3.1.2 A cognitive-semiotic approach to conceptual integration: Blending in metaphor¹

We frequently conceive of people and things around us as if they were someone or something else.
—Scott K. Liddell

3.1.2.1 Metaphor as conceptual integration of mental spaces

In Grady, Oakley & Coulson (1999) (“Conceptual Blending and Metaphor”), it is suggested we view Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Blending Theory, aka Conceptual Integration Theory (CIT), as complementary approaches to metaphor. Though both of these theories are rooted in cognitive semantics, and though it is arguably true, as suggested in Grady et al. (1999), that they differ with respect to their focus on entrenched conceptual structure versus online meaning construction (i.e. global and static versus local and dynamic meaning), certain theoretical discrepancies exist between them that are deserving of some elucidation.

The framework developed in this chapter builds on CIT, though embraces ideas from both theories, and seeks to introduce into CIT the use of a semiotic space of communication in the analysis of conceptual integration as a semantic process; to show that the network of spaces active in the processing of metaphoric meaning has inherent semiotic properties; and heeding the commitment to pragmatic relevance² by incorporating aspects of relevance into the diagrammatic blending model.

In CIT, source and target domains are translated into ‘inputs’ to a blended space. A (mental) space is understood, in the words of Grady et al., as:

[...] a partial and temporary representational structure which speakers construct when thinking or talking about a perceived, imagined, past, present, or future situation. Mental spaces (or, ‘spaces’, for short) are not equivalent to domains, but, rather, they depend on them: spaces represent particular scenarios which are structured by given domains. For instance, a CIT account of example 1 [“The committee has kept me in the dark about this matter.”] would involve a space in which the agent is standing in the dark. While this representation appeals to our knowledge of visual experience, the recruited structure is only a small subset of knowledge of that domain. In short, a mental space is a short-term construct informed by the more general and more stable knowledge structures associated with a particular domain. (Grady, Oakley & Coulson 1999: 102)

The core claim in CMT, that metaphorical meaning occurs in conceptual predication with one experiential domain acting as predicate for another (a domain T is conceptualized in terms of another domain S) is tied to the idea that these domains be fundamentally unlike. In Sweetser (1990), this fundamental dissimilarity is accredited to the proposed circumstance that the experimental domains functioning as source and target, respectively, hail from different semantic domains, the number of which is limited and fixed. For instance, the domain of epistemic activity is cognitively differentiated from the socio-physical domain (cf. section [1.6]). This difference in domain types helps explain the

¹ Section [3.1.2] is based on a paper I wrote with P. Aa. Brandt, published first in 2002, and again, in revised form in 2005, cf. Brandt & Brandt 2005a. The model presented herein owes to our collaboration at the Center for Semiotics (Aarhus University) and at UCSD and Stanford University, respectively. A preliminary version of the model emerged in general seminar sessions at Aarhus University; the design of the diagram and various elaborative points came out of meetings held at Stanford University; the main body of the paper was written at UCSD; and finally the paper underwent revision which was carried out at Aarhus University upon our return.

² See e.g. Fauconnier 1997: “Language expressions underspecify cognitive constructions. [T]here will typically be many configurations compatible with the space-building instructions carried by grammatical constructions. They will be partly resolved by pragmatic considerations involving strategies such as noncontradiction, relevance, prototypicality, default options, and so on.” (pp. 65-66, italics added) “Expressions like [‘If a man owns a donkey, he beats it’] can also apply in a more ‘punctual’ sense to a present state of affairs: We’re not sure about what’s going on, but we conclude that if there is currently a donkey owner in our midst, he beats his donkey. This interpretation will not have even restricted universal consequences; it will not entail that donkey beating is common, or will occur in the future, and so on. / It is important, then, when using matching configurations to export structure, to know what domain types they apply to, even though that is seldom fully specified grammatically. The problem is clearly one of ‘relevance.’” (pp. 137-138) “The participants in the conversation are prompted grammatically to construct a blend, to find contextually relevant features that produce inferences, and to export such inferences via the connectors. The rich meaning that will ensue is not inherently contained in the grammatical structures. What the grammar does is specify a range of constructions of blends from which to choose and on which to elaborate. This is why language functions so differently from codes, logical truth-conditional systems, and the like. It never does more than set a very schematic stage for the meaning that is going on to be built and negotiated locally in usage.” (pp. 163-164, italics added)
polysemous usage of certain linguistic units. It helps explain, for instance, why the modal verb in an utterance like “That can’t be right” (epistemic force) means something different than it does in the utterance “You can’t park here” (social force) or “The dam can’t hold the water back” (physical force). The direction of conceptual and terminological transfer is said to go from the concrete to the abstract in CMT. One can interpret this to apply to semantic domains or to experiential domains. In the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY (Lakoff & Johnson 1980), for instance, ‘journeying’ is taken to be more concrete than ‘love’. In this instance, the target and the source have roots in both different semantic and experiential domains.3

In CIT, the contributing conceptual contents in metaphor are not defined in terms of a predicate structure. Only occasionally is an input characterized as a topical target, and there are in principle no limitations on the number of inputs a metaphorical blend can have. Moreover, there is no differentiation in terms of semantic domains. The notion of domains is used rather loosely, and the theory does not distinguish between experiential domains, semantic domains and domains as mental spaces.

The idea of semantic differentiation of domains is replaced by the hypothesis that an internal process in a network of mental spaces produces a “fusion” or “blend” of elements, causing the suppression of structure in one input in favor of structure from another input. This process is termed “accommodation”: “[...] part of what defines metaphors is that they involve (temporary) suppression of critical knowledge of a given conceptual domain, and therefore are not compatible with our understanding of reality. We refer to this particular phenomenon, in which structure from one fused element is blocked, as ‘accommodation’: the target material yields to the source material, which is explicitly represented in the blend.” (Grady, Oakley & Coulson 1999: 116)

It is not clear whether the structure or material referred to here is encyclopedic or category-formed (prototypical), or if it is conceptual or semantic in some other sense. In CMT, source and target are entire experiential domains. Supposedly, in CIT, the domains in question are less comprehensive in their semantic scope since they are locally constructed wholes (“small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 40)). What is the scope of represented ‘material’, and importantly, what motivates the alleged suppression? We are told that what is suppressed is critical knowledge of the target, but we are left guessing as to why in fact critical knowledge of the target would yield to the alien structure.

Possible answers to these questions probably require a frame of explanation sensitive to contextual factors; the forces operating on the material in question have to have some sort of pragmatic motivation. This point could aptly be linked to the constraint expressed by The Relevance Principle (one of the optimality constraints, see footnote in the following).

CMT is vulnerable to the critique that it is interested in utterances only insofar as they may serve as data in the uncovering of conceptual metaphors. Though CIT is undeniably more geared toward explanations of utterance meaning, one thing that is missing as a result of the theoretical departures mentioned here is a set of comprehensible criteria for distinguishing utterances that prompt for metaphorical blends as compared to other forms of expression. Metaphorical blends are seen as resulting from multiple inputs merging into novel, temporary semantic units structured in accordance with a number of optimality principles4, as are other blends (all blends are characterized by: emergent and dynamic structure in the blended space, mappings between spaces in a conceptual integration network, and the optimality constraints that apply to such mappings). Subsequently, according to CIT, metaphors do not differ significantly from other “blends”.

3 By contrast, ‘Surgeons are doctors’ is not a metaphor, since source and target (doctors and surgeons, respectively) come from the same domain.

4 Optimality principles (brief summary of Fauconnier & Turner 2002, pp. 327-333): Other things being equal [OTBE], set up the blend and the inputs so that useful topology in the inputs and their outer-space relations is reflected by inner-space relations in the blend (Topology Principle). OTBE, complete elements in the blend by using existing integrated patterns as additional inputs. Use a completing frame that has relations that can be the compressed versions of the important outer-space vital relations between the inputs (Pattern Completion Principle). Achieve an integrated blend (Integration Principle). OTBE, maximize vital relations in the network. In particular, maximize the vital relations in the blended space and reflect them in outer-space vital relations (Maximization of Vital Relations Principle). [Vital relations: Change, Identity, Time, Space, Cause-Effect, Part-Whole, Representation, Role, Analogy, Disanalogy, Property, Similarly, Category, Intentionality, Uniqueness. (p. 101)] OTBE, intensify vital relations (Intensification of Vital Relations Principle). OTBE, manipulating the blend as a unit must maintain the web of appropriate connections to the input spaces easily and without additional surveillance or computation (Web Principle). OTBE, The blend all by itself should prompt for the reconstruction of the entire network (The Unpacking Principle). OTBE, an element in the blend should have relevance, including relevance for establishing links to other spaces and for running the blend. Conversely, an outer-space relation between the inputs that is important for the purpose of the network should have a corresponding compression in the blend (The Relevance Principle).
All the theoretical differences outlined here can hardly be accounted for simply by reference to the general attentional shift from conceptual metaphor (static S-T structures) to dynamic online construction of metaphor (instances of metaphor, whether derived from static metaphorical concepts or not).

In the following, I give a semiotic account of metaphor, integrating central ideas from both CMT and CIT. In the hopes of making some useful improvements, I present a critical reanalysis of an example analyzed in Grady et al. and a consequent revision of the architecture of the blending network so as to include the anchoring of meaning – metaphorical and otherwise – in communicative acts.

As noted above, CMT's directional view of the projection from source and target is replaced by a non-directional view in CIT, where the projection goes from a number of inputs – minimally two – to the blend (and sometimes, in reverse, from the blend back to one or more of the inputs).

The conceptual integration framework proposed here adopts the CIT take on metaphor as resulting from a process of blending mental spaces, but restores a directional mapping from source space structure to target space structure. This mapping is claimed here to connect a source structure as a generic predicate to a non-generic subject, namely the target structure that the metaphor refers to. As in CIT, there is a blended space that imports structure from both spaces. The production of novel meaning takes place when the blend attracts autonomous schematic structure (such as the evaluative schema of (un)ethical behavior that we will see in this example). This imported structure triggers the semantic completion that makes the metaphor meaningful to its users. The network therefore includes a mental space containing the scenario in which the metaphor is being expressed by someone with a communicational agenda.

The metaphor “This surgeon is a butcher” is discussed in Grady et al. (1999) as the authors’ first example of the CIT take on metaphor (Grady et al. 1999: Sections 2.3, 2.4). The formula involving two domains (in CMT) is converted into a new form involving four spaces: two input spaces, a generic space and a blend. There is a surgeon’s input space and a butcher’s input space, and a blend of surgeon and butcher in which the fused agent has a surgeon’s goal and uses a butcher’s means to achieve it. In addition, there is a generic space containing the idea of an abstract agent using means in general to achieve a goal in general.

The intended meaning, described as “incompetence”, is derived from a simple cross-over of ‘goal’ and ‘means’ of butchers and surgeons, respectively: using a butcher’s means (“butchery”) for a surgeon’s goal (“healing”) and not for a butcher’s goal (“severing flesh”). Notice that this analysis fails to show why the agents’ cross-over does not have a surgeon’s means and a butcher’s goal, which might equally have been the case, logically speaking. The mismatch of means and goal is presented as the reason why the metaphor should be taken to refer to a display of inadequate behavior.

In Grady et al. (1999) and elsewhere, the metaphor is said to predicate ‘incompetence’ (“The blend has emergent structure, incompetence […]” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002: 297)). The butchering-surgeon metaphor is characterized as “well-worn” and is generally considered to be “intended as a damning statement about an incompetent practitioner” (Grady et al. 1999, section 2.3). Contrary to this consensus, I claim that the metaphor can predicate something other than ‘incompetence’ about the practitioner (and does, in the example analyzed).

---

5 “This surgeon is a butcher” is rendered in quotation marks since, in CMT terms, it is a metaphor rather than a conceptual metaphor (traditionally marked in capital letters). It is, in other words, manifested linguistically.

6 The verbal metaphor does not mention means and goals, so the cross-over analysis finds no immediate support in the “text” of the metaphor.

7 Citing Veale 1996.
3.1.2.2 The butcher-surgeon metaphor

The metaphoric expression “This surgeon is a butcher” activates the experiential domains of butchery and surgery, two domains that are not systematically associated in advance. The utterance linking the source domain of butchery to the target domain of surgery is not a linguistic instantiation of an entrenched conceptual metaphor (e.g. *MEDICAL PRACTICE IS FOOD PROCESSING or *SURGEONS ARE BUTCHERS).\(^8\) It also does not bank on a concrete-abstract directionality of conceptualization, as the source and target could conceivably be reversed, given the right context.\(^9\)

The answer to the question of what the metaphor means, in any event, lies not in expounding any underlying concepts (as done in the practical application of CMT), but in exposing the conceptual process of interpretation. What the metaphor means, then, is what someone intends for it to mean in the act of uttering it in some particular situation; the metaphor is a means to an expressive end and does not have a static, predictable meaning irrespective of its actual use.\(^10\) The utterer intends to share some content of thought with an addressee in a semiotic exchange. This semantic-pragmatic content – inherently intersubjective, borne of a speaker’s intention to have the addressee recognize his utterance as an attempt to engage in a semiotic event of shared attention – constitutes the meaning of the metaphor.

Meaning construction occurs in a space of shared attention, and participants are collaborators in the act of “making sense”. Addressees become addressees, and vice versa.\(^11\) Methodologically speaking, it is thus inconsequential for the analysis whether it is conducted from the perspective of the speaker or the addressee, as the mental content is shared.\(^12\)

The metaphor undeniably expresses some sort of disapproval. The pragmatic effect of the utterance “This surgeon is a butcher” is one of reproach. The negative evaluation is part of the meaning of the metaphor, and as such is part of its semantics.

The evaluation, purportedly a crucial part of the semantics, lies beyond the strictly linguistic content of the utterance, if by “strictly linguistic” we mean the predication evoked by the lexical, morphological and syntactic elements of the sentence. It is not possible to understand the meaning of this metaphor without applying a normative schema of some sort. The metaphor has a descriptive as well as a deontic\(^13\) meaning.

---

\(^8\) As for the relation between conceptual and linguistic metaphors, as noted in Tendahl & Gibbs 2008, it is as of yet an open question how best to model online metaphor interpretation in cases where entrenched mappings exist between the topic and vehicle domains. “[I]t is not clear from cognitive linguistic studies or the extant psychological experiments whether people merely access the conceptual metaphor [e.g. LOVE RELATIONSHIPS ARE JOURNEYS] as part of their comprehension of an expression [e.g. “My marriage has hit the rocks”] or whether people must first access the conceptual metaphor and use that information to infer the intended meaning of this expression.” (Tendahl & Gibbs 2008, p. 1841) In a paragraph a few pages back (p. 1837), curiously, the authors venture into a proposal of a hybrid network model with “five spaces” consisting of both experimental domains and mental spaces, resulting in a peculiar theoretical construct which, in my estimation, would benefit from more careful explication. Though stated as fact, the model must be taken as a very sketchy hypothesis requiring a description more than a couple of sentences long.

\(^9\) Sperber & Wilson also mention the possibility of reversal (in Sperber & Wilson 2008) and construct the example ‘This butcher is a surgeon’. Notice, however, that Sperber & Wilson do not analyze the sentence as an utterance and hypothesize an apparently context-free, static meaning claimed to be a symmetrically reversed version of their (similarly isolated and context-free) example ‘This surgeon is a butcher’. “The interpretation of [‘This butcher is a surgeon’] is equivalent of the one for [‘This surgeon is a butcher’], and involves the construction of an ad hoc concept SURGEON*, denoting people who cut flesh with extreme care. A butcher who is also a SURGEON* is outstandingly competent and trustworthy. The predicates BUTCHER* and SURGEON*, along with the implication of incompetence for a surgeon who is a BUTCHER* and of competence for a butcher who is a SURGEON*, emerge unproblematically in the course of an inferential comprehension process guided by the search for relevance.” (Sperber & Wilson 2008: 97-98) I am skeptical of this analysis, first and foremost because the authors overlook the significance of contextual grounding and seemingly take for granted that the metaphor have a fixed meaning [despite the denunciation in relevance theory of fixed metaphorical meanings]: if the butcher is a surgeon, the butcher is said to be competent. Equally likely is the possibility that the metaphorical concept serve as a complaint that the butcher in question is not efficient enough. Separating meat from bones “ain’t surgery” – it needs to done with accuracy and speed. A butcher “being” a surgeon, i.e. who is doing his job as a surgeon would, is (in this reverse scenario) not doing his job competently.

Incidentally, I asked a butcher what his spontaneous interpretation would be if, on the cutting floor, he were to overhear the utterance “That butcher is a surgeon!” He immediately responded “They’re saying he’s too slow. That the business is losing money because of him.”

\(^10\) It is, of course, possible to generalize from actual uses, and, naturally, we form expectations based on these generalizations. Still, such (statistically) informed expectations do not amount to predictions.

\(^11\) Cf. section [2.1.2.1].

\(^12\) Only in miscommunication would that not be the case.

\(^13\) Deontic meanings indicate states of affairs that ought, or ought not, to be the case according to some principle that the speaker indirectly embodies or represents in the act of speaking.
dimension. This is the psychological dimension of understanding the semantic content of the metaphor: knowledge and application of the norms by which humans judge each other.

I argue, in the following, that the surgeon is criticized for having acted unethically, and in Grady et al. (1999), as mentioned, the surgeon is claimed to be criticized for being incompetent. So too in Glucksberg (1998) where the surgeon is said to be “a member of the category of people who botch jobs in reprehensible and often appalling ways”: (Glucksberg 1998: 42) Vega Moreno, in a chapter entitled “Metaphor, interaction and property attribution”, mentions incompetence, malice, negligence and carelessness as possible implicatures. (Vega Moreno 2007)

The fact that no account of the meaning of the butcher-surgeon metaphor omits the interpretation of it as a criticism illustrates that the metaphoric relation between the source and the target cannot be one of mere projection from one to the other, as would be implied in CMT.14 If that were the case, how would we account for the metaphor being understood as a criticism? Nothing inherent in the experiential domain of butchers warrants a negative evaluation, so it is hard to see how this implication could in fact be derived from the source domain.

Glucksberg (1998) does attempt to define the source domain – the category ‘butcher’ – as having an inherently negative encyclopedic meaning, but unconvincingly, as this alleged meaning presupposes the existence of butcher-metaphors.

This is one of the arguments leveled at Glucksberg’s attribution model of metaphor in Vega Moreno (2007). Charting the historical development leading up to current theoretical developments, Vega Moreno describes how much of contemporary research on metaphor has moved away from ‘feature matching’ models of metaphor – and so from the idea that metaphor comprehension involves the matching of properties between topic and vehicle – toward ‘attribution’ models, arguing instead that metaphor interpretation is a matter of attributing a subset of properties of the metaphor vehicle to the metaphor topic. “A very serious problem for both matching models and attribution models is that sometimes the set of properties which are attributed to the topic are not stored as part of our representation of the vehicle [...]”. (Vega Moreno 2007: 75) To illustrate this conundrum, Vega Moreno gives two metaphorical examples, including a butcher-surgeon metaphor:

(1)  Doctor: I am afraid the surgeon who performed a caesarean on your wife perforated both ovaries. I had no choice but to remove them. Husband: I want that surgeon out of the hospital. That surgeon is a butcher!15

(2)  Jane: I know I have to speak to my boss but I am afraid of him. He is such a bulldozer!

The speaker in [1] may be expressing the thought(s) that his wife’s surgeon is highly incompetent, dangerous, careless, etc. The speaker in [2] may be expressing the thought(s) that her boss is stubborn, difficult to deal with, that he is not respectful to her, that he undermines her needs, her thoughts, etc. The problem raised by these examples is that our knowledge of butchers does not include the assumption that butchers are negligent and careless and our knowledge of bulldozers does not include the assumption that they are disrespectful or stubborn. Since the set of intended properties are not stored as part of our representation of the vehicle, they can be neither matched with the properties of the topic nor attributed to it. Both matching and attribution models therefore fail to explain how these properties are derived. (Vega Moreno 2007: 76)

14 This point, that simple projection cannot account for the emergent meaning, is also made in Grady et al. 1999. No theoretical conclusions are drawn from it, however, in the authors’ discussion of the difference between CIT and CMT. It is unclear how CMT would in fact analyze the butcher-surgeon metaphor. Would proponents of CMT propose that the emergent meaning is predictable from the source category? In Lakoff 2008, the author attempts a solution involving the proposed formula A PERSON WHO PERFORMS ACTIONS WITH CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS IS A MEMBER OF A PROFESSION KNOWN FOR THOSE CHARACTERISTICS. (Lakoff 2008, p. 32) The formula is characterized as a conceptual metaphor though reads more like a formula for hyperbole (one may for instance jokingly refer to someone funny as a ‘comedian’). In any event it is hard to see how A PERSON WHO PERFORMS ACTIONS WITH CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS could conceivably become a useful or relevant domain in human experience. I thus share the skepticism expressed in Tendahl & Gibbs 2008 and agree further linguistic analyses are needed “to clarify the exact conceptual metaphor at work”. (Tendahl & Gibbs 2008, p. 1830)

15 Glucksberg and colleagues often illustrate their ideas with the example ‘my surgeon is a butcher’. They argue that in understanding this metaphor, the hearer aligns vehicle properties and topic dimensions, thus constructing an attributive category ‘people who are incompetent and who grossly botch their jobs’, which the vehicle typifies and which can assign a negative value to the dimension of ‘skill’ provided by the topic (Glucksberg, 2001: 43-55).” (Vega Moreno 2007, p. 78)
In a conscious effort to avoid self-made data\textsuperscript{16}, I will introduce an occurrence of the butcher-metaphor recounted to me by the co-author of Brandt & Brandt (2005a). In our 2005 article, we warned against excessive use of examples originating in desktop creativity because when using manufactured data one’s conclusions come to rely on the reader’s acceptance of the examples as plausible\textsuperscript{17} – an unnecessary pitfall. Analysts render themselves vulnerable to objections based on the feasibility of the data rather than subsequent analyses thereof.\textsuperscript{18}

This methodological consideration brings with it one further advantage. An empirical occurrence of a linguistic unit (a phrase, an utterance) provides an interpreted meaning which the analysis can take as its starting point. The analysis, then, becomes an answer to the question of how this – situationally manifested – meaning is cognized: “How does the expression come to be understood in this particular way?”

