not been touched upon during my discussion of Ifantidou's (2019) research from chapter 3 on the importance of emotions towards EFL students understanding unknown words in the L2 was the role of mental imagery in this contribution. In the metaphor "The immigrants' plight paints a horrific picture of a regionwide network of human trafficking", participants provided the definitions for the unknown word "plight" as "crisis", "mass", "a lot of people" etc. It is described that these meanings were derived from participants "looking at" a mental image while drawing from their personal experience. The emotions that were evoked put into the forefront certain relevant sociocultural facts that participants are aware of and have been previously exposed to (e.g. immigrants' plight in Europe, the devastating war in Syria etc.). These facts in turn activate

specific implications related to negative emotions thus greatly facilitating metaphor comprehension. These findings make us realize how interconnected emotions and mental images are in their crucial role towards metaphor comprehension, and to a lesser extent, how culture and cognitive restrictions still make their presence known as significant parameters to the whole process.

Through their collaborative research, Ifantidou and Hatzidaki (2019: 88) reaffirm Carston's account that mental imagery is permeating any metaphor processing mode by suggesting that emotional, imagistic meaning and literal paraphrases impact the interpretation of metaphors in EFL settings, and note that these images spring from autobiographical experience. Therefore, we can easily trace the personal character that mental images possess, and how they intrinsically interact with affective effects. Though as it has been shown they can also be of use to recover propositional elements as well, making metaphors a useful linguistic tool. Other studies are attuned with the above claims, with Draaisma (2000: 17) describing metaphors as "efficient storages of information" thus noting their effectiveness in recovering past experiences quickly. When it comes to a metaphor's longevity, Musoff (2004) suggests that a metaphor is more likely to stay relevant if it is "conceptually flexible and experientially grounded", referring to the latter as needed so that core elements can be made consistent.

Given these findings, it is challenging not to suggest that mental imagery should be considered part of the comprehension process to reach a speaker's meaning. Even though they cannot be made manifest and are entities that can only be experienced inwards, they nonetheless have been crucial in their contribution towards the very existence of unique and varied interpretations, that in turn give rise to new metaphorical use. Their utility is two-fold, in that they are closely associated with affective effects and evoke emotionally-loaded implications that greatly facilitate the comprehension process, and that consequently these implications manage to recover propositional elements in contexts that is otherwise near impossible to do so. In the hypothetical scenario in which our brains could not have such mental machinations thus interlocutors would not be in a position to report their existence or present them as evidence to enunciate their train of thought, metaphors produced would be much

more plain and poor in their poetic force and expressive magnitude, and similarly interpretations would be much fewer in number and more challenging to reach. For these reasons, the importance of mental imagery is elevated and it is but fair to suggest that it should be considered as part of at least the metaphor comprehension process.

## **4.2 Exploring a possible definition**

Even if mental images cannot be made manifest, their role in metaphor comprehension requires attention. I will attempt to draw some tentative conclusions as to their nature on the basis of a range of studies, summarised in the next paragraph.

First, I will examine Forceville and Clarke's (2014) research on whether pictures can have explicatures of their own, and apply that to metaphor comprehension as well as ask whether it can be applied to mental images. The study focuses on coded elements of nonverbal communication as discussed by Wharton (2009), as well as coded pictorial meaning discussed by Forceville (2011). Their suggestion is that forms of nonverbal communication can include coded meanings and give rise to "explicature-like" meanings similar to those of linguistic utterances, and can be differentiated from implicatures. Their findings suggest the existence of certain types of visuals containing coded elements, which are inferentially enriched in "explicature-like" ways. What is more of interest is the indication that these coded elements can only be made understood by those who are aware of this code, similar to language (Forceville and Clarke, 2014: 462). Could this finding apply in the case of mental imagery which is activated in our brains when producing or being exposed to a (most likely novel) metaphor? Since findings discussed so far pose mental imagery as being interrelated with autobiographical experience and emotions, we can quickly dismiss the possibility of mental images possessing a uniform and concrete code that can be readily recognized and processed by any individual. Since their internal structure is still up for debate, it remains to be seen whether they bear any

resemblance to images that can be directly accessed, but we can nonetheless not be certain about such a claim.

