Metaphor without Mainsprings: A Rejoinder to Elgin and Scheffler

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*The Journal of Philosophy* is currently published by Journal of Philosophy, Inc..
pants than results from universal defection, but allows nevertheless that any participant can gain from lone defection, or a defection by relatively few participants. (This is meant as a partial definition only and I shall not attempt here to formulate a sufficient condition of free riding. 4)

Obviously, there are several game-theoretic structures compatible with my above liberal partial characterization of the free-rider problem. In addition to PD, at least chicken, battle of the sexes, and typical turn-taking games can have free-rider instantiations. We may still relax the above characterization of the free-rider problem by allowing the second condition not to hold for every participant. Then various nonsymmetric games also qualify for characterizing the structure of the free-riding situation. Needless to say, much detailed work would be required to carry out this program for the N-person case. Leaving further discussion to another context, it can be concluded that, no matter how exactly one conceives of the free-rider problem, there are many other situations than those characterized by different kinds of the prisoner's dilemma game which qualify as bearers of the general free-riding dilemma.

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METAPHOR WITHOUT MAINSPRINGS: A REJOINDER TO
ELGIN AND SCHEFFLER*

Catherine Z. Elgin and Israel Scheffler¹ object that I "dismiss extensionalist theories of metaphor on the ground that substitution of coextensive terms does not always preserve metaphorical truth" (331). This charge is surprising, not the least because the passage they quote next and the substitutivity argument to which

4 I would like to suggest that, to get a set of necessary and sufficient conditions, we add two more requirements to the mentioned ones. First, as pointed out in this note, we should allow explicitly that a free rider's defection may involve a cost to the other participants (especially the contributors). Secondly, as free riding can be regarded as a strongly action-related notion, we should add that a free rider has the specific conditional intention to defect, the condition being that K members contribute.

* I wish to thank Ted Cohen, Jonathan Malino, and Avishai Margalit for comments on an earlier draft of this note.

¹ "Mainsprings of Metaphor" (henceforth: MOM), this JOURNAL, LXXXIV, 6 (June 1987): 331–335.

they refer make no such allegation. What I did write was that the substitutivity argument is "prima facie sufficient to rule out extensional theories of metaphor," to which I immediately added that extensionalists "will attempt to circumvent this difficulty by appeal to their notion of secondary extensions," a move which I then questioned because of general reservations and for one specific reason to which Elgin and Scheffler do not respond.² For reasons of space, I was unable to elaborate my objections to extensionalism in MAD but, rather than "failing to appreciate the firepower [secondary extensions] add to the extensionalist's arsenal" (MOM 332), I hinted that—and how—they misfire.

Elgin and Scheffler further claim that their own extensionalist account of metaphor, to which most of their note is devoted, is "stronger" (335) than mine. Because their presentation in MOM brings out certain features of their approach more explicitly than their previous discussions of metaphor, I would like to take this occasion to examine their account with the care it deserves.³ It is, furthermore, to the credit of extensionalists like Elgin and Scheffler that they give central place to metaphor in their theory of language, but the problems that arise with their explanation of metaphor are general problems with their extensionalism which are of interest in their own right. Both our approaches, finally, give central place to "context" in metaphorical interpretation. By exploring the differences between our respective ways of incorporating contextual features into a theory of metaphor, we can also clarify some general issues about the treatment of context in semantic theory.

Elgin and Scheffler give three reasons for the superiority of their theory over mine. (1) Because it is extensionalist and intension-free, it is the more "economical" of the two and, assuming it explains as much, it is therefore the more "powerful" (335). (2) In fact it does explain more, "and more that we particularly want to know, about metaphor" (ibid.). (3) It "makes no use of a distinction between linguistic knowledge and collateral information" (ibid.), a distinction whose absence "strikes [the authors] as a good thing" (ibid.). As for (1): admirable as ontological economy may be, it should be remembered that great savings of one kind often require significant costs of