What the utterance means is what the enunciator intended for the addressee to understand by it in the situation described. Since meaning can be shared, what is captured in the meaning construction analysis is this shared meaning – shared by the speaker, the addressee, and by whoever reads the description of the communication taking place and understands it.\textsuperscript{19}

Consider this instance of the butcher-surgeon metaphor\textsuperscript{20}:

(3) The speaker was a woman who had just undergone surgery and was recovering in the hospital.

The post-surgery patient, finding the appearance of the scar more noticeable than she had expected, was not happy. She showed it to her visitor and complained she had not been warned it would look like this. “This surgeon is a butcher!” she said, accentuating her dismay. The addressee took this to mean she felt the surgeon should have been more careful with the stitches, since she would now have to live the rest of her life with a noticeable scar, visible to anyone who saw her in the nude. Since the addressee was in the habit of enjoying this privilege, he inferred that she wanted him to reassure her/his viewing pleasure would not be diminished and proceeded to comfort her by expressing his affection.

The addressee’s interpretation of the quoted utterance as an act of soliciting reassurance relies, of course, on a primary understanding of the utterance as an evaluative predication, which is in turn determined by the contextual framing of source and target.\textsuperscript{21}

The meaning of expressive metaphors, such as the one given in this example, is five-fold: 1. sentence apprehension; 2. metaphoric space-building; 3. a structured blend; 4. emergent meaning; 5. implications for the situation of communication.

The addressee, having understood the utterance, has grasped (1) that “a butcher” is predicate of “this surgeon”. Comprehension, at this level, requires familiarity with the words and syntax employed in the sentence; (2) that the predication is metaphoric (either with respect to his personal identity or with respect to his professional identity\textsuperscript{22}; (3) in what specific regard this surgeon is a butcher; (4) the

---

\textsuperscript{16} In the Humanities, linguistics is the only discipline where self-made examples are sometimes accepted, and mainly for pedagogical and expository purposes. Linguists consider themselves competent informants, if they are native speakers of the language analyzed, since evaluative introspection is sufficient when the analysis concerns assessment of grammaticality.

\textsuperscript{17} Cp. Fauconnier: “We invent context (acceptable to subjects) or find it in attested conversation, literature, and so on.” (Fauconnier 1994, p. xxvii, italics added)

\textsuperscript{18} Though it does not mar the conclusions drawn in this instance, one may wonder, for instance, how plausible it would be for the doctor in example (1) to refer, in addressing the husband of the patient, to “the surgeon who performed a caesarean on your wife”. One might expect, assuming the husband is aware of the procedure being done, the use of a definite article introducing the caesarean (“the caesarian”) in the scenario imagined.

\textsuperscript{19} Meaning and meaning analysis are thus anchored in intersubjective phenomenology, rather than in solipsistic versions of introspection. Perhaps we need a new term – “interspection”? – to better capture the inter-subjective nature of shared introspection.

\textsuperscript{20} On another occasion a similar exchange unfolded between two friends, after one had had a mastectomy.

\textsuperscript{21} Though the pragmatic implication is ‘primary’ relative to the interpretation of the utterance as a metaphor, it does not follow that one precedes the other in processing time.

\textsuperscript{22} The description “this surgeon” could potentially be used to pick out an individual defined by his numerical identity and not by the attribute of being a surgeon. That is, an individual could be referred to irrespective of his profession as a surgeon. If, before becoming a surgeon, this person had been, say, a dentist, a former patient of his, spotting him several years later in a hospital, might say “This surgeon is a butcher! He did a horrible job on my teeth back when he was a dentist!” As Donnellan (1966) points out in his paper on the use of definite descriptions (arguing against Russell’s and Strawson’s views), it is a matter of pragmatic ambiguity: “whether or not a definite description is used referentially or attributively is a function of the speaker’s intentions in a particular case.” See Donnellan (1966, p. 297) on reference and definite descriptions.
evaluation that follows from (emerges in) this blend – this is the meaning of the blend; and (5) what pragmatic implications arise, given the emergent meaning in the blend and the circumstances characterizing the communication taking place.

The implication here is not that any addressee must necessarily first go through step 1 to get to step 2, and so on, in processing the meaning of the utterance – these two can perfectly well be apprehended simultaneously – but that it is possible for an addressee to get the 1st meaning and not the 2nd, and to get meanings 1 and 2 but not 3, and so forth. Patients with schizophrenic disorders, to take an illustrative example, typically have a hard time getting from 1 to 2 and thus will not get 3. In mental space terms, they tend to create only one space (subject and predicate) instead of a blend with two inputs (each with subject-predicate structure) (see e.g. Bonis et al. 1997; Langdon & Coltheart 2004).

Given these distinctions, the interesting question is what cognitive processes we go through in order to arrive at this kind of (multi-leveled) understanding.

Our post-surgery patient intends to predicate something of the surgeon who performed the surgery and creates a metaphor. This metaphor is intended to express an evaluation of the surgeon. The rhetorical power of the blend lies in expressing this evaluation emphatically, through conceptual dramatization (see Chapter 2). And ultimately, the intention behind passing judgment on the surgeon is to make the addressee infer what to think, do or say next.

Within the range of appropriate responses was the addressee’s actual response which was to offer her reassurance that the scar did not influence her beauty in any significant way. Had he, instead, commented on the low wages of hospital workers, that might conceivably have angered her. By responding appropriately the addressee shows that he has understood not only 1, 2, 3 and 4 but also 5; he has made a correct pragmatic inference. The generalization here is that a metaphor only has manipulative force insofar as the emergent evaluation (4) and the pragmatic implications (5) are grasped. What inferences arise depends largely on the addressee’s affective response to the hyperbolic imagery in the metaphorical blend and the evaluation of the referent which ensues.

Note that we know the expression is metaphorical essentially because we know it is about the surgeon in relation to the scarred patient. The situation provides the appropriate context for framing the surgeon as an agent acting upon a patient (in actantial terms), at the expense of all other possible ways of conceiving of the surgeon. It is clear, then, from the context, that the purpose of the metaphor is not to categorize the surgeon but rather to express an opinion about him. The evaluative stance is made especially potent by the figuratively vested imagery afforded by the metaphoric juxtaposition (when the surgeon is imagined as a butcher), and by the hyperbolic predication that results from grasping the force dynamics involved in the metaphorical scenario.

Metaphors with animated imagery – where both the force-dynamic and the figurual aspects of the metaphorical scenario are strongly experienced – are potentially very effective rhetorically because their “juicy” imagery gives extra weight to the predication expressed. The animated hyperbolic predication involved in such “juicy metaphors” generally elicit a stronger emotional reaction than literal predication does.24

The reason may be that force dynamics is naturally experienced in a strongly bodily manner – a human predisposition observable in everything from spontaneous gesture accompanying thought and speech, even in the absence of company, to the way we move in response to music. This hypothesis lies outside the scope of the present work but should be further pursued.

We immediately know to interpret “This surgeon is a butcher!” as relevant to something within the scope of attention. It is taken to be a critical remark on a scar not mentioned in the expression itself but

---

21 The use of force-dynamic models here is directly related to Sweetser’s model applied to the analysis of the modal may (Sweetser 1990, p. 60). Sweetser is in turn inspired by Talmy, who used force-dynamic modeling in his analysis of causation (cf. Talmy 2000).

22 The generalization is that structural metaphors are evaluative – that is, metaphors whose source input is not merely a schema (cp. “The prices went up”) but a full-fledged experiential domain (e.g. the slaughter of animals for consumption). These “juicy” metaphors should be distinguished from so-called primary metaphors: mappings resulting in the transfer of pure topological/force-dynamic structure (e.g. the boundary schema, aka the “container schema”, or the schema for up/down orientation) without any visualized imagery. (This point is further pursued in Brandt 2004b, Ch. 1.)

23 A question related to the issue of orientational metaphors, consisting as they do solely of image-schematic structure, is this: Does an image schema, or a cluster of image-schemas, constitute an “experimental domain”? If so, what sense is attributed to the notion of “domains”, warranting the application of the term both to abstract, non-figural schemas and to distinct areas in our life-world, rich in imagery, like ballgames, food, travel, warfare etc.? If not, how can these image-schemas function as source domains in metaphoric structures?

Relative to CIT, a relevant question would be the following: If the schematic source domain translates into a source ‘space’ in blending analyses of linguistic metaphors derived from orientational metaphors (e.g. MORE IS UP), what would be the content of a generic space, given that the source space is already schematically abstract?
made salient in the situation of communication where it is the focus of shared attention. The scar motivates the negative evaluation of the surgeon and hence the elaboration (‘composition’ and ‘completion’ in CIT terms) of the source and target spaces.

The speaker’s (ostensive or verbal) gesturing to a scar makes it clear to the addressee that it is not the speaker’s intention to re categorize the surgeon or to bring attention to a hobby of his. The blending by which two categorial determinations merge into one item is metaphorical only if it does not simply express that the item in question should be re categorized (“this (so-called) surgeon is in fact not a surgeon but a butcher”) or that it is to be categorized in both ways (“this surgeon has two professions; he is also a butcher”). The attentional focus on the scar makes it clear that the sentence refers to the causal agent of a surgical operation on the speaker’s body. This framing of the surgeon (the target of the metaphor) in turn affects the framing of the butcher (the source).

On this view, the relevant aspects of the target determines how the source is construed. By contrast, Glucksberg & Keysar (1990) argue that metaphors are understood as class-inclusion statements. They describe metaphoric predication as a matter of including the target in a (superordinate) category of which the source is a prototypical example25, or, alternatively, the source entity has a fixed metaphoric meaning stored in the lexicon, which is then simply ascribed to the target.

The categorical statement

[...] My surgeon was a butcher
assigns my surgeon to the class of people who are incompetent and who grossly botch their job. (Glucksberg & Keysar 1990: 9)

It would appear possible, on this view, to predict the meaning from the form “T is a butcher”; it means T is someone who is “grossly incompetent in tasks that require finesse, skill and expertise” because that is a meaning of ‘butcher’, according to a dictionary entry for the word. As in CMT, there is thus no blend to be analyzed; the predicate is transferred from the source to the target, thereby including the target in the attributive category.

Even if some variability is allowed, seeing the metaphorical predication as resulting from categorial interaction between the source and the target (taking the possibility of variant targets into account), explanatory difficulties arise. If we assume, as proposed in Glucksberg (2001), that the attribution of properties is a function of possible superordinate categories exemplified by the source, on the one hand, and the conceptual dimensions offered by the target category, on the other, we arrive at the understanding that the category of incompetent workers, of which “butcher” is claimed to be an exemplar, fits the dimension ‘skill’ in the target. The dimension ‘skill’ is thought to be inherently salient to the category ‘surgeon’, suggesting a view of categories as static and context-independent. Glucksberg thus in a sense acknowledges “relevance constraints imposed by the topic” (Glucksberg 2001: 55), but because the author thinks of relevance strictly in relation to source and target as static categories, relevant constraints are similarly thought of as static and context-independent. The model does not explain how a dimension is selected – a shortcoming partly due, I think, to the fact that topical concepts are imagined as categories rather than scenarios or ‘mental spaces’, i.e. as ‘partial and temporary representational structures which speakers construct when thinking or talking’.

There are other problems with the analysis. Firstly, “My surgeon was a butcher” can only be described as a “categorial statement” insofar as one ignores what the metaphor is about. If we assume that Glucksberg & Keysar had a situation in mind similar to the one described here, with a post-surgery patient complaining about the surgeon who has performed the surgery, the intended inference is about this particular surgeon, and there is no reason why the superordinate ad hoc category “the set of workmen who are incompetent and grossly botch their jobs” should be constructed. The intention behind the metaphor is hardly to categorize the surgeon as belonging to a “set”. Methodologically speaking, why construct a category, in the analysis of the metaphor, that is not warranted by any relevant circumstances pertaining to the situation where the metaphor is produced?

Secondly, the Glucksberg & Keysar account of metaphor skirts the issue of how “is a butcher” becomes a negative predicate of T, the target entity. The predicative meaning (“My surgeon was

25 Vega Moreno points to some difficulties with this notion. First, the source category, e.g. ‘butchers’, can potentially be members, and even typical members, of an indefinite number of ad hoc categories. “Second, according to Barsalou’s experiments, prototypicality is an unstable notion which varies across contexts, points of view, individuals, etc. with the typicality of a given member arising as a byproduct of constructing an ad hoc category rather than as a prerequisite to the construction of that category. Third, even if we take prototypicality to be a stable notion, and assume that [the] metaphor vehicle can exemplify only a limited number of ad hoc categories [...]  none of these categories may be the one intended by the speaker on a certain occasion [...].” (Vega Moreno 2007, p. 74)
incompetent and grossly botched the job”) is said to be the result of a logical operation, given the predetermined lexical meaning of ‘butcher’. The predicate ascribed to the surgeon comes from one of the Webster dictionary entries for the word “butcher”: “an unskilful or careless workman” (Glucksberg & Keysar 1990: 9). Glucksberg & Keysar would likely not make a general claim that the category of butchers is a category of “grossly incompetent” people. That is, a ‘butcher’ cannot be said to be a prototypical instance of the set of workmen who are incompetent and grossly botch their jobs. Yet it is hard to see how this claim can be avoided.

Referring to a conventional lexical meaning of ‘butcher’ camouflages the omission of an actual analysis. If the lexical entry ‘butcher’ really has this conventional metaphorical meaning, how did this meaning come into existence?

This circularity of argument is noted in Vega Moreno (2007) as well:

Thirdly, though it may be a valid generalization that ‘butcher’, used metaphorically, conveys a negative meaning, as statistical evidence may indicate, this prediction does not also warrant an expectation that the negative attributes be unvaried. Does the butcher predicate always give a picture of the target subject as unskillful or careless? A random Google search of the phrase “is a butcher” suggests otherwise. Let us consider the first two results of this search.

The first result is a news article about Israeli military attacks on Palestinian civilians. The metaphor is produced by a woman whose home has been destroyed by Israeli forces:

(4) “They destroyed our house without warning. We left without our shoes,” she cries. “Sharon is a butcher.” (‘Sharon is a butcher’, posted 10/16/2004: www.news24.com)

The second search result is a log entry entitled ‘God is a butcher’. The writer, a butcher, recounts how his parents were killed in a fatal highway accident and concludes:

(5) “God is a butcher and we are all going to be slaughtered, I work for him now. I do not hate him; I just don’t like his rules. (‘God is a Butcher’ posted 7/21/2004 on www.everything2.com)

Neither of these metaphors means that the target subject is unskillful or careless. Instead, they serve to criticize the subjects – Sharon and God, respectively – for their brutality and lack of compassion.

The butcher-metaphor in example (3) conceptualizes the surgeon as having acted in an ethically indefensible manner (whether due to lack of skills or not). The meanings in examples (4) and (5) are close to the meaning in example (3). However, a more active form of agency is implied; the brutality is enacted actively and willfully whereas our butcher-surgeon in (3) is judged, not necessarily for cruelty, but for exhibiting a kind of reckless indifference in the practice of his profession.

Supposedly there are contexts as well in which the same utterance would mean the surgeon is unskilled/incompetent (though we have yet to see an analysis of an actually occurring example). When examining actual occurrences of butcher metaphors it becomes apparent that the target subjects are brought up as topics for specifiable, situation-dependent reasons. The theoretical point here is that the phrase “is a butcher”, used metaphorically, does not have a predictable meaning independent

26 Notice, however, that there are instances of metaphor where the source domain of butchery may help contribute to a framing not laden with negative meaning. The Danish metaphor “at skære ind til benet”, for instance, (Eng.: to cut to the chase, lit. ‘to carve close to the bone’) means to make a straightforward and precise (“clear-cut”) assessment eliminating inessential material. The metaphor exploits the imagery of cutting meat off a bone with high precision so as to eliminate waste – an economically sound practice associated with skillful butchery. Thus applied to the domain of argumentation the domain of butchery serves to enhance the idea of skillful exactitude.
of the context of its use. The situational context determines what is considered relevant about the target space and hence how the source category is construed on that occasion. Consequently, what is salient about the target may well vary from instance to instance, and in any case cannot be identified as any one dimension like ‘skill’.

The apparent theoretical inflexibility begetting these explanatory difficulties is argued in Vega Moreno (2007)\(^\text{27}\) to be generally attributable to two things (a generalization extended to other interaction theories as well, including Conceptual Integration Theory, cf. Vega Moreno 2007, Ch. 3): the omission of an account of how the interaction between categories/domains/mental spaces is supposed to make meanings emerge, and, crucially, the exclusion of the speaker’s intentionality as a factor in interpretation.

[...] saying that metaphor interpretation (and category construction) depends on an interaction of topic dimensions and vehicle properties cannot explain how an utterance can have an indefinite number of possible interpretations, or how the hearer chooses or constructs a hypothesis about the one intended by the speaker. Not only can a single dimension-property combination open the way to a range of possible interpretations [as in (6a) and (6b) below], in many cases a good number of properties of the vehicle can be used to characterise a good number of topic dimensions. Since every combination offers a potential ad hoc category to which both topic and vehicle can be said to belong, how does a hearer know which one was intended? The Class-Inclusion Theory lacks adequate interpretive tools to answer this question. (Vega Moreno 2007: 75, italics added)

Vega Moreno gives two examples of the same dimension-property combination yielding different implicatures ((6a) and (6b)), and two examples illustrating variations on vehicle (source) properties ((6c) and (6d)):

(6a) (Of a surgeon who has been negligent) That surgeon is a butcher.

(6b) (Of a pianist who has played terribly badly) The pianist butchered the sonatas.

(6c) (Of a teacher who fails most of the class) That teacher is a butcher.

(6d) (On a gruesome crime scene) This man is a butcher!

“I agree,” the author writes, “with the ‘interactive’ idea that the presence of the metaphor topic has an effect on the set of attributes or assumptions which we access from the metaphor vehicle on a given occasion (e.g. the activation of a certain concept in memory may have an effect on how we process incoming information). However, I don’t agree with the assumption that by putting a certain topic and a certain vehicle in the same sentence, the right combination of dimension and attribution will emerge, by magic, providing an adequate basis for interpretation.” (Vega Moreno 2007: 73)

This leads into a discussion of the problem of emergence:

Properties which are not part of the hearer’s representation for the metaphor vehicle or the metaphor topic, but which seem to emerge in interpreting a metaphor, are often referred to in the literature as ‘emergent properties’ or ‘emergent features’. Examples ((1) and (2) supra) show how emergent features play a crucial role in arriving at the meaning the speaker intended to communicate in uttering a metaphor. It follows from this that any adequate account of metaphor interpretation should aim to provide an explanation of how these emergent features are derived. I shall refer to this as the ‘emergence problem’ of metaphor interpretation. [...] Saying that features emerge from interaction is not explanatory: it is necessary to spell out how it is that they are derived. One should then expect the cognitive models inspired by Black’s ideas [seeing metaphor interpretation as essentially an interactive process between two concepts or domains] to provide a detailed account of the pragmatic or cognitive steps involved in the derivation of new mental structures and

\(^{27}\) “A metaphor, for example a nominal metaphor of the form X is Y, may be used to convey a wide range of different meanings [‘That lawyer is a shark’, ‘John is an iron bar’], and involve the formation of a wide range of different ad hoc categories [...]. The question is: what determines the formation of the different ad hoc categories [...]? The Class-Inclusion Theory provides no answer to this question. According to this theory, aligning a metaphor topic and a metaphor vehicle should result in the emergence of a combination of topic dimensions and vehicle properties which should form the basis for the construction of the ad hoc category to which topic and vehicle belong, and so the basis for the interpretation of the utterance. If this is all there is to metaphor interpretation, aligning the same topic and vehicle should result in the emergence of the same combination of dimension and property, the construction of the same attributive category and in the derivation of the same interpretation across contexts. This is clearly not the case. [Fn.: This criticism is not unique to the Class-Inclusion theory but applies to interactive views more generally.]” (Vega Moreno 2007, pp. 73-74)
the emergence of new properties. Unfortunately, although a substantial amount of experimental research has been stimulated by the romantic idea of metaphor as powerful and creative, very little work has been done to explain how emergent properties are derived. In fact, experimental work which deals explicitly with the issue [...] has mostly been concerned with presenting evidence for the existence of emergent features rather than explanation of the cognitive processes involved in their derivation. The lack of work on accounting for the derivation of emergent properties in metaphor interpretation is surprising not only because solving the ‘emergence problem’ is essential for understanding how metaphors are understood but also because most modern approaches to metaphor are based on the assumption that something new is created in interpreting a metaphor. The issue of emergent properties is thus a problem for all theories which aim to account for how hearers arrive at the interpretation intended by the speaker’s use of a metaphor [...]. (Vega Moreno 2007: 76-78)

In the proposed exploration of the cognitive processes involved in the derivation of emergent meaning, a prerequisite for articulating viable experimental hypotheses is of course a productive theoretical point of departure. Though ultimately arriving at a different result, Vega Moreno is in agreement with the position championed here that the notion of communicative relevance is key to developing an adequate cognitive-semiotic framework for describing metaphorical meaning construction.