Forceville and Clarke proceed with examining non-coded elements of ostensive pictures and the slew of implications they could communicate. The example being a comic by David Shuter enables us to draw similarities with the aforementioned visual metaphors that were deduced from the uproar of French comics in chapter 2. Results showed that Shuter's cartoon yielded both more specific inferences that arose from "fleshing out" representations of elements of the picture, while weaker inferences correspond to "assumptions about the world interacting with a representation of what the whole image represents, and thus are more 'implicature-like'." (Forceville and Clarke 2014: 464) Such inferences can also be traced in the French cartoons. The pencils being represented as weapons or symbols of freedom yield the conceptual metaphors "PENCIL IS A WEAPON", "PENCIL IS FREEDOM" etc. while further processing combined with the sociocultural event of the attack drove readers to perceive the cartoonist's uniform message: that freedom of speech is greater than the violence of the terrorists and that hope is what prevails. So, the suggestion that the non-coded elements found in ostensive pictures activate assumptions that resemble explicatures and implicatures seems to indeed apply to visual metaphor comprehension.

But could it also apply to the processing of mental imagery in our attempts to deduce a novel metaphor? I believe that we cannot be confident to reach a definite conclusion. And this rests on the parameters of display and cognition. Regarding the former, Forceville and Clarke (2014) state that similarly to the mutually adjusting processes of ostensive stimuli that are seen on relevance theory, the same can be observed with pictures. Addressees can make initial hypotheses by focusing on specific parts of the pictures and make necessary adjustments as they turn their attention to other parts, while elements such as the lighting, the coloring, the size etc. are also taken into account by the addressee. Moreover, it is suggested that while a stream of words or sounds is presented to the listener gradually, a picture is presented at once. We cannot have this luxury in the case of mental images. Their perplexing nature which goes in direct opposition with pictures we are exposed to obstructs the

suggestion that interlocutors can detect specific parts of the image and accordingly adjust assumptions as they take note of more elements, or the certainty that this image is presented holistically in the mind. In regards to the matter of cognition, Barthes (1986: 35) claims that picture comprehension requires cultural knowledge on the part of the viewer, and the necessity to possess certain “lexicons”. It also requires knowledge of conventions and different genres, among others (Forceville and Clarke, 2014: 469) Similar to what was mentioned previously regarding the code, mental images do not seem to impose these requirements upon an interlocutor, because what becomes manifest in our brains is something entirely personal and is activated in order to best make sense of what we are exposed to, or to better enunciate what we have in mind.

From these examinations, we can observe that mental images do not appear to serve the same function as readily accessible images, and share Forceville and Clarke’s view on the apparent existence of a similar distinction between explicature-like mechanisms and implicatures. Rather, the function of mental images leans more on their interaction with emotions and their ability to make manifest representations from our personal experiences thanks to our memories so as to activate such emotionally loaded implications and crucial propositional information beyond an utterance’s literal meaning. Whether these implications can fall under either category of the explicature-implicature distinction remains to be seen.

Rey (1981) attempted to answer the question of whether these representations that govern our mental machinations include images at all, or whether their nature is propositional and thus non-imagistic. He addresses their affective force that has been pointed out by describing them as “a source of pleasure or pain” (1981: 117), and explains that visual experiences always seem to contain objects concerning “as if” experiences in some particular space (1981: 118) and states that it has never been illuminated just what kind of visual properties mental images have, or even if they have any at all. This validates my previous statements that we are not in the position to draw any definite conclusions about mental images resembling the function of actual images that can be outwardly perceived. His choice to better refer to mental images as “image-experiences” reaffirms how mental images are centered around our

personal stories and journeys that are recovered by memory. After classifying images into functional and eye-accessible categories<sup>4</sup>, Rey suggests that the processing of image experiences might bear resemblance with that of actual perceptual experiences, thus mimicking the processes when we are actually outwardly exposed to an image. But due to uncertainties regarding whether image experiences actually contain images themselves as well as the indefinite conclusions regarding whether they bear visual properties at all leaves Rey to draw the tentative conclusion that in the end we could not even be certain about the reported nature of these image experiences and their objects, and whether it comes to bear any significance at all.