² "Metaphor as Demonstrative" (henceforth: MAD), this JOURNAL, LXXXII, 12 (December 1985): 677–710; p. 684, fn 10, my emphasis added. My entire discussion of "extensionalism" in MAD was limited to this one footnote.
another; it therefore remains to be shown that an extensionalist theory is not only more economical but also on balance simpler than an intensionalist one—and for this to be shown on empirical, explanatory grounds rather than simply assumed as a self-evident truth. Similarly for (3): it may or may not be a “good thing” to distinguish between linguistic knowledge and collateral information. That should depend on the explanatory work the distinction performs in the theories in which it is utilized; there is nothing to “strike” one as a priori good or bad about the distinction itself. The force of both (1) and (3) ultimately rest, then, on (2): Elgin and Scheffler’s claim that an extensionalist theory offers the better explanation of the phenomena of metaphor. Let us turn now to an example they offer in support of this claim.

Suppose that Romeo’s utterance of

(a) Juliet is the sun.

is true, interpreted metaphorically, and that

(b) The sun is the largest gaseous blob in the solar system.

is also true, interpreted literally. Nonetheless,

(c) Juliet is the largest gaseous blob in the solar system.

may be false even under a metaphorical interpretation of the term ‘the largest gaseous blob in the solar system’. Given our standard principles of semantic compositionality, why does the substitution of these literally coextensive terms fail to preserve the truth value of their respective metaphorical interpretations?

Elgin and Scheffler’s answer exploits Nelson Goodman’s idea of the secondary extension of a term and his suggestion that “literal meaning . . . is a matter of primary and secondary extension” (332). They concede that the metaphorical extension of a term is not determined solely or simply by its literal primary extension, but they nonetheless insist that it is determined by nothing more than extensions—namely, by the term’s literal secondary as well as primary extension. On their view, the principle that “the metaphorical depends on the literal” should be interpreted to mean that “metaphorical interpretation is a function of literal meaning” (332, my emphasis), where ‘literal meaning’ is then construed extensionally à la Goodman. From this “it follows . . . that coextensive terms with different secondary extensions bear different metaphorical inter-

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interpretations" (ibid.): in particular, 'the largest gaseous blob in the solar system' cannot be substituted for 'the sun', salva metaphorical interpretation, because they differ in their secondary extensions—'Apollo's flaming chariot', e.g., is said to belong to that of the latter but not of the former. In effect, then, Elgin and Scheffler revise the principle of compositionality, making the (primary) extension of the metaphorical sentence depend, not only on the (primary) extensions of its parts, but also on their "meanings," i.e., their primary and secondary extensions. Only when two terms agree both in their primary and secondary extensions are they inter-substitutable. Thus, the invalidity of the inference from (a) to (c) is explained in purely extensionalist terms.

Of course, by this criterion, not only this but any substitution of one nonreplicating term for another is ruled out. As Goodman argued long ago, if we require secondary coextensiveness for sameness of meaning, it can be shown that no two nonreplicating words ever have the same meaning. Therefore, if metaphorical interpretation is a function of literal meaning, and no two nonreplicating words ever have the same literal meaning, no two nonreplicating words should bear the same metaphorical interpretation and be inter-substitutable. Some may find this consequence simply much too restrictive. Even if one does not, however, it calls out for an explanation. Is it some special feature of metaphor which requires literal Goodmanian synonymy for substitutivity? Or are metaphorical contexts no different in this respect from so-called intensional ones? Or do the authors really believe that the substitutivity of one term for another is never predictable semantically—in which case why is (primary) coextensiveness sufficient for ordinary extensional contexts?

There is a further problem with Elgin and Scheffler's extensionalist solution which concerns the explanatory power of their notion of literal meaning, which, in turn, hinges on their characterization of a secondary extension. According to their identity conditions for literal meanings, every difference between the secondary extensions of two terms constitutes a difference between their literal meanings.

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5 Goodman, ibid., suggests how one might weaken this requirement for synonymy by excluding certain compound schemata. None of these refinements affects my general point, however.