Despite the advantages of modern cognitive approaches to metaphor, “a problem common to all these approaches is that they lack the pragmatic inferential mechanisms necessary to guide the comprehension process and to account for the attribution of properties and the derivation of emergent properties taking place in interpreting a metaphor.” (Vega Moreno 2007: 85, italics added) So too in the case of blending theory, its evident advantages notwithstanding. In her efforts to pinpoint the main challenge facing the theory, Vega Moreno offers a critique of the analysis of the butcher-surgeon metaphor given in Grady et al. (1999). Vega Moreno explains why the processes of composition, completion and elaboration cannot account for the comprehension of the metaphor, as proposed in Grady et al., and poses the same question that essentially motivated the development of the semiotic conceptual integration network: What determines the evident emergence of meaning? “Scholars pursuing Blending Theory argue that emergent properties arise naturally from the construction of the blended space. But if a blended space is constructed by projecting information from different sources, namely input spaces and encyclopaedic information, how can anything ‘emerge’?” (Vega Moreno 2007: 80)

Vega Moreno summarizes how a blending analysis can take us through the vital steps in constructing a metaphorical representation of a butcher-surgeon but points out a missing link in the analysis allowing us to get from the metaphoric blend to the critical meaning intended by the utterer of the metaphor.

It is important to notice, however, that the blended space provides us with a certain representation which cannot be the one the speaker intended the hearer to derive. The speaker of the metaphor above, for instance, does not intend to communicate that there is a butcher operating on a patient but that there is a certain surgeon who does not do his job properly. The blended space provides information which is indeed consistent with a literal interpretation of the utterance, the interpretation that my surgeon is a real butcher! Attempting to explain how one gets from this interpretation to the intended one implies a variant of the standard serial model of metaphor interpretation [based on the assumption that derivation of metaphorical meaning relies on rejection of literal meaning] so widely criticised among psychologists. Maybe the hearer is simply supposed to take the blended space metaphorically so as to derive the set of thoughts the speaker intended to convey. If this is true then forming the blended space does not account for how metaphors are understood and just takes us into needless circularity. (Vega Moreno 2007: 80)

Vega Moreno’s critique of the blending theory account of metaphor ultimately serves as an appeal to “take seriously into account the speaker’s communicative intentions”, as indicated in the following passage.

One important problem with Blending Theory, and with many psycholinguistic approaches to metaphor, is that it does not take seriously into account the speaker’s communicative intentions. I have shown earlier how a single metaphor ‘John is an iron bar’ or ‘my lawyer is a shark’ can be used to convey a number of different meanings on different occasions. In order to explain this in terms of Blending Theory, one would have to say the hearer forms a different blend [on] every occasion. It is not clear how this can be done. Since the projection from input spaces to the blended space is taken to be based on structural similarities between spaces and not in the search for the recognition of speaker’s intentions, there is no apparent reason why different elements from an input space would be projected into the blended space on different occasions. In fact, even if the explanation of different interpretations were to be given in terms of different types of completions of the blend, the theory cannot explain what determines these different completions. (Vega Moreno 2007: 81)
It should come as no surprise, then, that the solution put forward by Vega Moreno places an emphasis on discourse comprehension and on deriving the inferential meaning determined by the speaker’s intentions. On the other hand, it may be somewhat surprising that the proposed theory continues in the tradition of attribution or class-inclusion theory and adopts Glucksberg’s insertion of ad hoc categories into the interpretive analysis (each of which represented by a lexeme marked with an asterisk and written out in capital letters). In addition, an extra analytic dimension is added which is supposed to close up the attested gaps in Class-Inclusion Theory: an inferential process hypothesized to yield the intended implications: “ [...] an inferential process which may involve several inferential steps, and several instances of pragmatic fine-tuning, before the resulting implications may be plausibly taken to apply to [the target]”.28 (Vega Moreno 2007: 110)

The examples analyzed are all nominal metaphors explicitly linking a target and a source, ‘T IS S’. These are presented with no or minimal discourse context, and the ensuing meaning to be explained remains rather vague as a result. Typically the meaning is represented as a short list of attributes followed by “etcetera”.

In the butcher-surgeon example (‘That surgeon is a butcher’), the analysis of the inferential process consists of a list of implications with 16 steps (from (a) through (p)). The list (not necessarily to be processed in strict sequence) involves deduction from a constructed ad hoc category of people who make less-than-optimal incisions to surgeons in general, and from surgeons in general to ‘that surgeon’.

The analysis of mapping relations and blended imagery involved in the analysis in Grady et al. (1999) is replaced by a relevance-theoretic notion of category formation, characterized as ‘adjustment’ of an initial encoded concept, and a process of deductive reasoning hypothesized to “derive a set of implications that may help to satisfy [the hearer’s] expectations of relevance” (p. 106).

It is not entirely obvious why the author chooses to abandon the idea of blended spaces altogether. It seems that, if adjusted to the relevance-theoretic framework, it might help explain the proposed process of conceptual adjustment.29

As it stands, it remains unclear exactly how the ad hoc concept BUTCHER* yields the intended meaning. “The inferential process may involve several steps, which take the constructed ad hoc concept further and further away from the encoded concept [...]” (p. 111) Metaphorically speaking, the concept is taken “further and further away” by “following a path of least effort”. And why does this happen? Simply to “yield appropriate implications”. We are told that the “adjustment” inferentially warrants implications that help satisfy the hearer’s expectations of relevance, but no semantic analysis ensues. The repeated references to adjustment begin to appear formulaic and still do not inform us as to how these implications are derived.30

---

28 See also Sperber & Wilson 2008.
29 See Tendahl 2009 for a proposal along these lines. Acknowledging the “need and possibility of achieving a broader and more realistic theory of metaphor” by bringing together research from different disciplines with overlapping research goals (Tendahl 2009, p. 276), Tendahl presents a hybrid theory of metaphor integrating relevance theory, conceptual integration theory and conceptual metaphor theory. As Tendahl points out, relevance theory has not yet offered a suggestion about how the proposed ad hoc concepts are formed and how mutual adjustment of lexical content, explicatures and implicatures occurs. Similarly, staying within the confines of a single framework, CMT has not made any suggestions about “the conditions determining which elements from a source domain are mapped to a target domain” (p. 287) and, generally speaking, has not paid sufficient attention to the pragmatic aspects of metaphor use and to the creation and interpretation of metaphors that do not instantiate an underlying conceptual metaphor. Tendahl sees an advantage to integrating aspects of CIT with these two other theoretical frameworks not least for the interest taken in the online processing of metaphor and finds the network model well-suited to capture “the dynamics of the ways in which different kinds of linguistic and contextual information interact.” (p. 286) Though I agree with the overall sentiment expressed, motivating the hybrid theory of metaphor, some problems persist in the merger, including, I think, the atomistic use of mental spaces (see section 5.5 where each lexical concept acquires its own mental space), a missing semantic dimension to the analysis of relevance in relation to the interpretation of meaning, and the enduring belief in the explanatory power of ad hoc concepts and metaphorical lexical concepts which already have metaphorical meaning when applied in analysis. Among other examples of metaphor, Tendahl analyses parts of a speech by Tony Blair employing some strikingly metaphorical language: “[...] we have launched an unprecedented crusade to raise [educational] standards”. (p. 249) Tendahl rightly notices the “extra force” emerging as part of the blend of political action and an unprecedented crusade being launched but does not explain how the impression of enhanced “force” happens to emerge. Furthermore, the derivatory lexical concept “CRUSADE2” (CRUSADE1 being a literal crusade), including “assumptions about campaigns, political/religious/social change, etc.” (p. 256) likewise presupposes the metaphoricity to be explained.
30 In the course of just a couple of pages, up to seven references are made to adjustment warranting the derivation of a set of implicatures which help to satisfy the hearer’s expectation of relevance (cf. Vega Moreno 2007: pp. 106-108), leaving the reader increasingly curious as to the assumed cognitive process by which this is achieved.
In agreement with the sentiment embodied in both the work of Vega Moreno and Fauconnier & Turner, the semiotic model of conceptual integration treats sentences and phrases as utterances, which given the inherent underspecificity of language, are to be understood in a pragmatically informed framework of interpretation. So too in the analysis of the butcher metaphor.

In the following, proceeding with the analysis of example (3), I will expound a figural and dynamic semantic network of interrelated semiotically precategorized mental spaces designed to derive the interpreted meaning of the utterance— including the emotive import of anger omitted in other analyses of the metaphor. The semiotic conceptual-integration diagrams represent a slowed-down account of the cognition involved in understanding the utterance.

3.1.2.3 Types of spaces in a semiotic blend

3.1.2.3.1 Spaces and domains

The input spaces display contents from distinct domains of lifeworld experience (or, in the terminology of CMT, experiential domains), one input being a scenario including “this surgeon” from the target domain of surgery, the other being a scenario including “a butcher” from the source domain of butchery. Butchers work on animals in abattoirs or shops, surgeons work on human beings in hospitals or clinics; in terms of social theory, one is related to basic production and distribution, the other to reproduction and service. Surgery is a part of a scientific medical discipline, butchery is a prominent aspect of gastronomic craftsmanship. As already mentioned, it is a general feature of metaphor that the input spaces be from different domains.31

These spaces—the space of surgery and the space of butchery—are set up in a Semiotic space. The Semiotic space is the space in which utterances are uttered and come to mean whatever it is they are supposed to mean. It is a space of expressive signification as such32, and is the base of all further space building, hence the alternate name “Base space”, not to be confused with Fauconnier’s notion by the same name (cf. section [3.1.1.2]). In Fauconnier’s (1997) terminology “the discourse base space” is a space vested with the speaker’s belief, a reality space according to the speaker.

This space, later referred to as “the Base” and in later mental space theory (MST) literature simply as “base space” (cf. Fauconnier & Turner 2002), is defined as: “a starting point for the construction to which it is always possible to return”. (Fauconnier 1997: 49) This Base space, previously characterized as an ontological base space, is heir to “space R” in Fauconnier (1994: 17), which got its name from the idea of a “speaker’s reality” which could then embed—or “parent”—other spaces. To see the difference between the two notions of base space, consider the following statement from Fauconnier 1994: “In a speech situation, the fact that something is said is pragmatically salient; the space of ‘what is said’ is set up.” (Fauconnier 1994: 161) As is evident, no clear distinction is made between “the fact that something is said” and “what is said”. As a consequence only one discourse space is needed in MST: a space concerning what the discourse is about. This notion of “base space” is topical rather than enunciational. It is the belief relative to which other semantic content is structured, and is the starting point in analyses of tense and mood, for instance. Speaker’s reality is the ontological base—or reference point—for determining the status of other related spaces, for instance hypothetical or counterfactual spaces and contrasting belief spaces.33

On a semiotic account, by contrast, a base space, or a discourse base space, is a representation of the cognizer’s act of engaging in meaning construction (whether privately or in the interaction with other minds). It is the saying of what is being said, the very act of signifying. The saying and what is said are

31 Compare “This surgeon is a butcher” to “This doctor is a surgeon”.
32 Expressive signification of course includes non-verbal and non-linguistic expressivity, as well as acts of artistic creation.
33 Cf. for instance the use in Semino 2009. This is likewise the sense adopted in the Radical Construction Grammar of Croft and Cruse (Cognitive Linguistics, 2004, pp. 33-39)—although reference is made elsewhere to the “speech act situation” (§2.1, §3.4.2), to the “actual situatedness of the interlocutors”, and in the section on Subjectivity (§3.4.3), the authors introduce a “communicative perspective”: “From a communicative perspective, we are situated as participants in the speech event, which defines our spatial and temporal location and our roles in the speech event (deixis). Our roles in the speech event [...] define the status of the situation to be communicated in speaking (epistemic deixis), our attitude towards it (empathy), and our presentation of ourselves in that situation (subjectivity).” (p. 63)
taken to be two different matters and are hence represented separately. The semiosis (the occurrence of utterances or other exchanges of signs) is the base for space building. It is the ground on which spaces are built. As such, it is closer to Langacker’s notion of ‘ground’ than Fauconnier’s notion of ‘base space’: “The term GROUND (G) refers to the actual speech event, its participants, and its immediate circumstances.” (Langacker 1999: 79) A semiotic base space has as its content “the fact that something is said”, with all that it entails, and this semiotic event is taken as the base for any (further) space building, anchoring meaning construction in enunciation.

A semiotic (base) space is a mental space in which the cognizer represents the present situation of cognizing. It is either a scene of communication, involving the individuals participating in the act of meaning construction, or a scene of reflection involving the reflecting subject and the situation in which the reflection takes place, as represented by the subject. It is thus assumed to be the case, phenomenologically speaking, that when people communicate, they represent the situation of communication, and that this shared representation is a prerequisite for meaning construction.

3.1.2.3.2 The semiotic base space

The semiotic base space comprises at least three determining resources for the interpretation of relevance. These determinations are represented here as a concentric map of three spheres: an inner sphere of circumstances pertaining to the expressive act as such, and two increasingly comprehensive spheres embedding it. The inner sphere of semiosis is contained in a larger sphere encompassing circumstances that characterize a specific situation as framed by the participants, and finally, the participants have access to an outer sphere comprising such conditions as are universally given in the human phenomenological lifeworld (or pheno-world).

To think or communicate – to “make sense” of utterances and the world these utterances are about – is to operate from inside this pheno-world which determines our acts and processes of signification. The signification itself, the semiosis, whether it be an act of communication or of private thinking, is thus always part of a situation influencing the act and hence potentially the interpretation of signifieds.

In the case of this particular (metaphorical) utterance the signification is communicative and takes place between two people in a hospital room; the speaker is recovering from an operation, the topic of conversation is a scar that is part of the perceptual environment, etc. There may have been other patients in the same room but if so, these are not construed as relevant and so are not part of the description of the situation. A situation, then, consists in the relevant aspects of the immediate environment and whatever aspects of the past and future are of consequence to the interpretation of the present.

The situated semiosis is contained in a phenomenal world: the world accessible to human thought (the ‘pheno-world’) including beliefs and counterfactual realities and encompassing the physical world with all its features and regularities and constraints on human action. The phenomenal world consists of everything that may serve as objects of thought – regardless of any belief in their existence outside of the minds of cognizers. It is the realm of subjective and intersubjective experience, including entities like butchers – which we believe exist independently of our thinking of them – and the winning lottery ticket we did not buy last week – which exists only by virtue of its significant absence.

The pheno-world and the semantically identifiable situations encompassed in it offer an infinite supply of possible spaces to the cognizers in Semiotic space – in the sense that any feature of the communication, or the embedding situation, or the humanly accessible world at large, can potentially become relevant to cognition.

---

34 See also Coulson & Oakley’s employment of a “grounding box” in their mental space analysis of figurative meanings in Coulson & Oakley 2005b. The grounding box is so called because it is not thought of as a mental space but rather as a list; the box “contains the analyst’s list of important contextual assumptions […]”. (Coulson & Oakley 2005b, p. 1517)

35 A term suggested by P. Aa. Brandt to evoke the idea that the world humans have access to is reality as it is phenomenally given: the world für uns, as Kant would say – a conceptualized reality, constrained by our faculties.
3.1.2.3.3 Reference and presentation

From the Semiotic space, where the utterance is produced, a topical space is set up; this is what we have called the Reference space (recall the conceptual integration analyses in section [2.1]). In our example, the Reference space relates to actuality, in contrast to the content in the predication space. The space-building is deictic; the Reference space is set up by an explicit and deictic space-builder ("this surgeon"). In other instances it might be built from contextual, non-verbal cues (if, for example, the surgeon believed to have caused the scar enters the visual field of the speaker and she mutters "Butcher!", or "Here comes the butcher!"). This step in the space-building process corresponds to step 1 in the above specification of five distinguishable levels of meaning. A subject of predication is singled out:

In order to apprehend the utterance as a metaphor, two more spaces need to be set up: a Presentation space and a Blended space. The Presentation space is highly figurative and also contains force-dynamic structure (most of which does not become salient until later in the process). In the blended space, the referent (T) is presented as if it were identical with the content in the Presentation space (S). By definition this identity link is virtual; if it were actual, only one space would be needed (a Reference space). It is in this virtual sense that T can be said to be S: in the blend, T is S. I propose it is this virtuality that makes a blend a blend. By virtuality I mean the very as-if-ness that characterizes the blend of a Reference space and a Presentation space.

In the terminology of Langacker’s cognitive grammar, our butchering surgeon exists on a “virtual plane” while the surgeon exists on an “actual plane”. In his paper on “Virtual reality” (1999),

---

36 As brought up in an earlier note, there are occasional references to “focus inputs” and to “topic spaces” in Fauconnier & Turner 2002. Perhaps this provisional nomenclature is motivated by a similar semiotic intuition, although the issue is not explicitly discussed. (Cf. for instance Fauconnier & Turner 2002, pp. 128, 352)

37 Reflecting ontologically distinct representational wholes, the notion of “planes” is practically interchangeable with “mental spaces” in this context.
Langacker proposes a distinction between virtual and actual entities in linguistic representation, and demonstrates how ubiquitous virtuality is in natural language use.38

Surprisingly much of our linguistic effort goes into the description of VIRTUAL entities, even when our main concern is with actual ones. […] Entities that are not part of actuality are visualized as occupying a VIRTUAL PLANE, which is distinct from the ACTUAL PLANE despite certain correspondences between them. (Langacker 1999: 78)

The blend is momentarily treated as if it were real and yields real inferences even though it is not vested with belief. Such representations – of virtual entities and relations – are meaningful, nonetheless, by virtue of their expressiveness and propositional power – qua the predicative sign structure. Metaphor is a poignant example of this, as it involves entertaining ideas not vested with speaker belief, with the ultimate aim of expressing actual beliefs. The blend is a virtual representation which specifies something about the reference – the “actual situation of concern” (cf. below). Virtual spaces are momentary fictions that yield lasting inferences.

This imagined entity [the blend of the target and the source] corresponds to [the source entity] but does not exist in actuality. It is the virtual, fanciful correspondent of a real entity, one that instantiates the metaphor and functions in lieu of the real entity for purposes of making the metaphorical predication. This predication is thus a VIRTUAL structure evoked to describe a facet of REALITY. […] Only via and in relation to what is said about the blended structure do we draw the intended conclusions about the actual situation in the target domain […] The blended structure is a kind of virtual representation created in order to indirectly specify something concerning the actual situation of concern. (Langacker 1999: 80-81)

In Figure 3-3, the (actual) subject – ‘this surgeon’ – is blended with the metaphoric predicate – ‘a butcher’ – in a virtual blend. One entity is seen as the other. The conceptualization, at this stage, consists in a crude mapping between the two input spaces and projections from these inputs to a Virtual space. These projections are rudimentary and not yet selective, so at this point there is no emergent meaning to be understood. What is understood, however, is that the predication is metaphorical. This amounts, not to a recategorization, but to an understanding that the surgeon is a butcher with respect to particular aspects of his character or profession – aspects not explicitly mentioned. At this stage in the analysis (corresponding to the 2nd level of meaning comprehension: metaphoric space-building) it has not yet been specified how the surgeon is a butcher.

In Figure 3-3, the (actual) subject – ‘this surgeon’ – is blended with the metaphoric predicate – ‘a butcher’ – in a virtual blend. One entity is seen as the other. The conceptualization, at this stage, consists in a crude mapping between the two input spaces and projections from these inputs to a Virtual space. These projections are rudimentary and not yet selective, so at this point there is no emergent meaning to be understood. What is understood, however, is that the predication is metaphorical. This amounts, not to a recategorization, but to an understanding that the surgeon is a butcher with respect to particular aspects of his character or profession – aspects not explicitly mentioned. At this stage in the analysis (corresponding to the 2nd level of meaning comprehension: metaphoric space-building) it has not yet been specified how the surgeon is a butcher.