I propose that these very reports of people hold more than enough value to attempt and grasp the nature of mental imagery's existence, no matter how elusive it currently is and how challenging such an endeavor might be. And most importantly due to how significant they seem to be in enriching metaphorical use both in production and comprehension. The difficulties that researchers come across not only arise due to the fact that there is no direct way to observe and access them in real time, but also, due to how diverse they can be for people. Mental imagery is shown to be interconnected with autobiographical memory and emotions, and the uniqueness of both these entities from person to person is exactly what is giving metaphors their plurality and diversity. These mental entities often account for emotionally charged implications to arise which play a crucial part in what gives metaphors their beauty, and at the same time said affective effects foreground even more of our personal experiences. This processing would not be possible without the functions of memory and imagination. So these processes vary from person to person, because each of us has different experiences, different emotional reactions to specific stimuli, and thus a unique way to perceive and visualize metaphorical language.

Tentatively, I suggest that what is most commonly labeled as mental images could be described as manifestations that are instigated by outward ostensive stimuli (in our case, metaphorical language) and which make their presence known through

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<sup>4</sup> In which functional are being described as ones who can be computationally processed and eye-accessible all those which can be readily perceived though not necessarily in the position to be scanned and processed, like television images or oscilloscope depictions

mnemonic recovery in the human brain. Cognitive factors are likely to restrict what information will be brought to the surface so as to arrive at a personally satisfactory and optimally relevant interpretation. They consequently interact with affective effects and the product of this collaboration seems to be both propositional and emotionally laden implications depending on the interlocutor's needs. So until more definite answers can be given on the internal structure of mental imagery, it is vital to highlight their usefulness in making communication so distinctive.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Ineffability and Individuality**

In the preceding chapters, I have attempted to provide a comprehensive account on the origins of metaphor and a thorough examination of the possible parameters that come into play when speakers and listeners are led to its creation and comprehension. I have highlighted the importance of non-propositional effects in these processes. All findings discussed and conclusions drawn have been in the confines of relevance theory. In this chapter, I will discuss the reasoning behind the rise of metaphorical activity as a means to most accurately express what speakers *feel*, and propose that the interpretive choices of the interlocutors are not made strictly with the intention to find a common ground so as to reach optimal relevance, like relevance theory suggests, but in many cases, it can be something much more loose and differing from individual to individual.

#### **5.1. Ineffability**

One of the most commonly agreed upon uses of metaphor is that it gives speakers the capability to express ideas, beliefs etc. that would otherwise be challenging to convey through the use of literal language (Ortony, 1975). This holds true in many commonplace instances of metaphor wherein concepts that might seem difficult or abstract are made more comprehensible through being compared to concepts that are easier to comprehend, as per Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphor theory (1980). This process involves uni-directional mappings from a more concrete or physical domain (source) onto a more abstract one (target). This brought to the surface many globally known conceptual pairs such as "LIFE IS A JOURNEY", "ARGUMENT IS WAR" "TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT" etc. that has long being

established as efficient ways to make sense of these concepts. But what happens when comparisons are not that straightforward? What happens in the case where, even seemingly simple concepts are compared to concepts that are so unexpected, when we already have mappings such as the above? Consider the metaphors:

(3) Time, you old gipsy man,

Will you not stay,

Put up your caravan

Just for one day?

– Ralph Hodgson, *"Time, You Old Gipsy Man"*

(4) Time is the reef upon which all our frail mystic ships are wrecked.