6 This paragraph has profited especially from discussion with Ted Cohen.

7 Why this is so is not obvious; not just any difference of literal meaning, in particular, of secondary extension, will always be relevant to the substitutability of terms preserving their metaphorical interpretation. It is unlikely, e.g., that 'Apollo's flaming chariot' enters into the metaphorical interpretation of 'the sun' in (a); what difference, then, should it make that it belongs to its secondary extension but not to that of 'the largest gaseous blob in the solar system'?
Under what conditions, then, does some description or picture fall in the secondary extension of a given term? Elgin and Scheffler state that the sun-descriptions that comprise the secondary extension of ‘sun’ need not themselves be true of the sun; the words and phrases in the class of sun-descriptions are simply those “readily recognized” as such. But what is it to be “readily recognized” as, say, a Ø? About this, we are told nothing save that we can readily recognize Ø’s “although we have no rule that governs [the] instantiation of the term Ø” (MOM 332). Now, whether we do or do not have such a rule, it seems clear that what is “readily recognized” as a Ø may vary with individual and occasion depending on “context”—on the beliefs, expectations, and symbol system of the recognizer. Which beliefs, expectations, symbol system, etc. (for short: “beliefs”)? Surely not all of them on each occasion but, for lack of a principled way of fixing a prior limit on the number and kind relevant in a given case, just as surely none can be arbitrarily excluded beforehand. So, given Elgin and Scheffler’s criterion of ready recognition, the extension of (a token of) ‘sun-description’ on any given occasion would seem to be no more determined, or constrained, than the speaker’s entire corpus of “beliefs” on that occasion. In other words, the class of sun-descriptions which constitutes the secondary extension of someone’s inscription or utterance of ‘sun’ would seem to be coextensive with the class of words and phrases he would use to express his “sun-beliefs” on that occasion. These “sun-beliefs” need not be limited even to those the speaker himself believes to be true of the sun. Some may be false, and be known by him to be false: witness Elgin and Scheffler’s own example, ‘Apollo’s flaming chariot’, a “readily recognized” sun-description relative to our common myth-

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8 Some “readily recognized” Ø-descriptions (such as, stereotypical descriptions) may indeed be false of Ø and yet bear on individuating its literal meaning; but it is doubtful that this is true of all or even of most. Thus, notwithstanding the authors’ assertion, I do not see why ‘Apollo’s flaming chariot’ should bear on individuating the literal meaning of ‘sun’. On the contrary, because of the intimate relation between “meaning” and the determination of extension, one would think that in general (although perhaps not always) the opposite would be the case.

9 Note that this assertion is given no argument, leaving it a complete mystery how we accomplish this far from trivial task. Whatever one’s philosophical scruples about meanings, definitions, and analytic truths, speakers may yet know rules for fixing or determining the extensions of terms, whether or not they are generally able to state those rules and in whatever way they “have,” or employ, them.

10 This theme, or versions of it, is to be found throughout Goodman’s writings from “The Way the World Is” to Ways of Worldmaking (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978).

11 By ‘sun-beliefs’ I mean “beliefs” that would be attributed to the speaker using content clauses in which the term ‘sun’ occurs. Here I ignore problems about beliefs for which there exist no actual inscriptions or utterances (tokens).
ological "knowledge" despite the fact that we all know it to be false. In general, in order for an expression ∅ to count as a sun-description for a speaker, it ought to be sufficient if he believes that his audience will recognize it as such—whether or not he believes that it is true of the sun or he believes that his audience believes that. But, if this is all that is required for a term to be a sun-description, then with each change, addition, or contraction in the speaker’s "beliefs" about the sun, the class of his sun-descriptions will change and, with it, the secondary extension of his use of ‘sun’. And if, for every change in the secondary extension of a word, there is a change in its literal meaning, then with every change in the speaker’s "sun-beliefs" there will be a change in the literal meaning of his uses of the term 'sun'. Thus, given Elgin and Scheffler's characterization of "literal meaning," every time we learn, or simply believe we have learned, something new about the sun, the literal meaning we attach to the term 'sun' also changes.