Figure 3-3.

As previously mentioned, the inputs to the blend are functionally distinct. This asymmetry is reflected in the distinct labels for the two spaces. The Presentation space and Reference space are two types of spaces. In the case of metaphor, the target scenario is represented in the Reference space and the source in the Presentation space. The distinct functionality in question is clear in our example. The surgeon is

38 See also Chapter 2.
deictically given, whereas the butcher is generically given.  As suggested in Brandt & Brandt (2005a), this is a general feature of metaphor.

Language renders its genericity by morphological means, here by the determiner of the nominal, the morpheme ‘a’: “[T] is a butcher!”40 The generic category – a butcher – is a metaphorical predicate of the deictic category – the surgeon in question – which is linked to the deictically given scar (“This scar does not look right!”).

There are roles in both spaces. Being a generically given category, the role of ‘butcher’ does not have a filler. A specific surgeon was believed to be denoted by the expression ‘this surgeon’, however, though solely in his capacity of fitting the description. Therefore, should it have turned out it was in fact not that surgeon but a different one who had performed the surgery (say, there had been a switch while the patient was anaesthetized), it would be this other surgeon the speaker meant and she would still have said something that could be assigned a truth-value, i.e. the propositional content of her statement would still be one with which the addressee could agree or disagree. The speaker, acknowledging her mistake, might have said “Well, whoever did this to me is a butcher!” Someone particular might or might not be believed to fill that role. ‘Whoever did this to me’ would be a description for which the speaker was not committed to finding a referent, even though she believed such an individual existed.

The definite description “this surgeon” is used attributively, meaning the person who performed the surgery, i.e. whoever left the scar in question.41

Equally abundant are cases where a definite description is used referentially or where the target referent is denoted by a proper name (SO-AND-SO IS [SOURCE]). In a 2002 article in a local American newspaper42, the journalist similarly engages the source domain of butchery and refers to the then Palestinian leader as a ‘butcher’, a predicate that comes to serve as an argument for deeming him an unfit leader (just as surgeons should not be butchers, political leaders should not be butchers): “It’s time Arafat stopped making excuses. He has proven he is not a leader but is still the same terrorist butcher he was 30 years ago.”

In contrast to our butcher-surgeon example, the utterer in this example identifies a particular individual, independently of any description, urging the reader to imagine this person – equipped with a proper name – as a butcher.43

3.1.2.3.4 Relevance and virtuality

Having set up a preliminary blend of a butcher space and a surgeon space (Figure 3-3), we need a relevant framing of the surgeon space to guide further mappings between the inputs and to motivate the selection of projections to the blend. This level in the analysis corresponds to the 3rd level of meaning outlined above (developing a structured blend specifying in what sense this surgeon is a butcher).

The speaker’s situation provides the relevant framing here; the surgeon has operated on the speaker and left a scar that is now the topic of conversation in the recovery room. Now we have a little story in the Reference space, which, in turn, motivates our framing of the butcher space. Since the relation between the semantic actants of agent and patient (undergoer) is in focus in the Reference space, this

---

39 The determination of an object is deictic if it is referred to by an instance of deixis, and is generic if given as a genus, a genre. In Fauconnier & Turner 2002, ‘generic’ instead means ‘abstract’ (see e.g. Fauconnier & Turner 2002, pp. 297–298).

40 It seems sensible to recognize generic nominals like “a butcher” as inherently virtual. According to such an analysis, generic nominals originated as blends of a presentational non-actual space with a representative unique individual, on the one hand, and a referential actuality space with an unspecified multitude of individuals of this type, on the other. The non-actual individual then comes to stand for the whole set of individuals that is referred to and believed to exist (within some space); in the blend, this representative individual virtually is the whole category. “A butcher”, for instance, interpreted in the generic sense, is any butcher, and “any butcher” resides among the plurality of butchers in the Reference space.

This analysis is inspired by Langacker’s analysis of genericity (see e.g. Langacker 1999) and takes it one step further, specifying what is means for an entity to be virtual: virtuality is rendered by the presentation-reference relation in the blend.

41 The description “a butcher” is not thought to denote any particular butcher, whereas “this surgeon” is. If the speaker had been hallucinating and there had been no surgery, and hence no surgeon to blame for any scar, the addressee could not agree or disagree with the metaphor. It would be neither true nor false under the attributive reading (See Strawson 1950 for a similar point); if no one fits the description there is no subject to take the predicate. In our example, however, what is referred to by the definite description “this surgeon” is an attributive role which does have a particular individual fitting it. Importantly, the meaning of the definite description in question is pragmatically disambiguated.


43 A butcher butchering civilians (cf. the characterization as a long-time “terrorist butcher”). Note that the import is not incompetence.
framing also comes to shape the content of the Presentation space: an agent is acting on a patient, and our attention is allocated to what happens to the patient. In the blend, the agent is simultaneously a surgeon and a butcher, the act is both surgery and butchery, and the patient (undergoer) is both a medical patient and a piece of meat.

The scar on the patient in the Reference space does not map onto anything in the Presentation space. Because it is there, we know the construction is metaphorical; the utterance predicates something about the surgeon in relation to something contextually specified.\textsuperscript{44}

The speaker considers the scar to be less neat than it should have been. In the Virtual space, where we imagine the surgeon’s job performed by a butcher, the figurative dramatization helps us see why it is so: The butchering surgeon is brutalizing the patient. In both inputs, an agent is taking a sharp instrument to an immobile body, but since the agent-patient relation is topical, the discrepancy between the (maybe anesthetized) human body (the referenced entity) and the dead body of an animal (the presentational entity) is critical. Experiencing this discrepancy is crucial for getting the metaphor.

Conceptualizers may also experience a discrepancy between the instruments used by the agents in the inputs spaces, but imagining the instruments as part of the virtual scenario is not vital to understanding the metaphor, so we have no reason to assume this aspect is part of the meaning. Adding this optional feature though (‘elaborating’ the blend, in CIT terminology) adds to the figurativity of the butcher space and, as a consequence, to the emotional impact that the metaphor may have on the addressee, because an experientially more dramatic predicate intensifies the predication.

That it is a butchering surgeon and not the other way around owes to the fact that the two inputs are asymmetric. Since one input functions as a predicate of the other, the agent is more surgeon-like than butcher-like in the mental enactment\textsuperscript{45}, and the patient (undergoer) is more patient-like than animal-like (the dative recipient of the act is more so human than non-human), while the act is more butchery-like than surgery-like.

Put differently, the referential entities (the surgeon and the patient) are more vivid than the predicate entities (the butcher and the dead animal), and, conversely, the predicate act (butchery) is more vivid than the referential act (surgery), when we experience the two scenarios in the blend; we see the butcher as a surgeon, and the dead meat as a human recipient, while we see the act of surgery as an act of butchery.

The discrepancy between a surgeon-like versus a butcher-like attitude to the patient of the act (a lifeless body of meat versus a recipient of medical attention) becomes apparent when the blend has been structured according to what is situationally relevant. Rather than conceiving of the input spaces as experiential domains (the domains of butchery and surgery, respectively) structured by encyclopedic knowledge, parts of which are then projected while others are suppressed, the inputs are viewed as mental spaces set up for a specific purpose, with content that pertains specifically to the topic of conversation.

The process of framing the inputs can be described as an elaboration loop: ‘elaboration’ because the topical focus (in Semiotic space) determines how the content of the input spaces is structured and elaborated in the process of comprehension (running the blend) or in ongoing discourse (the process of adding to and altering already existing spaces for whatever expressive purpose), and ‘loop’ because this framing process is open-ended and reciprocal. That is, online adjustments or alterations can happen in the course of a mental enactment (since it is an online dynamic process), and alterations in one space can influence the framing of the other spaces.\textsuperscript{46}

Situational relevance is distinguishable from the other two types of relevance outlined in this chapter\textsuperscript{47} by its effect on the framing of the blend: what is projected from the inputs, and how the projected content is structured in the blend. The concept of an elaboration loop thus offers an alternative explanation to “selective projection”, if by selective projection we mean partial representation of encyclopedic knowledge of the domains in question. Or else it can be viewed as a specification of how selective projection occurs, in the sense that the content projected to the blend is selected based on how the inputs are framed.

\textsuperscript{44} This point illustrates that the five levels are not to be taken as temporally contingent steps. The network is (for speakers, hearers and analysts alike) an online process where elaboration, deletion and alteration can take place at any time.

\textsuperscript{45} On the concept of enactment, see also section [2.1.1.4].

\textsuperscript{46} Different framing scenarios may be tried out in a mental enactment, though in this particular case apprehension is immediate. When dealing with examples of communicational misunderstandings, however, one pertinent task would be to compare the respective conceptualizers’ different framings of the inputs, and how the resulting inferences differ as a result thereof.

\textsuperscript{47} The three types of relevance outlined are: situational relevance (at level 3), argumentational relevance (at level 4), and illocutionary relevance (at level 5). See section [3.1.2.3.5] on ‘Relevance and emergent meaning’.
The framing of the inputs is contextually motivated. The presence of the scar and the preceding surgery are situationally relevant factors in the construction and comprehension of our butcher-surgeon metaphor. This attentional focus affects a framing of the Reference space according to which the relation between the surgeon and the (scarred) patient is prominent (whereas, for instance, the tools used in the act are not). This contextual framing of the surgeon scenario influences the framing of the content in the Presentation space. The result is a butcher scenario whose prominent feature is the relation between the butcher and the entity acted upon: the body of an animal killed for consumption. These two — now contextually framed — scenarios make up the two semiotic layers of the blended representation in Virtual space, and it becomes clear in what specific sense this surgeon is a butcher.

The unempathic attitude of the butcher, appropriate and necessary in the act of butchering, becomes the prominent aspect of the predicative representation in the blended scenario.

Figure 3-4 represents the cognitive process believed to be involved in selective projection of semantic content to the butcher-surgeon blend, as described above (cf. situational relevance).

The salient part of the scenario in Reference space is the patient, who is deictically given (she is the I that can say look what he did to me), and so the surgeon is said to be a butcher particularly with respect to how he has (mis)treated the patient, leaving a scar that is deemed unpleasing to the eye – an outcome which, importantly, is thought to have been avoidable. The surgeon evidently did not prioritize making
the scar look as unnoticeable as possible (this is the counterfactual outcome; he could have) and is faulted for failing to do so.

The selected framing, in turn, motivates a relevant schema, which makes the evaluative meaning emerge. What our scarred speaker conveys by the use of this metaphor is that the surgeon has an inappropriately indifferent attitude, and that this attitude of indifference is not only grossly inappropriate but unethical. (Cf. Figure 3-5 in section [3.1.2.3.5], ‘Relevance and emergent meaning.’)

The structure that the inputs have in common is specified by what is situationally relevant. As with other categories, the category “shared structure between the inputs” is context-sensitive. It is thus not cognitively realistic that this structure exists in the mind as a definite list of entities and relations independently of a goal, a purpose, motivating the conceptualizer to evoke these similarities – a view to be compared with the idea that shared structure exist as a list in a “generic” space.

While the blended space contains rather elaborate figural images, the generic space, one of the stock spaces in a standard mental space blend (along with two or more input spaces), contains abstract, skeletal structure. (Turner & Fauconnier 1995a; Fauconnier & Turner 1996, 2002) The generic space, summarized in Gibbs (2000) as “some additive space of what two or more domains have in common” (Gibbs 2000: 349), can be traced back to the concept in Lakoff and Turner (1989): GENERIC IS SPECIFIC (supposedly a conceptual metaphor in spite of the fact that source and target do not constitute domains), and was developed further in Turner (1991) and (1996).

Turner’s argument for the conceptual existence of a generic space is that we can reach a generic interpretation without projecting it onto a specific target (cf. Turner 1996: 87). A key example is proverbs, which are described in terms of generic-level information being projected to a generic space whose abstract story may then be applied to unlimited specific target spaces.

Possible contents of the generic space, in essence the fundamental properties instrumental to the structuring of human experience, are “[...] basic ontological categories (such as entity, state, event, action, and situation), aspects of beings (such as attributes and behavior), event-shape (such as instantaneous or extended; single or repeated; completed or open-ended; preserving, creating, or destroying entities; cyclic or without fixed stages that end where they begin), causal relations (such as enabling, resulting in, bringing about, creating, and destroying), image-schemas (such as bounded regions, paths, forces, and links), and modalities (such as ability, necessity, possibility, and obligation).” (Turner 1991: 161)

The generic structures are constituted by mappings establishing counterpart connections between input spaces to guide the blending. The concept of mappings was used already in Metaphors We Live By (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) and is a central component in mental space theory. A mapping “is a correspondence between two sets [read: mental spaces] that assigns to each element in the first a counterpart in the second.” (Fauconnier 1997: 1, fn. 1)

Similarities in (e.g. image-schematic) structure makes mapping possible, aligning comparable entities and relations in the inputs. The concept of counterparts presupposes structural comparability, on the basis of which elements in the source and the target inputs may be fused or contrasted in a blend. Remaining unmatched structure in either space needs only be compatible, so as not to cause unmotivated conflict. Some version of CMT’s Invariance Principle (asserting that mappings preserve the image-schematic structure of the source domain in such a way that it is consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain) may thus still apply, only adjusted to mental spaces instead of domains of experience, in the form of constraints on the projection of structure to the blend from the inputs.48

It [the invariance principle] does not require that the image schema projected from the source already exist in the target before the projection, but instead that the result of the projection not include a contradiction of image schemas. (Turner 1991: 30)

---

48 Interpreting the principle so that it consistent with available data requires some specification, however, of what is entailed. As Coulson writes, based on insight arrived at, in part, from analysis of the digging-your-own-grave metaphor: “These examples [‘He’s digging his own grave’, ‘It’s not too late to exhume ourselves from the shallow grave we’ve dug for ourselves’ (statement about the plight of the American educational system)] show that the inferences suggested by metaphoric utterances need not result from projections based on shared relational structure. In this respect, the source domain in a metaphor is less important than previously thought [cf. the Invariance Principle], as causal structure in the source can be quite irrelevant for the resultant construal of the target domain.” (Coulson 2001, pp. 171-172) Furthermore, Coulson & Oakley argue (in Coulson & Oakley 2003) that the topology principle, one of the optimality principles in CIT – a parallel to the invariance hypothesis in exerting pressure to preserve relational structure (p. 59) – can in some instances be in competition with other optimality constraints, and thus maximal preservation of relational structure may be “traded off” in favor of other relevant concerns (p. 61).
It is worth noting in this context a conflict in CMT not inherited by CIT, in part because CIT does not aim at explaining the origin of abstract domains. In CIT, as in CMT, there are not necessarily counterparts for every entity or relation in another space, but, importantly, it also cannot be the case that there is no structure at all in a target space. Since Lakoff & Johnson (1980), there has been an unspoken conflict in CMT between, on the one hand, the recognition of structural attunement as a factor in explaining constraints on the compatibility of source-target constellations, and, on the other, a desire to portray abstract domains as largely or entirely structured by a physical domain of sensorimotor action and perception can ultimately be claimed to ground the various other domains. In CIT, projections are thought to occur between two domains that are structurally compatible (a notion supported, respectively, by the invariance principle), but, contrary to this, it is also claimed that the target domain in some cases can be inherently unstructured, i.e. that the target subject matter need not have any structure of its own.

The longevity of the idea of unstructured target domains is evident even in Tendahl (2009) which similarly makes reference to target domains with “no (or only little skeletal) structure” (Tendahl 2009: 156). Apart from the questionable reality of domains existing without any internal structure to them, one briefly stated argument against viewing some metaphors as transferring structure to a target with no or only skeletal structure is that in primary metaphors, it is actually the source domain that has “skeletal” structure. Another is that we would expect boundless variation in the metaphoric coupling of domains, if, as it is claimed, one domain can be inherently unstructured, which is not what we see (there are constraints on what domains can be mapped onto what other domains).

Whether instantiating entrenched mappings between domains or not, the blends of mental spaces in CIT rely on structural compatibility as a factor motivating (e.g. metaphorical) mappings. Structural compatibility explains why some mappings are felt to “fit” while others would never be considered. This is true of domains as well as spaces. The question is whether similarities abstracted from input spaces are represented as contained in a generic space. Whether this structure figures in a space by itself depends, I suppose, on what a “mental space” is taken to be, and what use the conceptualizer has of separating off these contents, abstracted from any context, in the act of constructing meaning.

Though it may be analytically possible to construct such an exhaustive list for every blend, it seems implausible to me that such a list-space is effectively evoked in the mind of the conceptualizer. The presence of an extra space evidently does not help explain the process of constructing the meaning of a blend, which is probably why it is generally absent from the verbal descriptions of how particular meanings are derived, and in some cases absent even from the diagrams themselves.

Sweetser writes that: “[...] mappings between input spaces are normally structured by a generic space [...]” (Sweetser 2006: 33, italics removed). It is not clear, however, in Sweetser (2006) or elsewhere in the literature, what constitutes “normal” conditions; when are mappings presumed to be structured by a generic space and when not?

It seems reasonable to expect some sort of phenomenological motivation for positing the existence of this kind of representation. Without it, the space gains the appearance of an unnecessary appendage, of no obvious relevance to the understanding of the semantics in question. This is particularly notable, I think, in the case of the so-called “simplex blends” – consisting of especially meager spaces and claimed to account for the construction of the meaning of sentences like e.g. “Paul is the father of Sally” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Generic space often contains roles in blending analyses, but in the case of simplex blends, role and filler are contained in Input 1 and Input 2, respectively, and in the analysis of Paul (filler) as a father (role), we end up with the category man (the gender) in generic space, which does not add to the understanding of the semantics in question, and, in any case, seems somewhat contrived as “generic structure”. In another simplex blend example analyzed (ibid.) – “This is the top of the building” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, Ch. 8). XYZ blends have thus come to be defined, not semantically, but in terms of the syntactic form of linguistic units; it is the construction itself that prompts a blend. “[...] the syntax and mapping scheme of ‘The Child is father of the Man’ are the same as the syntax and the mapping scheme of ‘Paul is the father of Sally’.” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, p. 142)

30 This matter is deserving of more attention, I think, than it has hitherto been given.

31 The XYZ form – ‘X is the Y of Z’ – was originally of semantic interest because of the hidden W in XYZ metaphors – ‘X is to Z as Y is to W’ – and mental spaces were shown to help account for the figurative meanings analyzed (see e.g. Turner 1996). In Fauconnier & Turner 2002, however, the interest has shifted from the underlying semantics of XYZ metaphors [e.g. “Vanity is the quicksand of reason” (Sand), or “The Child is father of the Man” (Wordsworth)] to the syntactic form as such, including literal statements like “Paul is the father of Sally” or “This is the top of the building” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, Ch. 8). XYZ blends have thus come to be defined, not semantically, but in terms of the syntactic form of linguistic units; it is the construction itself that prompts a blend.

32 Attributes and the entities to which the attributes apply are thus thought to be represented separately.

33 In addition to “local” generic spaces, with structure abstracted from the inputs, Fauconnier and Turner claim the existence in multiple integration networks of an unspecified number of “global” generic spaces which are abstractions of one of more spaces in a network. “A blended space is a mental space, and we can always make a
of the building” – “this” and “the top” exist in a focus input and are said to map onto “a whole vertically oriented thing” and “a vertical extremity” in a whole-with-parts frame input. This, in itself, may sound rather odd (that the building needs a whole-with-parts-mapping to be conceived of as a whole with parts), but what is striking is the absence of any mention of a generic space. It is hard to see, perhaps, what the content would be, other than a “whole” or “vertical thing”; that is, other than a reiteration of the “vertically oriented thing” input.

3.1.2.3.5 Relevance and emergent meaning

The Reference space has temporal depth, extending from the past (the surgery) to the present (the post-surgery situation), to the future (the prospect of living with the scar). The virtual scenario – including the actual past event, now framed in accordance with what is situationally relevant – carries over into the present where the agent as well as the causal result of the act are evaluated. The metaphoric import is projected back to Reference space, by virtue of having been recognized as an argument in the communication between speaker and addressee in Semiotic space. That is, the emergent meaning of the blend is projected back to the semiotic base, where it influences the participants’ shared conception of the topic of conversation and the further development of the dialogue taking place. The emergent meaning thus has implications both for how the dialogue progresses in Semiotic space and for how the Reference space is framed in future communication (the framing of the reference becomes part of a shared knowledge base, aka a shared frame of reference).

The blend in Virtual space, interestingly, comes to serve as argumentation for the speaker’s point of view. The cognitive mechanism that allows the meaning to emerge in the blend should figure in the analysis, and I therefore offer a description of the schematic background knowledge that makes it at all relevant for the conceptualizers to blend the two inputs in the first place, and which, in effect, makes the metaphoric meaning come about in the virtual blend.