– Noel Coward, *"Blithe Spirit"*

(5) But that's where I am, there's no escaping it. Time's a trap, I'm caught in it.

– Margaret Atwood, *"The Handmaid's Tale"*

(6) Time is a storm in which we are all lost. Only inside the convolutions of the storm itself shall we find our directions.

– William Carlos Williams, Introduction to *"Selected Essays"*

If “TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT” is proved to be such a commonplace way to talk about time, one in which will most likely be understood by a large amount of speakers, why do these writers instead opt for such differing novel ways to describe time? In a similar vein, why do lovers choose to indulge in metaphorical language and create such extended novel metaphors when they can stick to standard metaphorical instances of expressing how they feel? Isn't the reason why the metaphor “Juliet is the Sun.” is so impactful and worthy of discussion because Shakespeare placed the Romeo character to express his love in such an unorthodox way? What exactly causes such a constellation of extended complex metaphors and, hence, consequent interpretations?

MacCormac (1986) claims that while painters rarely retrieve words when they draw on past experiences as the basis for creating a new work of art, poets' attempts at expressing passionately experienced events struggle to find words adequate to represent their feelings. In the writers' case, where words are necessary to the production of an artwork, it seems something of an irony that they would regard finding the right words to be challenging! But I would argue that is what leads writers to metaphorical use and what gives metaphors their poetic force. The creation of poetic and novel metaphors in general is a product of this struggle, I contend, and represents an attempt to articulate a range of abstract concepts. Creators struggle precisely because their passion cannot settle for rudimentary descriptions of concepts which have left a strong emotional impact on them and which are connected to core experiences that have shaped their perception of these concepts. Consider the following metaphors about love:

(7) Oh, love is a journey with water and stars,  
with drowning air and storms of flour;  
love is a clash of lightnings,  
two bodies subdued by one honey.  
– Pablo Neruda, *Sonnet 12*

(8) Love is a dog from hell.  
– Charles Bukowski, *Love Is a Dog From Hell*

(9) Love is a beggar, most importunate,  
Uncalled he comes and makes his dear demands  
– Corinne Roosevelt Robinson, *Love Is a Beggar*

(10) [Love] is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
– William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 116*

All these constructions can be said to be personalized descriptions of how the authors have experienced love, of how the concept of love makes them feel. I have discussed how emotions and mental images interact so as to recover personal experiences that cause the possible invocation of propositional or emotionally laden implications that facilitate metaphor production and comprehension. Each individual holds different emotions and has unique experiences in relation to specific matters. Our inclination to best describe how these matters mean to us on a personal level makes metaphors be nothing but unexpected and worthy of exploration. That is why there cannot ever be a definite number of restricted and limited metaphorical expressions about a specific concept. A metaphor is a painting with words, and instances like the above seem to indicate that.

This suggestion could very well apply to the perception of novel metaphors. Each of the instances evoke something different to the hearer and through them, they discover different facets of love or any other abstract concept. This wide array of different weak implicatures that each listener/reader associates with a creative metaphor, are merely attempts to verbalize these inexplicable feelings that arise from being exposed to a creative metaphor. They are unique, unpredictable, and innumerable, because how each individual accesses and deals with their emotions is a completely different experience. Wharton and De Saussure (2020: 18) claim that “creative metaphors are ineffable for the reason that no imaginable explicit counterpart such as an array of propositions, if spelt out, can do the job of exhausting what they convey for an individual”.

This suggestion appropriately applies to the already examined outburst of novel visual metaphors in France. The initial metaphor “Pencil is a weapon” underwent an evolution and spawned so many variations exactly because each cartoonists was affected by the attack differently, and wanted to communicate this uniform message of the power of freedom of speech against violence in their own personal way. Specifically:

The new conceptual territory is an unexplored niche for cartoonists, and has given rise to an extensive adaptive drift. A simple pencil has become a grenade launcher, a bomb, a missile, a mast supporting the banner of freedom of expression, a cartoonist’s coffin, an improvised jail

for terrorists, a trap for the enemies of freedom of expression. Over a week, it suffered surprising and inconceivable transformations, reusing the metaphor across contexts or recontextualizing it.