None of this, to be sure, entails that every two replicas (tokens) of a word (type) will always have different literal meanings, but it also provides no constraints that prevent this possibility from obtaining, and it certainly looks like it will be the typical case. For many, this consequence will be objectionable enough. In fairness to Elgin and Scheffler, however, it is at one with their denial of any distinction between linguistic knowledge and collateral information, and it is also in the spirit of their own inscriptionsalist preference for tokens rather than types. Yet, even from their point of view, it should be clear by now that the appeal to "literal meaning" does no explanatory work. For their condition that "metaphorical interpretation is a function of literal meaning"—i.e., of the literal primary and secondary extensions of the term—simply amounts to saying that the metaphorical interpretation of a term ‘∅’ is a function of its literal primary extension and (for lack of any way to restrict the class of "beliefs" relevant to "ready recognition" of ∅-descriptions) everything the speaker "believes" about ∅. Attaching the label "literal meaning" to these last two conjuncts provides us with no more of an explanation of the substitution conditions for metaphorical interpretation than does the conjunction itself.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12} The extensions of 'sun-description' tokens, each determined by what the speaker readily recognizes as a sun-description on that occasion, may nonetheless be "determinate," as Elgin and Scheffler emphasize. My question concerns not the determinateness of their secondary extensions but their explanatory power. There is, furthermore, a question whether Elgin and Scheffler's implied dependence on notions like belief and recognition threatens their extensionalism. If so, they will give extensionalist analyses of belief and attitudinal sentences; see Scheffler, "An
A similar problem arises for Elgin and Scheffler’s notion of mention selection which they introduce in order to explain how tokens of one type (literally coextensive replicas) which bear different metaphorical interpretations in their respective contexts “differ semantically” (332). “In a mention-selective application,” they say, “an expression refers, not to what it denotes, but to mentions thereof” (333); e.g., ‘sun’ mention-selects, not the sun, but other sun-descriptions and sun-pictures. Since different replicas may select different mentions in their respective contexts—e.g., tokens of ‘sun’ which occur in a work of Ptolemaic astronomy mention-select ‘moving celestial body’, while those which occur in a Copernican text mention-select ‘motionless celestial body’—Elgin and Scheffler propose that metaphorical applications of different replicas may also bear different metaphorical interpretations because the replicas select different mentions: the inscription of ‘sun’ that applies metaphorically to Juliet mention-selects ‘life-sustaining’ and ‘beauteous’, while the one that applies to Achilles selects ‘life-threatening’ and ‘terrifying’ (333).

Here also Elgin and Scheffler do not mean by the word ‘mention’ exclusively inscriptions that denote, or are true of, what the mention-selecting expression denotes or is true of. If they did, then even a token of ‘sun’ occurring in a work of Ptolemaic astronomy would not mention-select ‘moving celestial body’. Despite what Ptolemaic astronomers reasonably believed at one time, they were wrong: the sun was never denoted by, or a member of the extension of, ‘moving celestial body’. Instead, what Elgin and Scheffler appear to include in the class of “mentions” from among which a given token Ø may make its selection is the whole range of expressions that fall in Ø’s secondary extension, expressions which, as we have seen, need not be true of the primary extension of Ø and do not generally stand in any particular semantic relation to it. But, since this is so, it is unclear why they call such differences in selected “associations” (333)—associations which are mainly a function of the speaker’s “beliefs” and

Inscriptional Approach to Indirect Quotation,” *Analysis*, xiv, 4 (March 1954): 83–90; and now C. Z. Elgin, “Translucent Belief,” this Journal, lxxxii, 2 (February 1985): 74–91. A full discussion of this issue requires more attention than present space allows, but I would argue (on lines similar to those in the text) that the cost of extensionalizing belief sentences is loss of semantic structure which, in turn, renders them impotent for explanatory purposes.