This semantic content may or may not be represented as a separate mental space, depending on the individual conceptualizer’s conscious awareness of it. Because it is an essential part of the meaning construction process, my suggestion is that it be included in conceptual integration analyses, regardless of how it is accessed.\(^{32}\) Whether the conceptualizer pieces together a representation of the issue that makes the presentation (the source) relevant to the reference (the target), hence constructing a mental space, or gets the meaning without identifying the intended framing schema, it is present in the mind, since the meaning would not emerge without it. To the analyst, however, this applied background knowledge, insofar as it is taken into consideration, will necessarily figure in a mental space, since it takes considerable analytic effort to, not just identify, but give a description of it, rendering evident its schematic form as it might plausibly be represented in human cognition (with varying degrees of awareness).

These schemas, a resource in the pheno-world, are represented in a type of space characterized by affording argumentational relevance to the blend. As such, the induced schemas contribute to the

---

\(^{32}\) The issue of whether to represent relevance-making semantic contents as separate mental spaces was subject to extensive discussion in cognitive linguistics seminars at the Center for Semiotics when development of the semiotic integration model was first initiated. My stance has been that the evident presence of relevance-makers warrants semantic analysis, though such content may not necessarily be conceptually represented as actual mental spaces in every case. A good example of a blend in which a relevance space is arguably activated would be the Buddhist Riddle (see Koestler 1964, pp. 183-184; Fauconnier & Turner 2002, pp. 39-57). One way of solving the riddle of the Buddhist Monk, one of Fauconnier and Turner’s stock examples of conceptual integration, is to imagine a meeting of two – (numerically) non-identical – individuals. In this example the conceptualizer even actively searches for a suitable framing of the blend, in which two days are one while the singular monk is represented twice, and it is precisely the generation of a relevance space that makes the solution emerge (fictive as the content may be; there is only one monk in the narrative under consideration). Another type of example in which a relevance-maker is readily consciously accessible would be a joking comment that makes an implicit reference back to an earlier shared experience – a mental space representation of some shared incident – which provides the relevant context for meaning construction. More generally, one could say that a space is set up whenever a relevance-maker is not just present in the meaning construction process but easily unpacked (to use a CIT term) – a notion presupposing conceptualization, and therefore some degree of conscious accessibility.
framing of blends. In Brandt & Brandt (2005a), we proposed calling this space the Relevance space since it contains knowledge of the issue the speaker has in mind when evoking the presentation as a sign for the reference. It provides the relevant thought content for the framing of the blend (at levels 3 and 4) and, ultimately, for the emergence of reasonable inferences at the level of pragmatic implication (5).

The metaphoric meaning is accordingly a product of a mapping between the blend, in its pre-emergent-meaning state (the blend prior to emergence of relevant inferences), and some relevant schema which structures the blend and makes its strange figurativity meaningful.

From the perspective of an addressee, a blend may attract different schematic mappings depending on what structures can be construed as shared between the inputs and what has been established as situationally relevant to the communication. From the perspective of a speaker, the relevant issue will determine the range of possible presentational scenarios, and the adequacy of any individual candidates. The mapping allows the relevant schema to be projected to the blended representation, structuring it as a narrative about the reference (extending from the past to the present to the future, as mentioned above).

The appropriate schema for the evaluation of the brutalization of the now scarred patient is a skeletal, force-dynamic story of how one person’s act influences another person’s situation and leaves this other person worse or better off (or alternatively, neither in a worsened nor improved position). This schema is directly relevant to the understanding of the utterance as an emotional evaluation. It is signified by the speaker’s emotional expression and since it can be apperceived as a genuine part of that emotion it functions as a relevance-maker (appearing in Relevance space in the model below). It is the basic narrative force-dynamic schema found in the evaluation of human acts as ethical or (more commonly) unethical. We can call it the ethical schema. Acts qualifying for consideration in terms of (un)ethical behavior are evaluated in terms of helping or harming. When people are said to help each other, the verb ‘help’ prototypically refers to the life and death of its object – an individual – and means ‘making it easier for the individual to stay alive’, whereas the verb ‘harm’ means ‘making it difficult for the individual to stay alive’ (as in wrong-doing and evil-doing). The ultimate form of harm, therefore, is to end the life of the individual trying to stay alive.55

The ethical schema of harming versus helping (with not harming as another option) can be diagrammatically rendered by a force-and-barrier schema. In force-and-barrier schemas, agents may be represented by conflicting forces.56 An agonist is affected by an antagonist acting as a barrier to a flow or a moving entity, and the weakening of the antagonist then ‘lets’ the agonist go/flow/live on. To help someone corresponds to weakening a barrier for this person. To harm someone conversely corresponds to reinforcing the barrier that opposes this person’s progress/movement/life. The dynamic principle applied in this framework is displayed in the graphic below (see Figure 3-6):

---

54 The communicative principle of relevance claims that “every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance”. (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 260) Relevance in this framework, as in Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986), refers to the status of an expressed semantic construction that is demonstrably meaningful in the situation in which it occurs. In terms of the analysis proposed here, it further refers to the specific structure, neither referential nor presentational in the sense explained here, that is recruited from the Semiotic base space and connected to instances of the network described, making constructions meaningful.

55 Though there are of course less dramatic occurrences of helping and harming in daily life, prototypical instances of good and evil entail interactions between two subjects, one being the ‘patient’ of the other, and the other being responsible for the well-being (in radical cases: the survival) or, in cases of wrong-doing, demise of the former. The schematization capturing this dynamic is what grounds the emotion of the speaker, and consequently the – metaphorically hyperbolized – emphasis.

Figure 3-5.
Figure 3-6.

The activation of this schema in the network is reinforced by the contrastive superposition of a prototypical ‘helper’ (a physician, a surgeon), a craftsman of life, on the one hand, and a prototypical craftsman of death (a butcher), on the other.

The latter is notably not prototypically a ‘harmer’. Butchers perform a service instrumental to sustaining life: providing nourishment. Only from the viewpoint of animals could the butcher be conceived of as a harmer. The butcher, as he appears in our Presentation space, also does not engage in any slaughter. He does not do any killing because killing is not part of the relevant framing of the butcher scenario (as motivated by the framing of events in Reference space). The windowed event is the handling of the already dead animal.57

It is by virtue of the metaphor that the butcher is turned into a harmer. This happens because the dramatic scene in the blend is construed from the viewpoint of the patient of the act – the human acted on in the Reference space – which is where our sympathy is vested. This allocation of sympathy and

57 By contrast, the butcher is actively slaughtering animals in the earlier Sharon and Arafat examples, where reckless cruelty is inferred. Here, it is the nature of the attacks on the political enemy that is referred to; the metaphors concern the “slaughter” of Palestinian and Israeli citizens. Cf. example (4) concerning Israeli military attacks on Palestinian civilians: “They destroyed our house without warning. We left without our shoes. Sharon is a butcher.”, and the Arafat example concerning Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians: “It’s time Arafat stopped making excuses. He has proven he is not a leader but is still the same terrorist butcher he was 30 years ago.”
attention carries over into the blend, where the butcher becomes a harming agent because viewed from
the vantage point of the patient – simultaneously perceived as a slaughtered animal and a living human
being.58

The patient is helped by the surgical operation (is relieved of her suffering), but is also harmed (by
the scarring) and hence sees herself as worse off than would otherwise have been the case. The scar is
believed to be harmful to her existence as a woman, and not having such a scar is the ideal, though
counterfactual, situation against which her present, actual, situation is measured.

The ethical schema applied to the blend has the scarred patient as the patient of the act (in the
actantial sense) and the surgeon as the agent constituting a barrier to the ‘ideal program’: the scenario in
which the patient continues her existence, her beauty unaffected by dermatological disfigurement:

Figure 3-7.

In extension of previous reflections on the relations holding between the Semiotic base space and the
Relevance space, a number of dimensions of relevance may be distinguished, corresponding to the
suggested stratification of the Semiotic base space. Relevance can be seen as composed of (at least)
three types of phenomena. The expressive base is the origin of illocutional relevance, determined by
what is happening in the ongoing discourse. In the present example, a speech act of requesting
reassurance is felicitously performed. The situational base creates situational relevance – here the
framing of the inputs, including the focally salient scar. Finally, the pheno-world is the origin of the
argumentational relevance that motivates description and evaluation – here, the ethical schema.

Figure 3-8.

3.1.2.3.6 Meaning space

The Meaning space is the properly framed Virtual space: a post-emergent-meaning space (the blend
structured by the ethical schema). The completion offered by the dynamic schema is crucial to the
emergent meaning, which does not emerge in the blend “by magic” (recall Vega Moreno’s critique, cf.
section [3.1.2.2])59 but by virtue of this interpretive process, grounded in the circumstances shaping the
production of the metaphor. Were the argumentational relevance altered and the dynamic schema
replaced by a different schema, the meaning of the utterance would change.60

58 This is a good example of a life/death blend, a phenomenon earlier discussed in the blending literature (cf.
Pascual 2002; see also Turner 1996).
59 “[..] I don’t agree with the assumption that by putting a certain topic and a certain vehicle in the same sentence,
the right combination of dimension and attribution will emerge, by magic, providing an adequate basis for
interpretation.” (Vega Moreno 2007: 73)
60 We can imagine various situations in which the utterance would warrant alternative interpretations. Imagine, for
instance, a superior talking about an employee at a staff meeting, discussing whether to keep this person on staff –
The evaluative emergent meaning occasions certain inferences that project back to the interaction between speaker and addressee. The addressee interprets the use of the metaphor as concurrently communicating a request for reassurance and infers what he should do and say next, in response.

Figure 3-9 shows the conceptual integration network in its entirety.

Were the question What does that mean? asked in response to the utterance, it could be answered at five different levels of explanation, and each of these replies would be appropriate, depending on what part of the network needed filling in. The speaker could explain (1) what the lexical entry “butcher” means (or any other words or phrases appearing in the sentence); (2) that it is a metaphor; (3) that the surgeon handled her anaesthetized body the way a butcher would handle the body of a dead animal (this sort of explanation would greatly reduce the affective potency, replacing emphatic evaluation of the act with mere description; (4) that the surgeon should have thought of her as someone who would have to live with the scar for the rest of her life; or (5) that she would like the addressee to help her believe the harm is not as detrimental to her existence as she presently happens to feel.

It could also be the case that the utterance be taken to mean that M.D. Smith was not skillful enough (for instance, using a scalpel the way one would use a meat cleaver). In that instance, the utterer would be evaluating the quality of a (particular) surgeon’s work, a meaning emerging by recruiting some force-dynamic schema making the surgeon’s professional incompetence apparent (cf. argumentational relevance).

Note, by the way, that “this surgeon” is used referentially, not attributively, in this made-up discourse situation. If the superior had suddenly come to the realization that it was in fact not M.D. Smith but M.D. Butcher who was causing problems, he would have to concede he had made a false statement.

Recall the different levels of comprehension listed in section [3.1.2.2].
3.1.2.4 The semiosis of a mental space network

The standard conceptual integration network proposed has a semiotic design. The space functioning as the base for further space building is the one in which the acts of signification – thought, communication – take place. From this space the two input spaces are set up, one presentational, one referential. The network represents the cognitive process of meaning construction for utterances and expressions that let one scenario be signified via another by having them appear as an integrated whole – in the case of metaphor as a conceptualization of virtual identity. The inputs to the blend are two mental spaces that stand in a sign relation to one another. In Saussurean terms, Presentation space contains signifier structure (in Hjelmslevian terms the expression of the sign), while Reference space contains signified structure (Hjelmslevian content). Thirdly, Relevance space contains structure that interprets the relations to be taken into consideration between the selected composite structural constituents in the blend. The blend, therefore, corresponds to the sign, semiotically speaking.

In terms of Peircean semiology, a ‘Representamen’ (the signifying sign) is introduced in the Presentation space, while the Reference space introduces an ‘Object’ (the object signified). These spaces contribute to a Virtual space, the content of which is structured by an ‘Interpretant’ which specifies how the sign is to be interpreted, for instance whether it is under negotiation (in order to determine its illocutionary status), and whether it is iconic, indexical or symbolic.62

The model below (Figure 3-10) illustrates the structure of semiosis in terms of mental spaces63, a general structure hypothesized to be active in cognition of blends occurring for expressive purposes. In the blend, the Object (O) virtually is the Representamen (R), and so (R) may stand for (O).

---

62 The semiotic function of relevance-making, in this perspective, corresponds to the stabilization of the linking of a Representamen to an Object through an Interpretant. I am aware, of course, that this interpretation lies outside the Peircean conception of the sign relation which is not restricted to human communicative behavior and according to which an interpretive triad is not necessarily an intentional sign relation. This (specifically intentional) understanding may be taken as one of the constitutive ideas of a Cognitive Semiotics.

63 Signs that are not blends of mental spaces should of course not be analyzed in terms of Presentation and Reference spaces etc., but the overall design of the network is generalizable to other expressive signs as well.
The monk ascended the path at varying rates of speed, stopping many times along the way to rest and to eat the dried fruit he carried with him. He reached the temple shortly before sunset. / The monk ascended the path at varying rates of speed, stopping many times along the way to rest and to eat the dried fruit he carried with him. He reached the temple shortly before sunset. / The monk ascended the path at varying rates of speed, stopping many times along the way to rest and to eat the dried fruit he carried with him. He reached the temple shortly before sunset.
space is given a number (Input 1, Input 2, etc.) and only occasionally do the spaces have descriptive designations (e.g. “topic”).

Meaning, in CIT, is not anchored in semiosis but in the private mental world of a conceptualizer, a mental world somehow accessible to the analyst though the cognitive processes in question are regarded as largely unconscious and are thought of, curiously enough, as taking place below the level of conscious access.

The aim here is of course not to deny that cognitive events can occur in our minds without our awareness, but to bring attention to the fact that the metacognition of phenomenological reflection is indispensable to semantic analysis. Meaning, in the semiotic sense, is representational and plays out in experience, in an immediate sense, and, consisting of consciously experienced representations, is accessible to conscious examination. This point is not particularly radical and more or less amounts to saying that by contrast to the binding processes of perception, there is conscious agency in semantic cognition (to borrow a phrase from cognitive semantics); we are able to be aware of, examine and manipulate our own thoughts as we are having them.

Semiotic agents are also not principally unaware of the situations in which communication takes place, and in the case of literature, the least situationally grounded type of semiotic exchange, of the relation between enunciator and reader. Both the representation of the situation of communication and the representations of the (semantic-pragmatic) content of the communicative exchange are experienced by the participants (and by the analyst, having understood the meaning of what has been expressed). The non-inclusion of a semiotic base space in CIT is thus deserving of a philosophical rationale so far not made explicit.

I hope to have made it clear that these issues are not merely a matter of stylistic differences in the diagramming but reflect philosophical and methodological differences that should be addressed in future discussions on blending. The semiotic model of conceptual integration is proposed as a next interdisciplinary step in the evolution of CIT as a theory of meaning construction. On the one hand, it is meant to exhibit the aptitude of a semiotic adaptation of blending theory as an analytical aid providing us with the theoretical means to advance our understanding of the – empirically manifest though philosophically challenging – use of non-actuality in representation. On the other, it represents a constructive critique of the absence of semiotic theory in CIT, an absence that is understandable given the contingencies of historical context, yet is striking, given the undeniable central interest in meaning.

Aspects of this critique also extends to Glucksberg’s theory of metaphor, according to which metaphors are understood as class-inclusion statements, and to Relevance Theory, which cannot be faulted for leaving out the pragmatic side of metaphor comprehension but which, I think, would benefit from incorporating into its pragmatic analyses a more elaborate semantic dimension.

The model, applied to metaphoric expressions, posits an experiential reason for seeing one scenario in terms of another: an experienced intensification of particular relevant aspects of the target scenario, typically through an amplification of force-dynamic structure, by virtue of the blended space, resulting in expressive hyperbole.

With its focus on the dynamic aspect of meaning (rather than encyclopedic knowledge structures), this phenomenological description represents an alternative to accounts positing the generation of ad hoc categories, like Glucksberg’s ‘butcher’ category of “people who both jobs in reprehensible and often appalling ways”. In the same vein, it adopts a relevance-oriented perspective, much in line with relevance theory, without necessitating, in the case of the butcher-surgeon metaphor, the construction of an ad hoc category “denoting people who treat flesh in the way that butchers do” (identified as the marked and capitalized notation BUTCHER) (Sperber & Wilson 2008: 97), or, similarly, one that “denotes the set of people who fall short of the standards of precision, delicacy and foresight required in making an incision, causing damage to human beings in their care, and being liable for sanction as a result”. (Vega Moreno 2007: 105)

Ad hoc concepts may highlight similarities between concepts, or in the case of the butchering surgeon and the bulldozing boss (“My boss is a bulldozer”), they may exclude all category members of the original (non-metaphoric/non-“loose”) category. Thus the category of butchers can represent brutality and that of bulldozers insensitivity, despite the fact that there are no insensitive bulldozers and no butchers who are unethical or incompetent by virtue of being butchers:

“[…] the resulting ad hoc category may exclude certain members of the denotation of the encoded concept. In other cases, it may exclude all the members of the denotation of the encoded concept, so that the literal referent of the metaphor vehicle is not only not a prototypical member of the resulting ad hoc category, but not a member at all […]”. (Vega Moreno 2007: 126-127)

---

67 See Chapter 4 on literary base spaces (cf. sections [4.2] and [4.3]).
The ad hoc bulldozer category (BULLDOZER*), said to unconsciously develop in the interpretation of the metaphor “My boss is a bulldozer”, denotes not bulldozers, nor any attribute a bulldozer has, nor any inanimate entity, but people who are “disrespectful, obstinate, undermine other people’s feelings and thoughts, etc.”. (p. 97)

That the entities the encoded concept is normally used to denote fall outside the denotation of the new ad hoc concept that results is taken to be unproblematic. “Because the encoded concept is merely a starting point for inference, there is no reason why it should not be adjusted to a point where the entities it is normally used to denote fall outside the denotation of the new ad hoc concept that results.” (p. 105)

The ad hoc category is thought of as a class, or set, to which the target belongs; the boss in question thus belongs to “a set of people who are insensitive to the feelings of others, ignore their suggestions and objections, are fixated on their own goals at the expense of others, are a danger to those who oppose them, etc.”. (p. 112) It is not made clear on what grounds it is deemed plausible that the conceptualizer needs to conceive of a set including the boss as one among many members, or how this alleged meaning is derived. That the conceptualizer follows a “path of least effort” (cf. Vega Moreno 2007; Sperber & Wilson 2008) does not seem a sufficient answer.

A process of adjustment is supposed to account for the transition: “ [...] the concept conveyed by the word ‘butcher’ [and similarly by the word ‘bulldozer’] is continuously adjusted in order to warrant the derivation of these implicatures.” (Vega Moreno 2007: 104-105) It remains a bit of a mystery, though, how this adjusted category comes into being. The process happens behind the curtains, so to speak, and the hearer may only come to know the novel category after the fact, i.e. after having arrived at the result: “[...] it is important to bear in mind, that the hearer of the utterance does not find out what the actual denotation of the concept BULLDOZER* constructed during the interpretation process would be until he arrives at an interpretation of [sic] which satisfies his expectations of relevance.” (p. 103) Putting aside for now the question of individual speakers’ ability to introspect and the amount of conscious effort put into interpretation, it is notable that, with no retrospective reconstruction being suggested to shed light on the conceptual process entailed by the adjustment, the semantics of the interpretation process leading to satisfied expectations of relevance remains obscure.

The interjection of the adjustment process, constrained by the general regulatory mechanisms of relevance (cf. Sperber & Wilson’s claim that there is no mechanism specific to metaphors68), is meant to ease the dissatisfaction with the near-magical emergence of metaphoric meaning (attributed to class-inclusion theory and blending theory among other interaction theories)69, but we are left with the unanswered question, as also pointed out in Tendahl & Gibbs (2008), of “why a physical attribute can acquire a psychological sense”. (Tendahl & Gibbs 2008: 1839)

Vega Moreno aspires to arrive at an account of metaphor which does not require any alignment or mapping between domains, but the “pragmatic fine-tuning” referred to is hypothesized (in the case of the butcher-surgeon metaphor70) to involve the inferential steps (f) and (g): (f): ‘A butcher cuts dead meat in a way that falls far short of the high levels of precision, delicacy, foresight and planning to avoid risk required in a competent surgeon’; (g): “The surgeon is a BUTCHER* (where BUTCHER* denotes people who make incisions in a way that falls far short of the levels of precision, delicacy, foresight and planning to avoid risk required in a competent surgeon)”. (Vega Moreno 2007: 102) How are these arrived at?

Methodologically speaking, one drawback is this: generating inclusive ad hoc categories by way of explanation, supported by long lists of inferences for which no validation procedure exists, inadvertently veils the semantic construction process. Moreover, it does not seem cognitively realistic that these conceptual entities would enter into the mind of the conceptualizer in the process of meaning construction. The category account of the butcher-surgeon metaphor, for instance, (“Husband: I want that surgeon out of the hospital. That surgeon is a butcher!”), cf. example (1) introduces a whole group...