(Linell, 2009; Semino, Deignan, and Littlemore, 2013 as quoted in Dominguez, 2015: 250)

This diversity in creative production, besides showing the sociocultural impact of creativity, could prove how the cartoonists were led to more and more obscure metaphors from the need to express their emotional state, and to get across what they cannot bring themselves to verbalize. This seems to come in agreement with Carston describing the feelings of hopelessness and inertia which are depicted by a squatting frog metaphor as being “not fully verbalizable” (2010: 314), thus suggesting that the writer resorted to metaphorical language so as to best depict dreadful components of depression that cannot be easily put into literal words. It is mental imagery like the above that bring forth each individual’s personal feelings and experiences which in turn interact and create properties not necessarily connected to a concept’s propositional meaning, as previously discussed.

## **5.2. Individuality**

According to the principles of relevance theory, the prime goal of the communicator and addressee is for communication to succeed, which involves the hearer succeeding in comprehending the speaker’s intended meaning. The more efficiently the speaker achieves relevance, and the less processing it involves, the easier the hearer will understand the utterance (Sperber and Wilson, 2008: 88). How is relevance made more explicit? As it has already been discussed in chapter 1, it is achieved by speakers providing more evidence for their true intention. Wharton and De Saussure (2020) claim that since speakers are aware that listeners seek out stimuli that are relevant enough, they will attempt to attract their attention by making the communicative stimuli relevant enough to be worth processing. But similar to what has been brought up in the previous section, despite the extent to which the speaker wants to make their intentions manifest, a number of interpretations would still vary from the speaker’s original intention, because the way in which emotions govern our cognitive processes is different for everyone. Let’s examine yet another metaphor about love:

(11) Now that you're gone I can see  
That love is a garden if you let it go.  
It fades away before you know,  
And love is a garden—it needs help to grow.  
– Jewel and Shaye Smith, *Love Is a Garden*

Despite the fact that the poets make their intentions clear enough and a general idea can be drawn about the metaphor's communicated meaning, different implications among hearers will still be drawn. For instance, what the "source" of the help would be for the garden to "flourish" and not wither. The hearers who have been hurt with a breakup, might interpret it as the garden being the love their partner gives them that wasn't given proper attention. If another hearer is tortured with feelings of self-doubt and self-loathing, the garden is the love that the hearer gave their partner, which was not tended enough. Taking this into account together with my previous discussed suggestions about ineffability, it could be seen how metaphor processing could have the tendency of being self-oriented and governed by emotions, with no necessity for it to be matched with the speaker's interpretation.

Therefore, I argue that metaphor processing is not as systematic as relevance theory makes it out to be, especially in the case of novel metaphors. When speakers/writers create, it is not always that they will be driven by the knowledge that their expression of emotions, thoughts and beliefs should be comprehended exactly as they themselves have visualized it. Rather, their motivation could involve what I suggested regarding the matter of ineffability. This argument goes both ways. When hearers/readers are exposed to a novel metaphorical expression, they might not be necessarily driven by the intention to reach the creator's meaning exactly as it is, but in that moment, they will interpret it by how it applies to them. This suggestion is both supported by what has been suggested by Sperber and Wilson as "loose talk" combined with Pickington's (2000) "poetic effects", and by Kecskes' (2010) proposal of a socio-cognitive approach to pragmatics and communication.