68 Cf. the deflationary claim in Sperber & Wilson 2008 that metaphor is ‘nothing but looseness’; they are arrived at “in exactly the same way as literal, loose and hyperbolic interpretations: there is no mechanism specific to metaphors, and no interesting generalisation that applies only to them.” (p. 84) “It is just that, on the whole, the closer one gets to the metaphor end of the literal/loose/metaphorical continuum, the greater the freedom of interpretation left to hearers or readers, and the more likely it is that relevance will be achieved through a wide array of weak implicatures, i.e. through poetic effects. So when you compare metaphors to other uses of words, you find a bit more of this and a bit less of that, but nothing deserving of a special theory, let alone a grand one.” (p. 103)

69 The authors wish to extend the theory to be able to account for poetic effects not just in speech but in literary texts as well. One question that comes to mind, as a somewhat – though not entirely – off-topic thought, is how a theory hinging on the discourse interaction between a speaker and a hearer in online situations can manage to deal with literary discourse – where meaning is created outside of this kind of situationally grounded interaction.

70 Cf. Vega Moreno 2007, p. 73 (as discussed above in section [3.1.2.2]).
71 Cf. examples (1) and (6a).
of surgeons into the inferential equation, according to the assumption in (i) (p. 103): “Surgeons who make incisions in a way that falls short of the levels of precision, delicacy, foresight and planning required may cause serious damage to someone in their care”. The expression only makes reference to one particular surgeon, so one wonders what warrants the evocation of surgeons in general. The speaker has no evident reason to relate the ovary-removing surgeon to a general class of people (who botch jobs etc.). What, then, would make establishing a broad category of this sort relevant for the construal of the meaning? If this intermediary category is claimed to be evoked in the cognizer’s mind though no experienced representation is present, some other means of justification are called for. With no obvious semantic or pragmatic motivation, the category appears a purely analytic construct.

The ad hoc category BUTCHER* is similarly problematic: the category BUTCHER* “denotes people who make incisions in a way that falls far short of the levels of precision, delicacy, foresight and planning to avoid risk required in a competent surgeon” (p. 102), and in yet more inclusive terms “denotes the set of people who fall short of the standards of precision, delicacy and foresight required in making an incision, causing damage to humans beings in their care, and being liable for sanction as a result.” (p. 105). Put briefly, “[t]he concept BUTCHER* as presented here [in a relevance-theoretic framework] would denote anyone (not necessarily surgeons) who make cuts of this type.” (p. 103)

Though inferentially useful in creating a valid deductive line of reasoning, it is hard to see why people other than butchers – anyone (“people”) who make cuts of this type – would be relevant to take into consideration.

In the case of the metaphorical bulldozing boss (cf. Vega Moreno’s example cited above), an alternative analysis might conceive of “removing obstacles in the way’ not as a feature or attribute – “[REMOVE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY]” – but as a quasi-narrative scenario unfolding in time in the conceptualizer’s imagination. A bulldozer (the ‘vehicle’ of the metaphor) removes obstacles in the way. If this is the aspect the situationally framed referential content (the ‘boss’) brings to the forefront, the virtually represented blend does something to the way in which the scenario with the forceful boss is seen in the mind’s eye; mappings of quasi-narrative (temporally dynamic) structure make the relevant structure of the Reference stand out in vivid and exaggerated form, rendering the predicate more potent and emotionally evocative. The (generic) presentation of a bulldozer in action provides a force-dynamic framing of the target scenario (presumably the relation between employer and employee(s)). The context of occurrence (the production of the metaphor) provides a relevant (contextually motivated) schema for evaluating the entity or relation in focus, the referential (target) scenario now framed by the relevant force dynamics of the presentational (source) scenario: perhaps, in some interpretations, a social schema for evaluating specific types of interactions (involving conflicting agendas and so on). In the mental space superposing the generic presentation onto the reference – the so-called “blend” – the target is thus framed by the narrative force dynamics of the source and powered by its figural imagery (e.g. agent entity as bulldozer-boss, patient entity as inanimate run-over stuff or human roadkill).

The phenomenological perspective offered here addresses the three concerns articulated by Vega Moreno (p. 136) in a way that, hopefully, brings us closer to understanding the phenomenon in question. First, she states that it is difficult to see how information from other sources (e.g. other available contextual assumptions, expectations about the speaker’s meaning) may be brought into the interpretation process. The semiotic model supplies us with a theoretical foundation for exploring this matter in detail.

The next concern – “Second, if comprehension involves an interaction or mapping between two domains, there is a risk of circularity: the properties which the topic helps select in the vehicle are the properties attributed to the topic by the vehicle.” (p. 136) – is one that I believe is addressed by the description of the blend in terms of mappings of structural similarities that differ in their experienced intensity: the force-dynamic intensification and the accompanying imagery makes the attentionally focused elements stand out, creating hyperbole which helps assign value (relative to a topical concern) to individual facets of the scenario and to explain the emotional pregnance of this kind of metaphor (justifying the descriptor “juicy”).

The third stated concern is that “looking at metaphor as involving interplay between two concepts isolates the interpretation of metaphors from the interpretation of other utterances, including those literally or loosely intended, which is undesirable unless it can be demonstrated that there is a sharp distinction to be made.” Sensible arguments can be made for the existence of a continuum between literal, loose and metaphorical expressions, but language users do make these distinctions (as made

---

71 In semio-dynamic terms one could say the focused structural element of the semantic referent is made pregnant by virtue of increased – schematically induced – salience.

72 This phenomenological explanation also serves as an alternative to the hypothesis espoused in Fauconnier & Turner 2002 that the purpose of blending is to achieve human scale. (See also section [2.1.1.1].)
expressivity, including multimodal and diverse expressive phenomena like visual art, advertisement and theory started to materialize that could encompass in its scope of research data the vast realm of human being directly dependent on the inner workings of just these phenomena. With mental space theory, a cognitive semantics, and with good reason. The distinctive characteristics of categorization and Accordingly, the meaning is the to direct attention to something. To speak of meaning is to speak of the meaning being. The very concept of meaning only makes sense insofar as there is a what Mickey Mouse “means”. It would make more sense to ask, perhaps, how the concept came into what an utterance means (“I’ll have that butcher sued!” etc.), substantially different kinds of entities in these two cases. While one may plausibly ask, for instance, creating superpositions of mental contents in imagination – i.e. of seeing one thing in terms of another – may have developed, not for abstract concepts to evolve (as proposed in the Lakoffian tradition of cognitive semantics), but for expressive purposes. It seems plausible at least as concerns the creation of virtual scenarios – representations that have no counterparts outside of the imagination, yet aid us in developing hypotheses and beliefs.

Blending in this view is a semiotic cognitive activity, a way for us to “make sense” to one another, by engaging each other’s imagination. This view differs from CMT, the practical application of which does not concern the analysis of what individual metaphors mean but concerns the uncovering of underlying conceptual metaphors in everyday and poetic discourse. It also differs somewhat from CIT, in its current form, although CIT does in part concern itself with the meaning of metaphoric expressions and other intentional signs. The impediment to further progress, as I see it, consists in neglecting to recognize the difference between analyzing blends that are signs, i.e. blends occurring in dialogue and other expressive activities, on the one hand, and analyzing conceptual mergers resulting in composite concepts such as, for instance, the concept of Mickey Mouse, on the other. The word ‘blend’, though uniformly used to cover a plethora of phenomena (Fauconnier & Turner 2002), likely refers to substantially different kinds of entities in these two cases. While one may plausibly ask, for instance, what an utterance means (“I’ll have that butcher sued!” etc.), it does not make immediate sense to ask what Mickey Mouse “means”. It would make more sense to ask, perhaps, how the concept came into being. The very concept of meaning only makes sense insofar as there is a signifier that is or can be used to direct attention to something. To speak of meaning is to speak of the meaning of something. Accordingly, the meaning is the signified part of the sign structure (the words ‘Mickey Mouse’, for instance, mean Mickey Mouse, the character).

Since the beginning, the nature and development of concepts has been a significant focal point in cognitive semantics, and with good reason. The distinctive characteristics of categorization and conceptualization are basic to any subject matter relating to human cognition, and not least language, being directly dependent on the inner workings of just these phenomena. With mental space theory, a theory started to materialize that could encompass in its scope of research data the vast realm of human expressivity, including multimodal and diverse expressive phenomena like visual art, advertisement and
literary conceit, in addition to the more traditional linguistic interest in isolated sentences (now increasingly reframed in terms of their potential appearance in utterances). In Lakoff & Turner (1989), the authors, who later branched off and assumed roles as primus motor in the development of NTL and CIT, respectively, turned their attention from everyday language to literary language and showed how the same conceptual metaphors underlying conventional language also play a role in the conceptual structuring of poetic texts and other artifacts of the imagination not governed by ordinary pragmatic objectives. Turner’s enterprise of uncovering the “literary mind”, along with Fauconnier’s efforts to improve on contemporary philosophy of language, led to a semantic theory that has brought important insights. From blending analyses of textual excerpts and various sorts of material (e.g. pictorial), CIT developed the hypothesis that metaphoric meaning emerges in the conceptual amalgamation of disparate representational contents, i.e. in a blended space. “[T]he power and even the existence of central inferences of the projection come not from the source input space and not from the target input space but only from the blended space.” (Turner 1996: 62) Analysis of the butcher-surgeon and bulldozing-boss examples validate this point.

Metaphors, in CMT, had a semantic motivation, and similarly, CIT takes a semanticstance, approaching linguistic phenomena from a psychologically mentalist (rather than, say, behavioral, computational or neuroscientific) point of view. Despite the stated hypothesis of a correspondence between mental and neural mappings – “We think of the lines in [the Basic Diagram] (lines that represent conceptual projections and mappings) as corresponding to neural coactivations and bindings” – CIT is, for all intents and purposes, a semantic theory. A “good blend” is subsequently defined on semantic grounds, in terms of its effectiveness in expressing an idea, the degree of compression achieved, adaptability etc.

The term “correspondence” may be equivocal; does it imply the auxiliary co-occurrence of neural activity or actual identification? This issue constitutes a bit of a Pandora’s Box. Methodologically speaking, however, the theory is primarily analytical and intuitive, seeking inspiration and suggestive support rather than falsifying or verifying evidence from neuroscientific experimentation.

NTL, the offspring of CMT developed in the 1990’s (see e.g. Lakoff & Johnson 1999) and onwards is a neural theory striving to develop a neural computational model of metaphor, more specifically of primary metaphors – which are not interpretational but a matter of immediate conceptual mapping via neural connections (Lakoff & Johnson 1999: 57). Primary metaphors are thought of as building blocks of other kinds of metaphors, and thus, ultimately, metaphoricity is part of the “cognitive unconscious”, an unconscious that, in the spirit of Locke, originates in sensorimotor experience from which all subjective experience is hypothesized to derive (cf. the empiricist dictum that nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses).

A shift seems to have occurred, placing principal explanatory power in computational modeling of hypothesized neural activity, and in consequence, putting aside, maybe even negating, the experiential dimension of conceptualization. “Good blends”, as explained in Lakoff’s comparison of theories in a cogling thread (August 2005), seem to arise from neural optimization. As this radical reframing makes clear, the experiencing conceptualizer, linguist or layman, would not be one to consult on issues of meaning, in this view.

Blending, Lakoff explains, is just neural binding – a claim based on experimental evidence in the study of primary metaphor (e.g. the conceptualization of quantity in terms of verticality: MORE IS UP). Co-occurrence in experience is simultaneous activation of brain regions. Experiential conflation has no semantic motivation and is solely identified as simultaneous activation of distinct parts of the brain. Frames or domains experienced together are neurally bound temporarily which means they are firing in

---

73 Fauconnier & Turner 2002, p. 46.
74 CIT not clearly stating its position is likely a contributing factor motivating Lakoff’s criticism of the theory for not taking sufficient interest in modeling neural correlates (cf. communication in the cogling [cognitive linguistics] discussion forum).
75 See especially Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6.
76 A question to be raised which falls outside the present scope of investigation concerns the status of primary metaphors: Are the proposed domains involved in the projection of structure actually semantic domains in some sense? If so, what constitutes a ‘domain’ (as opposed to e.g. a ‘schema’)? I raised this point earlier in a footnote: “A question related to the issue of orientational metaphors, consisting as they do solely of image-semantic structure, is this: Does an image schema, or a cluster of image-schemas, constitute an ‘experimental domain’? If so, what sense is attributed to the notion of ‘domains’ warranting the application of the term both to abstract, non-figural schemas and to distinct areas in our life-world, rich in imagery, like ballgames, food, travel, warfare etc.? If not, how can these image-schemas function as source domains in metaphoric structures?” (See also fn. 62, section [3.1.2.2])
77 http://listserv.linguistlist.org/cgi-bin/wa/?A2=ind0508&L=cogling&D=1&T=0&P=11634 [accessed 2010].
synch. Neural co-activation is activation flowing along neural connections between distinct parts, which stimulates synapses to chemically change and grow stronger. The “mapping” in metaphor is neural circuitry strengthened and made permanent. Multiple mappings across roles in two different frames are identified as neural circuits connecting distinct parts of the brain. Different frames equal different parts.

I am not sure how the step between the schematic mappings of so-called primary metaphor and the more complex material analyzed in CIT is supposed to be accounted for so as to lead us to the conclusion that all blends, including expressive ones, are simply neural bindings. It is not obvious, from the above description, how one would proceed, for instance, in investigating why a representation of a surgeon and the concept of butchers would fire in synch, or how the predicative directionality comes about. The equation of conceptual integration and neural binding seems highly dubitable as a proposition about semantic structure. If accepted, though, it is understandable why, to Lakoff, designing integration diagrams appears curiously far removed from what needs to be done. (Taking the argument further, one could ask why indeed we need linguists at all. If studying semantics is studying neural co-activation, what are we doing at our desks? If conceptualization equals bindings, in fact would it not make more sense that everyone put on their lab coats and head in to study bindings rather than creating network diagrams or interpreting metaphoric occurrences – or making models on the computer for that matter?)

While some categories are localized (e.g. faces) we don’t have knowledge of “parts” corresponding to every semantic frame or every semantic category. We don’t even know that every concept activated is necessarily localized, and we don’t know how mental enactments of meaning play out neurally.

Are all semantic frames and every semantic category thought of as localizable circuits, and if so, do these show up for observation simply as activity?78

Perhaps the notions of “domains” and “frames” have become synonymous with “parts of the brain”. This would seem a rather nebulous substitution, reducing consciously discernible semantic entities to their identification as general activity in general regions of the brain. Whatever the case may be, the observation that two general parts of the brain are active at the same time is hardly a semantic analysis of meaning construction. What is missing here, I would argue, is recognition of the expressive function of metaphorical concepts and language in communication; for whom do these concepts and expressions exist if not the communicative minds that put them on stage in real-life situations?

If mappings are equatable with neural circuitry, and permanent mappings with strengthened neural circuitry, the question of what it is about those mappings in particular that makes them durable remains. And what, besides recurrence (durability, entrenchment), might still make them successful in individual manifested instances of communication? These are semantic-pragmatic questions.

CIT does not deny that blending is something that occurs in brains79, nor that binding is a form of integration. However, the theory acknowledges the fact that we do not exchange bits of brain in order to communicate ideas; there is another – more ‘abstract’ – dimension to meaning not captured by observations of how the brain works (or by computational models of how the brain may work).

I would add to this acknowledgment the suggestion that the study of conceptual integration may potentially lead to a better understanding of certain semantic phenomena so that we better know what to look for in the labs, i.e. so as to create motivated hypotheses concerning these phenomena as a foundation for investigating their neural realization.

In any event, the linking of semantic meaning and activation (e.g. locations or patterns of activation) presupposes a duality in description, between an experientially accessible and a less immediately accessible side to the phenomena of interest, two sides that are typically said to be “correlated”. From a practical point of view, experientially informed descriptions of representations would seem a necessary component in accounts of semantic meaning, including “neural” ones. In a basic sense, one needs to know what to look for.

We have so far dealt primarily with nominal metaphor, affording special attention to the butcher-surgeon metaphor. In the following section of the chapter, we will look at a verbal metaphor: the digging-your-own-grave metaphor (aka the gravedigging metaphor), another well-known, “juicy” metaphor which, like the butcher-surgeon metaphor, does not have experiential convergence or permanent cross-mapping as its motivation. Using the same framework presented in the preceding

78 This would appear particularly problematic as a motivating assumption for investigative methods if more entrenchment actually reflects less activity due to less cognitive effort (meaning that less neural processing is required).

79 – Though this, in a narrow sense, is also disputable, cf. Hutchins’ analyses of distributed cognition. The productive (or “creative”) mechanism in these cases is instantiated by a system spanning across multiple cognitive agents. (Hutchins 2005)
sections, I offer an analysis emphasizing the conceptual employment of enhanced force-dynamic structure, via a blend[^80], leading to metaphoric hyperbole, as an alternative to the ‘reverse causality’ analysis proposed in Fauconnier & Turner (2002).[^81]

### 3.1.3 The gravedigging metaphor

*Please, just stop digging that grave you’re already in and just lie down in it. Don’t worry we’ll cover the filling in of it for you, just please lay down in that hole.*

—Reply posted in a Nintendo internet forum (2008-03-06)

_Because blending depends crucially, not just incidentally, on the richness of the conceptual world, we can investigate its principles only by investigating the meanings that people actually do construct in real situations._

(Gilles Fauconnier & Mark Turner, 2002)

In this section, I present a detailed semantic analysis of the gravedigging metaphor based on occurrences in natural discourse, and suggest a likely reason why the metaphor, in its varied manifestations, tends to appear in utterances intended and perceived as humorous. The examples are recorded from TV shows with unscripted dialogue (spoken discourse) and newspapers (written discourse). One instance in particular is analyzed in depth, and diagrammed as a network of mental spaces set up in the process of meaning construction, using the same analytic framework established in the preceding section. Three aspects of relevance are distinguished: situational, argumentational and illocutional relevance, cf. the illustration of the full conceptual integration network in Figure 3-20. As in previous chapters (including section [3.1.2] and section [2.1] where the theory was first demonstrated), the blending diagram is modeled as a semiotic integration network, hypothesized to be a standard network with a fixed structure and number of inputs. _Blending_, in this conception, is understood as (a form of) semiotic integration, and _mental spaces_ are conceived of as integrated representations of some situation or state of affairs, existing in the imagination of conceptualizers as they think, talk, dream and reason.

In the general model of semiotic integration, the sign – an utterance, a lexeme, a metaphor, etc. – is evoked in the mind of an enunciating or interpreting cognizer, in a cognitive process that takes place in some situation that is of consequence to the – thus contextually relevant – production of the sign, and hence to the _meaning_ of the sign. The situation of signification is defined by the relation between an expressive agent – in the case of verbal communication, the _enunciator_ – and an (actual or hypothetical) addressee. This relation of attentional directedness is represented by conceptualizers as the here-and-now of semiosis, including the history and prospective future of the interaction, and is represented in descriptive diagrams as the semiotic space, or “ground”. (See Figure 3-11.) Put in didactic terms, the semiotic space specifies the _who and where_, the reference the _what_, the presentation the _how_, and the relevant sign relation the _why_.

![Semiotic integration diagram](Figure 3-11)

[^80]: A blend in which, quoting Fauconnier & Turner, “someone unwittingly does the wrong thing, and ultimately fails.” (Fauconnier & Turner 2002, p. 132) “[F]igurative digging of one’s own grave is conceived as _unintentional misconstrual of action._” (italics added)

[^81]: See Fauconnier & Turner 2002, pp. 131-135. (See also Turner & Fauconnier 1995b and Fauconnier & Turner 1998.)
3.1.3.1 “Keep digging”: An example

In an episode of the reality dating show *Meet My Folks* (NBC), three bachelors vie for an extended date with a teenage bachelorette, a blonde, blue-eyed California beauty who lives at home with her parents, aka her “folks”. It is up to the parents to pick the one they deem the worthiest, who will then get to go with her on a vacation date in an exotic location. As part of the process of judging the contestants and finding a winner, the participants – the young woman, her parents and the three bachelors – watch video segments in which friends of the individual bachelors disclose unfavorable information about them. A friend of the tall, dark and handsome Giancarlo, so far the blonde’s favorite suitor, volunteers the information that Giancarlo has made some remarks in the past revealing particular prejudices about women’s appearance. According to his friend, Giancarlo is of the opinion that “blonde, blue-eyed California women” are unsophisticated airheads who are “only good for a one-night stand”. When they are done watching the clip, the mother asks Giancarlo to explain. At this point one might expect him to attempt to save the situation by specifying that her daughter is somehow an exception to the rule. Instead Giancarlo adds insult to injury and proceeds to confirm what was reported on the tape. Blonde women with blue eyes, he says, are not his “first choice”. He is about to go on but is interrupted by the mother, who is at this point visibly unimpressed: “Keep digging,” she says.

There is laughter in the room, and the targeted bachelor, in a gesture of acknowledgment, makes a digging motion (shoveling imaginary dirt over his shoulder) with downcast gaze, smiling in what appears to be embarrassment. What he is forced to acknowledge is of course, firstly, the syllogistic soundness of assuming, extending the generalization to particulars, that the girl he is competing for must then have the negative qualities ascribed to the aforementioned category of women as well. And secondly, what this *faux-pas* means, socially speaking. In effect, he has insulted her – and, subsequently, her “folks”.

The indirect insult becomes particularly embarrassing as the mother’s ironic encouragement to continue talking brings attention to the various reasons to *not* go on, including the – metaphorically inferred – threat of foolishly contributing to his own demise.

The handsome bachelor undeniably sets himself up for failure: When the time comes for the parents to eliminate one of the three candidates from the competition, he is indeed the first one to go.

---

Note that the name of the show embodies an instance of generic enunciation (cf. section [2.1] on *fictive interaction*). The imperative invitation “Meet My Folks” is a non-actual utterance, imagined to be uttered by the son or daughter who fills the role as the prize of the game. The viewer imagines the utterance as being addressed at the invited party – the guys or girls competing for a date. The show is thus metonymically signified by a generically represented scenario of personal interaction, which is in turn metonymically evoked by the emblematic utterance functioning grammatically as a proper noun.
3.1.3.2 Semantic analysis of the metaphor

3.1.3.2.1 The rhetorical implications

The mother’s metaphoric utterance evokes an already familiar gravedigging metaphor, and the reactions from the addressee and the present witnesses to the interaction testify to the fast recognition of her intention. Particular to this instance is the enunciator’s projection of herself into the presentational scenario, by contrast to the (equally plausible) strategy of observing from a distance and merely stating the metaphor as fact.\textsuperscript{83} The imperative to “keep digging”, as opposed to a stated proposition (You are digging...), implies an ongoing digging scenario in which they are both present, and just as she is presently witnessing his attempt at explaining himself, the interactional dramatization casts him straight into the metaphor, as if he is literally digging in front of her (which he then — literally — proceeds to pretend to do).

The metaphor invokes a presentational gravedigging space which maps onto the referential scenario of the ongoing interaction and the script framing it. The reference space is accessed without linguistic prompting. By virtue of what Fauconnier identified as the access principle (Fauconnier 1994), the presentation space comes to function as reference point\textsuperscript{84} for the performance scenario (in the reference space), and references to the digging scenario signify their counterparts in Reference space.

That Giancarlo actually ceases to defend himself indicates that he accepts the intended implications, an acknowledgement accented by the voluntary dramatized enactment of this temporary fiction (commencing to wield a fictive shovel).

Importantly, the use of irony forces him to also acknowledge, in front of everyone in the room, the social consequences of acting cluelessly (losing face, being the target of ridicule etc.).

By uttering encouragement for him to go on, it is indicated that it is presumably advisable for him to keep talking, that it is indeed a recommendable course of action, one that should be endorsed. The intended inferences instead go in the opposite direction: towards a negative evaluation. Delivered with an ironical tone of voice, the encouraging speech act implies approval but conveys a markedly discouraging attitude and is interpreted as a reproachful remark. The bachelor is not only deemed a fool for being unaware of the consequences of his actions, he is also held accountable for insulting the girl. The mother is protecting her daughter from further insult: If he “keeps digging”, he might make matters even worse.

The irony is tacitly derived. The speech act, calling attention to the true state of affairs, implies a tacit ironical evaluation: “Keep digging/talking – that will go over well?” Rather than the imperative utterance itself, it is thus the implied evaluation that is interpreted as ironical.

As emphasized by the prospect of having dug himself a virtual grave, it is evident that his strategy for staying in the parents’ good graces is fact not working, and that it would not go over well if he were to keep it up.

The imperative has an implicit conditional structure. As in the general structure of warnings and threats (‘Do X – or else...’), an – in this case hidden – apodosis specifies the outcome of non-compliance: ‘If you keep digging/talking, there will be consequences to pay’. The metaphor makes obvious how grave these consequences are; it is, accordingly, advisable to stop making it worse.

The ironic utterance serves as an appeal for him to realize something that should be obvious to anyone and thus ought to be obvious to him as well.

The example shows us some characteristics of verbal irony that may well provide us with a general motivation: (1) to appeal to someone to realize something that should be obvious to anyone, and, crucially, (2) to invite others to join in the feeling associated with experiencing the difference between an expectation and an actual state of affairs. Identifying meaning in a feeling of mutual understanding, based on appreciation of a very obvious state of affairs, this characterization supports a non-propositional view of verbal irony.\textsuperscript{85}

3.1.3.2.2 Force-dynamic logic and modal meaning

The space building metaphoric utterance establishes a virtual identification between a gravedigging scenario and an actual situation. In the metaphoric fiction, Giancarlo (Subject 1: \textit{S1}) is virtually engaged

\textsuperscript{83} Cp. for instance the use of the metaphor in the following paragraph where the enunciator is entirely exterior to the communicated metaphoric meaning: “In the Iraqi affair, there’s one certainty: Saddam didn’t yet possess nuclear missiles. As for other bits of chemical and biological weapons, the haziness distilled by the Raïs persists. There is but one confirmed liar, Saddam, and he dug his own grave.” (From “When a Lie Is a Lie” by A. Glucksman in \textit{The Wall Street Journal}, July 16, 2003.)

\textsuperscript{84} See Langacker 2000, pp. 171-202.

\textsuperscript{85} See also Saussure & Schulz who, similarly, see irony as “fundamentally a matter of non-propositional content.” (Saussure & Schulz 2009, p. 406)
in the act of digging his own grave, and each fictive element means something by virtue of the counterpart correspondences between the (non-actual) presentation and the referential situation. One scenario becomes a sign for the other, for the sake of expressive emphasis. In the virtual space, one is the other.

In the blend, the role of the agent, in the gravedigging scenario, is filled by the particular individual (S1) that the metaphor refers to, i.e. who figures as the subject of the predication. Semantic roles and event structure motivate interspace mappings connecting the two – cumulative – acts, and the situation created by the subject’s verbalizations on dating biases maps onto the object of the transitive act of digging: the hole which, dug deep enough, becomes a grave.86

Entrenched semiotic associations strengthen the mapping between counterpart connections, because, as noted also in Coulson (1997) (cf. also Coulson 2001; Coulson & Oakley 2003), a grave is metonymically associated with death (Coulson 1997: 239) and death metaphorically associated with failure (Coulson & Oakley 2003: 66). By representing the act of creating a prototypically undesirable outcome and attributing it to S1, the mother (S2 hereafter) calls attention to the relation between his course of action and its consequences. Two levels of framing are active at the same time: the (local) framing of his performance in the situation of interaction, where he falls victim to the situational logic of behavioral interaction, and the consequential significance of the performance in the context of the competition (a global framing). The situational context is significant for how the verbal exchange is interpreted. The course of action is evaluated in terms of its consequences for the immediate interpersonal interaction, where it is interpreted as insulting. Simultaneously, the incident is framed within the script of the dating game, where a bachelor’s mistakes will lower the parents’ esteem of him, which in turn affects his winning chances in the competition. What the metaphor ultimately refers to is S1’s chances of winning the prize of the game – a date with the girl he is inadvertently offending. Given that S2 is in the position of judge in the game that constitutes the framing context of the interaction, she has the upper hand in the communication. The “folks” decide the winner of the prospective date for their daughter; from the viewpoint of the bachelor the parental unit is a potential obstacle to his goal.

He is only allowed to stay in the game for as long as they welcome him as a guest. His objective, therefore, is to do what he can to make the parents favor him over the others. The daughter favors him but he will only have her if her folks grant him permission, if they let him win.87

In Figure 3-12, we see what S1 presumably believes he is doing, up until the point where he is interrupted:

**MAKING SCHEMA**

What S1 thinks he is doing, according to S2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S1 explaining himself to S2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2 not convinced yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2 convinced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1 succeeds:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2 no longer skeptical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3-12.

S1 engages, upon S2’s request, in an attempt at explaining himself – a form of making: If he keeps talking, a point will be reached where enough will have been said. At this point, supposedly, he will be off the hook, and the conversation will move on to a different topic.

S1 hopes to make S2 believe he is the best candidate for her daughter, and his performance on the video-clip segment of the show is one of a number of makings that, in a best-case scenario, will

86 As noted also in Coulson 2001, the degree of trouble can be mapped onto the depth of the grave (cf. Coulson 2001, p. 171).

87 The design of the schemas in the following diagrams are inspired by the work of Talmy (see also section [3.1.2.3.5]). Force dynamic diagramming was further developed by Brandt and Østergaard in the 1990’s at the Center for Semiotics (Aarhus University), along with Thomian catastrophe diagrams designed to illustrate morphological changes and transformations of state brought about by forces acting upon one another. See Almen Semiotik, No. 16, 2002: theme issue on ‘Narration’ (Brandt, Bundgaard et al. (eds.), Aarhus University Press). See also Brandt 2004b.
eventually lead to a desirable outcome. This is S1’s ‘ideal program’, diagrammed in Figure 3-13. His task is to lower the barrier of the parents’ skeptic attitude towards him by convincing them of his good intentions, promoting and defending a flattering image of himself.

The ‘ideal program’ of S1

![Diagram of the ‘ideal program’ of S1]

(‘A broken line barrier represents the lowering of the barrier; the broken line traces the motion of the lowering.)

While he appears to believe he is competing competently, the explanatory endeavor is not at all working in Giancarlo’s favor. The mother brings it to his – and everyone’s – attention that instead of making himself appear more attractive, lowering the parents’ resistance, he is, in fact, making the parents think less of him, thereby raising the barrier blocking the path to his goal.

By identifying with the barrier in the force-dynamic schema underlying S1’s ‘ideal program’, S2 makes apparent the unlikelihood of her letting him achieve his goal. The (verbal) making in the Reference space is entirely counterproductive to his objective and, according to S2, is to be seen as the making of an end (see Figure 3-14). Her presentation of the referential scenario is in contrast to S1’s confident plan; in the actual course of events, as opposed to the ideal one, he has placed himself in an even worse position than before.

Every verbal output becomes a virtual “dig”, and the more repetitions, the sooner the finished result is actualized (see Figure 3-14).

MAKING SCHEMA

What S1 is actually doing, according to S2

![Diagram of the Making of a Dig]

The presentational making draws attention to the result of the referential act of explanatory talking. S1 is letting himself be defeated by allowing negative opinions of him to develop, and, moreover, is actively contributing. The more digging/talking occurs, the more likely the prospective negative consequences become, until a critical point where the negative state of affairs becomes an irreversible fact and S1 is at the mercy of exterior forces.

What S1 fails to do is block the inference that the negatively evaluated predicate (‘airheads who are only good for a one-night stand’) must apply to the daughter as well:

88 A term suggested by P. Aa. Brandt in seminars on cognitive narratology (CiS, AU) to characterize the chain of events relative to which deviations are evaluated.
Blonde, blue-eyed California women are airheads who are only good for a one-night stand.
Daughter is a blonde blue-eyed California woman.

Figure 3-15.

The conclusion to this simple syllogism will be assessed as valid unless the premises are weakened. S1 would have to make a disclaimer, within a limited time window, against the premise (that blondes are airheads etc.), or he would have to insist that the daughter is an exception to the rule, or that she has set an example proving him wrong. Instead of grasping this opportunity for escape, however, he gives the deductive force an extra “push” by repeating what was said on the video clip. At first the insult is a potential act that is yet preventable. By letting the insult become manifest (cf. Figure 3-16), S1 makes a virtual grave for himself.

S1 consequently finds himself trapped in a bad situation of his own making, from which there is no recovery:

Figure 3-16.

Of the factors contributing to S1’s demise, his failure to avert the insult is the factor that brings about the new irreversible state of affairs – represented by the passage from the inside of the cusp – the ‘problematic’ field – to the other side – the ‘final state’. See the making schema in Figure 3-17 below:

Figure 3-17.

S1 initially acts as if he believes he is competing successfully, though as intently emphasized in S2’s evaluative conceptualization of the event, he is unwittingly setting himself up for failure. The self-sabotaging verbal contribution is seen in contrast to the presumed self-preservational goal-orientedness of S1 as a rational human being.

The relevant notion for the evaluation of the scenario in the blended space is a schematized conception of rational versus irrational behavior, which the conceptualizer applies as a relevance maker (cf. ‘argumentational relevance’, section [3.1.2.3.5]). In its simplest form, the structure of the schema for irrational behavior is the same as the schema for unethical behavior described in the analysis of the
butcher-surgeon metaphor (cf. section [3.1.2]), with the significant exception that the agent and the patient are numerically identical, i.e. the two agenteve roles of protagonist and antagonist have the same filler:

**Unethical behavior:**
Harm is done to patient by agent

**Irrational behavior:**
Patient = agent

![Figure 3-18.](image)

Acting rationally implies the capacity to be self-aware, as if seen from the outside, and the inclination to act in one’s own interest, furthering rather than undermining one’s own enterprise, avoiding obstacles. S1’s behavior, “talking himself into his grave”, so to speak, is irrational given his objective: to be on good terms with the “folks”, hyperbolically presented as staying alive. His lack of self-awareness makes him an irrational agent, a disposition that renders him needlessly vulnerable and is therefore perceived as laughable (see Figure 3-19).

![Figure 3-19.](image)

As in the metaphor with the butchering surgeon, where the force applied in surgery is amplified due to the inappropriate attitude of the agent toward the patient (see section [3.1.2]), the narrativization of the referential content is experienced in exaggerated form due to the force-dynamic magnitude and figural concretization of the presentation which, through the superposition in the virtual blend, is predicated of the referent. An understanding of metaphor in terms of experienced enhancement of dynamic features may provide a cognitively realistic explanation for the affective response that metaphors are known to elicit and hence for their power to persuade.

---

90 In a 4D diagram, the counterfactual “barrier to the barrier” would be represented as an obstructive force blocking a rising barrier (the solid barrier in the 2D diagram below). The counterfactual obstructive force would be represented graphically as non-solid. To signify a missed opportunity, the non-solid obstruction would “evaporate”, and the barrier would continue upwards, forming a solid obstruction barring S1 from proceeding.

91 Though it lies beyond the scope of present purposes, it would be interesting to pursue the question of whether or to what degree this type of explanation is extendible to different sorts of metaphors, e.g. to the conceptualization of non-bodily events in terms of bodily movement (e.g. ‘to be kicked off the team’), to adjectival or verbal stylistic specifications of directed motion (e.g. ‘prices soared’, ‘a snaking road’, i.e. mappings between the motion of temporal processing and concrete forms of motion, cf. section [2.2.2.1]), and to other kinds of identification.
Experienced in conjunction with the unfolding event in Reference space, the force-dynamic logic of the digging scenario exposes the weakening of the subject’s position relative to an adverse force which is conversely increasing, up until a point when the subject is overpowered. Digging the hole deeper corresponds to the raising of the barrier (of situational adversity, cf. Figure 3-19; and parental skepticism, cf. Figure 3-13). The more he digs, the more likely the unintended outcome becomes, because, logically, the deeper he is in, the more trapped he is inside the hole. The hole constitutes a physical barrier around the digging agent. The agent actively brings about the vulnerable state that allows antagonistic forces to act on him, making it all too easy for the forces that be to harm him. Trapped inside a hole, a creature will eventually fall prey to circumstances and die.²⁹ It is easy to see, in this light, how a hole may become a grave; the physical containment of his body inside the hole is an image of the subject’s vulnerable position, with an evident final conclusion.

The logic of a self-initiated burial bears likeness to the painting-yourself-into-a-corner metaphor (‘to paint oneself into a corner’), which similarly entails entrapment, and to a metaphoric Danish idiom borrowing from the domain of tree trimming: ‘to saw off the branch that supports you’ [Da.: at save den gren over, man (selv) sidder på]. Putting oneself in the position of being stuck inside a hole without any means of escape is comparable to sitting in a tree, trimming branches, and sawing away without making sure that one’s body will remain supported. In all these metaphors, an agent is acting without awareness and foolishly causing harm to himself. In the sawing-off-the-branch-that-supports-you metaphor, the antagonistic force is gravity (causing the agent to fall out of the tree); in the digging-your-own-grave metaphor it is the substance of dirt (forming a massive and insurmountable barrier).

A causal account in terms of causal force-dynamic logic – according to which the digging forms a wall of dirt causing the entrapment of the agent – constitutes a less mystifying alternative to the ‘reverse causality’ explanation proposed in Fauconnier & Turner (2002). (On the ‘causal inversion’ account, ordinary logical considerations are hypothesized to be temporarily suspended in fashioning the conceptualization, and the existence of a grave is thought to somehow cause the death of the digger.) The analysis presented here instead suggests a comprehensible narrative: The agentive subject inadvertently makes a trap for himself, and is thus a necessary, contributing cause of his own death, since the – irrational – making of the hole causes – rationally predictable – forces to exert their influence and bring about his death.

The force-dynamically schematic narrative in the signifying mental space serves to present in an expressive way the force dynamics of the referential situation. The double-layered force dynamics in the virtual space displays a metaphorical mapping of natural forces (a combination of impenetrable mass and gravity) onto non-physical (epistemic and social) forces.

The dynamic properties of the reference space motivate the invention of figural instantiations of dynamically unfolding narratives, which they attract. The ‘attraction’ occurs because the schematic properties of the source and target scenarios are structurally compatible, thus lending themselves to a temporary integration.²³ Though integrated in the blended space, the schemas differ in intensity. The force implied by the presentational – signifying – event is stronger than the force inherent in the – signified – referential state of affairs. Functioning as a predicate of the target space, the presentational source scenario amplifies the force dynamics of the target narrative. Experienced enhancement of the force- and motional dynamics of a scenario may well offer a conceptual and rhetorical rationale for the use of metaphor, not least due to the figural component of the presentation, causing the dynamics to be more vividly experienced. This element of figurativity fades as metaphors become more entrenched, leaving the impression of motion and force, and in instances such as the ones discussed in this chapter, of evaluative judgments.

The result is expressive exaggeration, hyperbole. The hyperbolic meaning is thus effected by an (intended) mismatch between the intensity of the forces at work in the presentational and referential scenarios, respectively.

mappings, e.g. integrations of schemas and non-figural concepts (e.g. ‘center-periphery’ and ‘importance’). The study of gesture might offer special methodological advantages to this undertaking.

In the same vein, one might also attempt a phenomenal account of entrenchment in terms of (1) loss of imagery (figural presentation) and (2) preservation of the dynamic profile evoked by the initially fully unfolded blended representation (dynamic in terms of force and motion).

²⁹ Though his observation does not appear to be based on any concrete examples, Krikmann also mentions the trap aspect of a hole-as-potential-grave in his discussion of the digging-your-own-grave metaphor (see Krikmann 2007).

²³ Generally speaking, addressing the issue of – topologically and force-dynamically motivated – source-target attraction, a target space attracts a range of possible source spaces, each potentially highlighting different aspects of the target; relevancy determines which space may be suitable in a given situation. (Attention is determined by the intentions of the conceptualizer.)
The dynamic structure of the target situation in Reference space becomes more apparent through the metaphor, because the force dynamics of the gravedigging scenario, including the hyperbolic death of the subject, mirrors its dynamics – in exaggerated form.

3.1.3.2.3 Contrastive viewpoints and situational irony

The blend exposes a contrast between two framings of the referential situation, one of which stands as a corrective to the other. The digging scenario is framed from a viewpoint foreign to the agent’s own, a viewpoint from which the end result of the focal act is known. S1’s own framing of the situation is limited by an immediate and incomplete attentional scope. S1 acts in the moment and is not gauging the import of what is going on. That the utterance is meant to expose and ridicule his obliviousness is underscored by the use of the directive, “keep digging”, which feigns to presuppose a mutual understanding that he is in the act of digging; that the meaning is already shared and he already knows that is what he is doing, thus provoking him to gain awareness.

Whereas S1 has a local viewing scope focused only on himself and his act, S2 brings the significance of the incident into perspective by presenting it in a global viewing scope, showing, as it were, the big picture. The narrow, local viewing scope yields to the more encompassing global viewing scope, prompting S1 to evaluate his own behavior as seen from the outside. While S1’s actions initially have positive, or neutral, value in S1’s local viewing scope, they have distinctly negative value in S2’s framing. The simultaneous awareness of two conflicting framings, one informed and one uninformed, is what makes the situation seem ironic.

The ironic perspective is one in which both viewpoints are accessed at once: the privileged viewpoint of the conceptualizer who has access to both viewing scopes and the viewpoint of the subject confined by the ego-centric local viewing scope, the subject in the ironic situation, who does not see the outcome, only the act itself.

The unwitting gravedigger is a tragic and also comical figure. From an existential standpoint, the degree to which a state of affairs is tragic is also the degree to which it is comical.