Sperber and Wilson (2008: 100), explain that a speaker or writer "has good reason to suppose that enough of a wide array of potential implications with similar import are

true or probably true, although she does not know which these are (hence, they are weak implications) and is neither able to anticipate nor particularly concerned about which of them will be considered and accepted by the audience (hence, they are weakly implicated)". The findings seem to resemble Pikington's terminology of calling the cognitive product of these implications as "poetic effects" (2010). The communicator has the option to encourage any of the implications that might be relevant to the addressee, but not a specific one (Sperber and Wilson 2008: 99). Thus, these findings encourage the notion that a creator has no definitive power over the possible interpretations that might arise from their creative utterance. And addressees have the freedom to adopt an interpretation that is not only relevant, but also affects them on a personal level. Could these effects be strictly labeled as "poetic?" On one hand, it is only fair since it is through literature and artistic creation that people will choose to verbalize what they cannot bring themselves to describe in rudimentary means, but can't any one of us, who is not to be considered a professional artist, be inspired and retort to such vivid metaphorical usage when we are brought to our limit and are moved beyond compared? When in a moment of vulnerability we want to meticulously enunciate how certain experiences in our life have affected us? Novel metaphorical expressions can exist out of literary spaces because every individual is irrevocably affected by the interactions of mental imagery and affective effects discussed in chapter 4 to a greater or lesser extent.

Kecskes (2013) similarly opposes the principles of Relevance Theory, suggesting that the common goal between communicator and addressee is not strictly relevance-driven, but rather, salience-driven. Through his socio-cognitive approach (Kecskes, 2010) he argues that in practice, the speaker tends to formulate utterances that are relevant for them rather than being mindful of what will be relevant for the hearer. In contrast, hearers can consider something as more relevant in a different way than the speaker. Overall, he sums up that the hearer perceives that something could be of relevance for them the same way as it stands for the speaker, without the existence of a mutual agreement being necessary (2013: 276). It has been suggested that speakers underestimate the level of ambiguity that their utterances possess and overestimate their effectiveness (Kaysar and Henly, 2002). What is of note is Kecskes highlighting the role of previous individual experience as a major driving

factor of language processing, regardless of an individual's role as communicator or addressee (ibid, 276). These suggestions can be said to apply in the case of metaphor processing.

If we consider Shakespeare's poetic metaphor through the words of Romeo "Juliet is the Sun.", we will come to realize that a lot of different interpretations can be drawn regarding the character's particular description. One could be more drawn to the sun's warmth, deducing that Juliet is a positive, compassionate presence in Romeo's life. Another reader could be more affected by the sun's radiance, thus interpreting the metaphor as Romeo praising his lover's breathtaking beauty. Others could focus on the sun as a source of life, being led to conclude that for Romeo, Juliet is what nurtures and sustains him. These and the existence of quite a few other interpretations showcase that addressees are not primarily concerned with finding the communicator's specific communicative meaning. Shakespeare could have any of the above interpretations in his mind, when he wrote his work, but there is no way of ever disclosing that. And perhaps the crucial point is that no readers should hold the obligation to do so. Like Sperber and Wilson propose:

Just as Romeo need not have intended any one of these propositions to be taken as his exact meaning, so the audience need not, indeed should not, aim to attribute any exact meaning to him.

(Sperber & Wilson 2015: 147)

The metaphorical expression's poetic force lies in the fact that it resonated in the minds of readers and spawned a wide array of interpretations about the grandeur of the concept of love. And similarly, as suggested from the previous section, communicators indulge in metaphorical use so as to potentially make their inner personal world explicit first and foremost, by way of attempting to verbalize their emotions, thoughts and beliefs about complex ideas and concepts. This aspect of metaphor processing seems to apply to Kesckes' claims about a duality in speakers' motivation, since it can not only be social, wherein the speaker intends for the hearer to recognize their intended meaning, but also egocentric, driven by salience that irrevocably affects utterance production in a subtle way (2013: 277). To further enhance his salience-driven framework, he proposes that speakers can possibly let

words that are indicative of their real emotions dominate any conscious planning when expressing an utterance. Through these suggestions, we can once again trace the detrimental role of the perpetual interaction between mental imagery<sup>5</sup> and emotions in metaphor processing and how these effects are what constitute metaphorical usage such a diverse and individualistic matter. Moreover, with findings which suggest that interlocutors tend to ignore their mutual knowledge and instead focus on their own knowledge when processing language, it can be seen how the restraints placed by cognitive knowledge on the non-propositional effects are ever-present.