The effect of the two contrasting viewpoints is a comically tragic perspective inherent, I think, to situational irony. Contrasting evaluative assessments of the situation avail themselves based on the conceptualizer’s informed framing and the uninformed framing of the subject in the situation. The tragic component is the tragic unawareness of the subject, and the comical element consists in the experienced incongruence: the dramatic difference between the informed and the uninformed, the local framing in view of the global one.

The bigger the contrast between the initial evaluation and the informed one, the more ironic a situation will seem. It thus seems highly ironic when someone who believes he is being very persuasive ends up achieving just the opposite, i.e. when he achieves a negative result, worse than a neutral not-succeeding-to-persuade.

In a maximally ironic situation the evaluations would be polar opposites. In our “keep-digging” example, our gravedigging subject appears to have a neutral, rather than a markedly positive, attitude to his act prior to the negative re-evaluation. However, the gravity of the subject matter also influences the intensity of the irony, and the hyperbolic failure-as-death exaggerates the severity of the consequences, adding to the ironic effect.

Below is a diagram illustrating the full conceptual integration network.

---

93 The phrase ‘viewing scope’ was suggested in Chapter 1 (see section [1.6]) as a term for the perspectivization of a state of affairs in terms of its inclusiveness. A conceptualizer may evoke different interpretational frames of understanding depending on the amount of information taken into account in considering the import of a situation.

94 See also section [4.2].
3.1.3.3 Digging the hole deeper

Applying to situations of unwitting self-sabotage, the gravedigging metaphor gives rise to a range of expressive (e.g. verbal) variations on this conceptual integration network, with its two contrastive viewpoints and presentational causal logic (as described in the two preceding sections).

An article in the *Times Literary Supplement* quotes a retrospective use of the *digging-your-own-grave* metaphor from the dust jacket of a book on Galileo:

**Digging your own grave:**
The troubling adjective in the subtitle of GALILEO IN ROME [*The rise and fall of a troublesome genius*] is easily explained. The book, to quote from its dust jacket, shows that “Galileo dug his own grave” and that “the Church might have accepted the heliocentric teachings of Copernicus if there had been solid proof”.

Several Catholic websites echo this interpretation of the events of 1633: it was Galileo’s tactless, headstrong and ungrateful behaviour which earned him gagging and house arrest, not the doctrinaire rejection by an all-powerful theocracy [...].

*(TLS, June 18, 2004: 7)*

In this controversial conceptualization of Galileo’s “rise and fall”, the presentational digging scenario maps onto a reference space with Galileo’s “tactless, headstrong and ungrateful behaviour”, however conceived by the author of the book.

Another propositional example of (counterfactual) gravedigging occurs in a Danish newspaper for higher education distributed at universities, in an article by journalist Lone Sandstrøm quoting Hanne Løngreen from Roskilde University as saying that it would amount to “digging our own grave” if the Department of Communications were to let underqualified students pass their exams:

**Digging your own grave:**
In the case of the Department of Communications, only students who competently demonstrate scholarly mastery of the relevant disciplines are able to pass their exams in this academic program. Academic performance is thus given higher priority than financial gain.

– If we allow underqualified students to slip through and complete their education who did not in fact have the proper qualifications, it would obviously undermine the scholarly merits of the department in the long run. – *That would be digging our own grave*, since our

---

95 In face-to-face communication non-verbal cues may sometimes suffice; a digging gesture, for instance, may in some instances serve as a sufficient prompt for the blend.
graduates would then be considered less attractive to potential employers, because they would turn out to not be sufficiently equipped for the job market. – Our reputation would suffer, and the number of applications would consequently decline [...].

Facing accusations that Communication Studies are letting underqualified students pass exams to benefit the department financially, the representative, defending departmental professionalism, rejects the accusations, contending that doing so would only be a seeming advantage. Doing so, she is quoted as saying, they would only be “digging their own grave”, since it would harm their reputation and eventually lead to a diminished student body – a clear financial disadvantage.

Another example of financial gravedigging appears in The New York Times:

Digging yourself into a (financial) hole:
PARIS – A French bank announced Thursday that it had lost $7.2 billion, not because of complex subprime loans, but the old-fashioned way – because a 31-year-old rogue trader made bad bets on stocks and then, in trying to cover up those losses, dug himself deeper into a hole. ("French Bank Says Rogue Trader Lost $7 Billion", by Nicola Clark and David Jolly, published by The New York Times, January 25, 2008)

The digging, in this example, maps onto making bad bets on stocks and then “trying to cover up” incurred losses. Making more bad decisions, following prior calamitous decisions, corresponds metaphorically to digging oneself “deeper” into the hole. The causal logic is, as suggested earlier, based on physical causality: The deeper the subject digs himself into a hole, the more stuck he is. Supposedly bankruptcy, or some other critical form of financial ruin, constitutes a subsequent (potential or actualized) endpoint, at which reemergence ceases to be an option and the hole becomes a financial grave.

In illustration of this very dynamic, a contender on a dating show crafts a creative elaboration of the blend, adding a gravestone to the scenario. In yet another episode of Meet My Folks, a young woman interrupts her own discourse, exclaiming: "I’m digging the hole too deep! I forgot the gravestone! I’m done!"

As in Giancarlo’s case she had also been defending herself to the “folks”, though arrives at the realization herself that her explanatory efforts are not having the desired effect. The explicit reference in this example to a gravestone, implying the hole is now conceived of as a grave, lends further support to the claim espoused here that metaphors referring to the digging of a hole are derivations of the digging-your-own-grave metaphor. Having dug the hole too deep, the digging agent is, in her own words, “done” – finished.

Similarly, references in English to hole-digging on American (or British) TV are translated into the equivalent Danish ‘gravedigging’ idiom [lit.: to dig your own grave] in the subtitles.

Digging your own hole/grave:
Obese teenager on Dr. Phil offered to be put on a life-saving weightloss program: “If I don’t follow Dr. Phil's program I am digging my own hole, and I’ll probably be dead.”

Danish subtitles: “Følger jeg ikke forløbet, graver jeg min egen grav.” [lit.: “If I don’t follow the program, I will be digging my own grave”]

The choice of words “my own hole” is a bit unusual (“I am digging my own hole”). As far as phrasing, speakers will usually chose ‘grave’ as a noun following ‘someone’s own’. The conceptual equivalence of metaphoric expressions involving a hole and a grave, respectively, may have led the speaker to merge different expressions into one (‘digging myself a hole’ combined with ‘digging my own grave’).

The following utterance is a variant of the keep-digging metaphor discussed earlier, delivered without verbal irony and with explicit mention of the transitive object (and the 2nd person ‘you’). On the dating show Date My Ex (Bravo), the host, whose purpose it is to help the bachelorette make a decision as to whom to date, enters the room just as one of the suitors – his already least favorite one – is talking about him, having a laugh at his expense. Realizing the host is standing right behind him, the suitor turns

---

96 For Kommunikations vedkommende er det kun studerende, der udviser fagets faglige indhold kompetent, der består eksamenerne på denne uddannelse. Så faglighed kommer altså før penge. – På længere sigt ville det jo også være undergravende for faget, hvis vi lod studerende slippe igennem uddannelsen, som ikke havde de rette kvalifikationer. – Det ville være at grave vores egen grav, idet arbejdsmarkedet så ikke ønskede at aftage kandidaterne, fordi de simpelthen ikke var gode nok. – Vi ville få et dårligt rygte og det ville betyde en mindre søgning [...].

97 Note that the title of the show is a fictive enunciation ascribed to the host, the woman’s ex-fiancé, who is, in addition to hosting the show, also hosting the suitors in his home.
around. The host makes a digging gesture, followed by the utterance [directed at the suitor]: “You just keep digging that hole.”

Here, the digging maps onto the numerous times the suitor is perceived to show disrespect, typically by talking. The more offensive he behaves, the less likely he is to win the game. The host’s warning draws attention to the fact that the suitor is making it easy for him to exert his power: “You just keep digging that hole – and see what happens.” Digging his own grave, in this context, corresponds to bringing about his own elimination as a contestant.

In the next variant of the metaphor, antagonistic force is similarly ascribed to social esteem, i.e. the esteem in which others hold the subject of the predicate. The utterance, produced on Dr. Phil, leaves out mention of the object of the digging act and instead focuses on the downwards trajectory of the subject in his descent, using the satellite adjunct ‘in’:

Digging yourself in:
Situation: Husband on a Dr. Phil panel who is already unpopular with the audience, having admitted to denying his wife a tummy-tuck after giving birth to four children, makes it worse by referring to his stay-at-home wife as a “built-in babysitter”.

Dr. Phil: “Somebody bring this boy a shovel!” [makes shoveling motion] “Diggin’ himself in.”

These differently worded utterances, in their variant illocutionary forms (e.g. imperative, declarative etc.) and variant situational contexts, all evoke the same metaphor, with the same trap dynamic. Continued beyond a critical boundary, digging a hole, i.e. digging yourself into a hole, by the logic of this narrative, amounts to digging a grave for yourself. The different forms of expression – digging-yourself-in, digging-yourself-in-deeper, digging-yourself-into-a-hole, digging-yourself-a-hole, digging-your-own-grave, etc. – window different aspects of the narrative, prompting conceptualizers to fill in the rest.

The final example, from the reality show The Bachelor (ABC)98, windows the incremental process (mapping onto metaphorical depth) of a subject’s descent into a pit of ridicule.

After the final episode, the former contestants are invited into the studio to talk to the host about their experiences on the show. The set-up: The host is seated on a stage with an interview subject next to him, facing the audience consisting of all the women who did not win a proposal from the Bachelor.

The host is interviewing one of the would-be girlfriends vying for the bachelor’s affection who is perceived as having been unsuccessful on the show: She had not spurred the interest of the bachelor, she had quarreled with other contestants, and she had danced around drunk – unusual behavior for aspiring brides on the show.

The host interviews her about her appearance on the show – her failure to make a connection with the bachelor, her combative interaction with the other contestants, and so on. Finally he asks about her getting fall-down-drunk on the show – to which she responds: “I was just bored...” The host tilts his head back in a gesture of open-mouthed astonishment, and, with a digging motion, laughs: “Dig that hole deeper!”

As in the Giancarlo example (Meet My Folks), the interviewee is oblivious of the foreseeable outcome of her face-saving measures. The interviewer affects a shift from a local viewing scope – represented from S1’s naïve viewpoint – according to which she is just being honest, to a better informed viewpoint with a global viewing scope – according to which she is failing to rescue her public image. Just as the grave she is digging for herself is an irreversible fact (in the physical domain), so is falling prey to other people’s judgment in a given situation (in the speech-act domain). Digging the hole too deep is social suicide.

The pragmatic implications of the utterance are slightly different from the other example, because the script is not that of a competition or a game but of sheer entertainment. The host brings it to her awareness that her disrepute is but increasing (with the rate of her talking) – which is unfortunate and, of course, highly entertaining from the perspective of the audience. Since it does not help her cause (saving face), she should abandon her current course of action – on the other hand, her “digging” heightens the entertainment value of the show.

The evaluation implied by the utterance is interpreted as ironical; it is of course not recommendable that she pursue her own termination. The use of verbal irony invites audience participation in the

---

98 The concept of this dating show is for a select eligible bachelor to date a large variety of women at the same time, with the objective of eventually ending up with just two of them, one of which receives a proposal from him in the finale.
signified evaluation indicated by the speaker, based on the joint recognition of the truth of the situation: she would be a fool to continue.

By urging the interviewee to “dig that hole deeper”, the host feigns an assumption of knowledge on the part of the interviewee (the definite article ‘that’ in “that hole” implies knowledge that a hole is being dug). This subtle irony further accentuates her oblivion; her familiarity with “that hole” and the fact that it is already deep (such that it can be dug “deeper”) is exactly what is precluded, given her current disposition, regrettably causing her to go on, at her own expense. This irony, and the ironical utterance as a whole, play up the situational irony characterizing the blend.

As in some of the previous examples, the metaphor serves to bring about the public acknowledgment of someone’s failure to uphold a positive image of himself in the eyes of others. Typically these expressions occur in communicatio nal settings. In these kinds of occurrences, the failure is pointed out, not only to the “gravedigger” himself but to any present company as well, an audience whose ridiculing laughter attests to the role of public opinion (i.e. others) as an antagonistic force helping to finish off the digging subject.

The metaphor appears to be especially suited for situations where someone is explaining himself to one or more listeners who offer skeptical resistance. I have noticed that its use is particularly frequent in televised court shows, where civilian prosecutors and defendants advocate their own cases in front of a judge, sometimes to their own detriment. It is likewise frequently used in competitive settings and in reality shows like Meet My Folks where the contestants have to defend themselves against embarrassing attacks on their character and personal integrity. Its occurrence, at least in spoken discourse, is predominantly observed in situations where it refers to ongoing interpersonal interaction.

Generally speaking, humorous use of the gravedigging metaphor typically occurs in spontaneous verbal discourse and refers to someone making a fool of himself in the situation of enunciation, while metaphorical mappings to target domains other than social exchange (i.e. to ongoing interactions) are more likely to occur in written language and in instances where there is (e.g. temporal) distance between the enunciation and the alleged act of gravedigging. This is true for instance of the digging-your-financial-grave examples in this section, and of the Galileo-as-gravedigger quote.

3.1.3.4 Concluding remarks

While analysts of the semantics of the digging-your-own-grave metaphor agree on its application to instances of “unwitting failure”, there are differing accounts of how it attains this meaning.

Curiously, though a rhetorical trope, it is commonly analyzed independently of any rhetorical context, so one reason may be the acquisition of data. More often than not, self-made examples are used, and the process of interpretation is thus more so invented than discovered. This is true not only of blending-theoretic and other semantic accounts of metaphorical meaning but also of relevance-theoretic accounts of phenomena like verbal irony, despite the posited condition that they attain their interpreted meaning in the pragmatic circumstance of situated communicative interaction.

In the preceding section of the chapter, I have presented a range of empirically occurring examples of the gravedigging metaphor; I have given a description of the narrative dynamics involved in the emergence of metaphorical meaning and offered a unified account of expressions referring to the digging of holes and graves, respectively, expressions that refer only to the act of digging, as well as non-verbal (gestural) evocations.

The analysis takes a framework in terms of integration of mental spaces to be fruitful for understanding the cognitive process of semantic interpretation, but, contrary to other analyses proposed, without invoking the reversal of causal logic as a factor in explaining the interpreted meaning. On the reverse causality account, death is first seen as the cause of the existence of a grave, whereafter the order is reversed. In Coulson (2001: 168-172) and Fauconnier & Turner (2002: 131-135), it is proposed that the blend relies on “twisted logic” because it is not evident why digging a grave would lead to the gravedigger’s death. Fauconnier and Turner therefore suggest that causal inversion is part of the meaning of the metaphor.

I have argued instead that the emergence of the meaning can be accounted for by straightforwardly logical dynamic narrativization and schematization. The analyses presented here suggest it happens as a result of narrative schematization of the two blended scenarios in a Virtual space, and projection of an intersubjective norm or expectation by which to evaluate the blended content. The inclusion of a semiotic base space grounding the metaphor in enunciation furthermore has the advantage of capturing various aspects of relevance.

The metaphor serves to cause a reconceptualization of the thought content of the Reference space and a re-evaluation of some aspect of it. How this is done depends on what the enunciator wishes to
convey; the premises for structuring the input spaces are determined by what is relevant in the communicative situation in which the given utterances take place.\textsuperscript{99}

Based on detailed analysis of an occurrence of the gravedigging metaphor in verbal dialogue I have proposed that the aptness of a metaphorical presentation of a digging scenario is due to the force-dynamic properties of a hole as a potential \textit{trap} physically constraining the antagonist and putting him in a vulnerable, possibly fatal, position.

The blend exposes a correlation between the force-dynamic structure in the presentational and referential inputs, with an experienced difference in the \textit{intensity} of force.

The experienced intensification of the force in the target input when seen as the source (in the blend one virtually is the other) supplies us with an explanation of the \textit{hyperbolic} effect of metaphor, an observation supported by the analysis in section [3.1.2] of the butcher-surgeon metaphor.

This semantic phenomenology, presumably characteristic of metaphor in general, helps us explain what is cognitively gained by the use of metaphoric expressions, and, within the proposed conceptual integration framework, gives us the means to account for the conceptual process involved in the construction of metaphorical meaning – e.g. of the \textit{keep-digging} expression analyzed here.

The proposed analysis provides an alternative to the reverse causality account and also to the vision put forth in “On the nature of blending as a cognitive phenomenon” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1998): “[…] a vision of blended spaces as a by-product of the activity of working memory where matched productions retrieved from production memory are executed to yield pre-established combinations of ICMs.” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1998: 273) In his analysis of the \textit{digging-your-own-grave} metaphor, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez proposes the involvement of two ICMs (idealized cognitive models, cf. Lakoff 1987). One is Self-Amnihilation, which is said to derive the meaning that the agent is foolish, because, according to the author, killing oneself is “foolish”. The other is a Divided Person metaphor (Lakoff 1996) “whose activation is prompted by the wording of the metaphorical expression.” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 1998: 272) Aside from my doubts that the duality of the self (into “self” and “subject”) originates in a metaphor\textsuperscript{100}, as originally claimed by Lakoff, the idea that the activation simply be “prompted by the wording of the metaphorical expression” is problematic. The wording varies, as we have seen, from time to time, and some expressions have no mention of any self (i.e. “yourself”) at all. Again, this problem, to restate a point made earlier, would be avoidable if instead of analyzing the item ‘digging-your-own-grave’, actual occurrences of the metaphor were analyzed.\textsuperscript{101}

However that may be, the most problematic claims, to my mind, are the claims that, firstly, the subject is plotting to have the self buried – an unfounded and rather absurd conspiracy – and, secondly, that the metaphor implicates an image of the digging agent as “digging the grave while expecting somebody else’s death rather than his own” (p. 272).

The latter idea recurs in Krikmann (2007), who attempts to derive the metaphor etymologically, tracing it back to a biblical passage stating that he who digs a pit will fall into it (Proverbs 26:27). Krikmann’s suggestion bears testimony to the drawbacks of not paying attention to empirical manifestations of the metaphor, such that its meaning, in context, might be made clear. The proverb in question, echoed in the Irish proverb “If you dig a grave for others, you might fall in yourself”, expresses the conviction that it is the plotter’s doom to have his own craftiness and cruelty returned upon him, thus implying a sense of divine karma.

The resemblance in imagery notwithstanding (i.e. the \textit{digging of a grave}), the narrative structure of this saying is altogether different from the one intended in the \textit{digging-your-own-grave} metaphor, which expresses the notion of virtual suicide – notably, and importantly – without any plotting on the part of the digger. The force-dynamic structure of the gravedigging blend bears similarity, as previously

---

\textsuperscript{99} By this I do not mean to indicate that the thought contents of these spaces lack dynamicity prior to the pragmatically motivated elaboration process, but that any inherent temporal and force-dynamic structure is indeterminate with regard to the online process of meaning construction. Only \textit{some} of the potential dynamic features are activated. It is therefore a non-trivial advantage to view a metaphor in its expressive context when subjected it to analysis. If what we want is a descriptive account of natural meaning construction we should not make the fallacy of thinking the meaning is \textit{in} the metaphor (cf. Reddy’s problematization of the entrenched ‘conduit metaphor’, Reddy 1979) independent of its expressive function in semiosis. Similarly, it is misguided to rely on a belief that the structure, and meaning, of the blend is entirely predictable from generalized versions of the input spaces.

\textsuperscript{100} If killing oneself is metaphoric, so too, it would seem, is shaving oneself. Both, it appears to me, are quite literal. The question of whether, in effect, all reflexive constructions are likely to be metaphoric, becomes irrelevant if one assumes, in accordance with the experience of the self, an inherent duality, allowing one to be a patient to one’s own agency (e.g. feeding oneself) and to \textit{think to oneself}.

\textsuperscript{101} Granted, one might still make the claim that a Divided Person ICM is evoked in some other way, but that still does not derive the meaning of the metaphor or explain why it would be relevant to utter it in any given situation.
discussed, to metaphoric idioms like ‘painting yourself into a corner’ and the Danish *sawing-off-the-branch-that-supports-you* metaphor (expressing the idea of sawing off the very branch on which you are sitting while trimming a tree), both of which evoke a sense of irreversibility and an assessment of the subject as foolish because the result of the action would be avoidable if some foresight were exerted. As in the gravedigging metaphor, a limited viewing scope prevents the agent from seeing the big picture—in which it is evident that his activity is self-destructive. The direct cause of harm is presumably gravity in the branch-sawing example, but the direct cause is not significant (except from a figural point of view—e.g. to a cartoonist); as in the gravedigging metaphor, it is the agent’s own contribution that permits the antagonistic force to do its work. He is thus perceived as the cause of the fiasco. In each of these metaphors the lack of self-awareness is a critical part of the meaning.

A piece of insight availing itself in this discussion, I think, is the benefit to be gained, methodologically, from an approach favoring the comparison of *dynamic structure* over the use of *imagery*, e.g. the occurrence of a *grave*. 