Finally, I feel the necessity to point out that by reinforcing the notion that hearers do not necessarily always seek the speaker's communicated meaning, but instead are driven by their own knowledge, experiences, and feelings to yield an array of implications so as to draw their own interpretations regarding a complex concept, in no way would I go as far as suggest that communication would still hold value if hearers strayed off too far from the speaker's communicated meaning. In such a case, effective communication would not have proved to be successful. I suggest that despite their diversity, the abundance of weak implicatures generated from exposure to a creative metaphor can nonetheless have a common denominator. Going back to the much-discussed novel metaphor "'Juliet is the sun' in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the variety of different interpretations could nonetheless point us to observe specific patterns in their nature, with mostly positive connotations about Juliet's disposition and degree of importance to Romeo. No matter how varied the plurality of interpretations, at their core, they follow the sentiment behind the speaker or writer's metaphorical expression, however weakly. Correspondences in such patterns could lead to mutually agreed interpretations in a speech community, a possibility which connects to my previous claim that any creative metaphor has the prospect of becoming conventionalized. After all, what is important according to Semino (2008: 178) is "how a metaphor is used, and the extent to which individuals are free and able to select the metaphors that work best for them".

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<sup>5</sup> Since I have discussed in chapter 4 through previous research how mental imagery is intrinsically connected with autobiographical experiences, whose role is accentuated by Keszkes.

## **Conclusions**

In this paper I have attempted to provide a comprehensive account on the anatomy of metaphor through the examination the reasoning behind their production and comprehension under the principles of Relevance Theory. I proposed that novelty and conventionality in metaphor processing are not two concepts that should be considered rigid and separate, but belonging in a continuum. Cases of novel metaphor have the disposition of reaching the point of conventionalization and conversely, a metaphor that is otherwise considered “dead” can nonetheless still keep its impact. I highlighted that culture and communicative usefulness are to account for such occurrences. I then gave focus on the role of non-propositional effects on metaphor processing, highlighting how each speaker’s personal experiences initiate the interaction of mental imagery and affective effects. The products of this interaction are not only a vast variety of novel metaphorical expressions and consequent interpretations but also propositional implications, showing their importance in the facilitation of comprehension. These results would not have been made possible without the contribution of creativity. I then attempted to provide a tentative definition of mental images based on how dependent their emergence is to personal experiences and how effectively they interact with affect and human creativity. As challenging as their internal structure is to pinpoint, I believe that working out their definition based on these reported relationships could be the optimal way of yielding further results about their nature. Finally, I proposed that the reason literary work is so vivid, diversified and oftentimes so challenging to explain because creators come up with such constructions so as to verbalize the impact some abstract concepts have for them. This consequently led me to discuss how metaphor processing could be described to be a subjective and personal matter, self-oriented and governed by our emotions and our volition to express our beliefs in a way that feels satisfactory to us. That is not to say, that differing expressions and interpretations disrupt effective communication in any way, as a common denominator can still be traced at their core and emergent interpretations will dominate and spread in specific speech communities. My concluding suggestions regarding the individualistic character of creativity go as far back as my account on

the origins of metaphor, in which humans seemed to start using metaphorical language to fulfill their communicative intentions. On the other hand, I showed how metaphor can also become symbols of unity in speech communities, by showcasing the constant influence of sociocultural factors in metaphor comprehension and production. Overall, despite the fact that metaphor should not be given special treatment in terms of its research, as it is yet another part of our everyday speech, it is nonetheless important to carry on examining what a valuable tool it is for each individual to outwardly express their inner thoughts, beliefs, and emotions the way each of us chooses to do, and how these linguistic expressions, which represent a small part of ourselves, could go on to shape the identity of an entire society.

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