13 There are, to be sure, any number of strategies by which one might defend the intuition that the Ptolemaic astronomers, despite their false beliefs, were nonetheless referring to the sun with these descriptions. I do not know, however, whether, or how, these can be made to fit with the rest of Elgin and Scheffler’s inscriptionalist philosophy of language.
not of actual extension or truth—ways in which the tokens "differ semantically" (332, my emphasis).

Furthermore, the sense in which Elgin and Scheffler's own account is extensional should also now be understood in a narrower sense than usual. It remains true, as they emphasize, that mention selection is formally an extensional relation in the sense they stipulate: its range is a determinate class of expressions (tokens) and two tokens are co-mention-selective iff they mention-select exactly the same tokens (333). Their theory is, however, not extensional in the sense that it is exclusively or primarily the extensions of the terms in question, and relations among those extensions, which do the explanatory work of their theory. Were they to spell out why some but not other terms are mention-selected on a given occasion, they would have to take into account not only extensional relations like denoting or coextensivity, but also beliefs and other psychological notions.\(^{14}\)

Despite the fact that they twice assert that literally coextensive replicas "can, and often do, diverge in mention selection" (333), Elgin and Scheffler never, indeed, explain what accounts for different mention selections. All they have to say about this lacuna in their explanation is summed up in one word: Context (see, e.g., MOM 334). But this one-worder lends itself to two interpretations: Either it may mean that it is only by closely analyzing the context that we will arrive at an explanation, or it may mean that at this point—when we

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\(^{14}\) The closing remarks of fn. 12 also apply here. It should also be noted that Elgin and Scheffler's claim that "exemplification . . . is thus extensional" (333) is not as simple a matter as they seem to suggest. As Goodman already recognized (Languages of Art, pp. 54–56), in the vulgar what we say is exemplified is a property. Apart from his general aversion to properties, however, Goodman argues that properties—at least on one view—are not finely enough individuated for purposes of exemplification, that only entities with the identity conditions of linguistic objects draw the requisite distinctions. At the same time, he also recognizes that exemplification cannot be simply of a predicate, or label, since labels are restricted to languages or to individual speakers. Thus, whereas Socrates surely exemplified rationality for Plato, Socrates did not exemplify the English label 'rational' for Plato. What is needed, then, is something finer than properties but not as fine as predicates of particular languages. Goodman's solution is to construe 'exemplifies redness' as elliptical for 'exemplifies some label coextensive with "red"' (55).

But this extensionalist solution—to this case of nonextensionality, as it should by now be clear—even he concedes is much too broad. Goodman's final words on this matter are instructive: The answer is that the lines may be drawn with any degree of looseness or tightness. While "exemplifies rationality," taken by itself, says only "exemplifies some label coextensive with 'rational' ", the context usually tells us a good deal more about what label is in question (56).

Here the reference to 'context' serves, not as the start of an explanation, but as a convenient wastebasket for the extensionalist's unsolved problems; 'context' in this sense is where explanation stops and where a problem, once deposited, can be safely ignored.
find ourselves looking at context—explanation stops. I find both readings in MOM.

Sometimes the authors claim to have "explain[ed] both metaphorical reference and metaphorical likening" (MOM 335, my emphasis). But, if that is their aim, they have yet to meet it. For, whatever else one might ask of an explanation, explicitness is surely a minimal condition; but it is not one satisfied by their account, which leaves so much of the burden of explanation on the shoulders of a shrouded "context."

Elsewhere, on the other hand, Elgin and Scheffler emphasize that there are no "recipes for determining metaphorical meaning," only "heuristics," "cues and clues about which aspects of the context and background might be relevant" (331); that certain "contextual considerations are plainly insufficient to determine exactly which labels are jointly exemplified" (334) and, hence, metaphorically expressed. Contextual factors may "direct . . . our attention to a neighborhood in which a correct interpretation might be located" (334), but these directions are not determinative, systematic, fixed, or rule-like—unlike the explanations of (at least some) literal interpretations.

This negative prognosis may be true enough; I myself would endorse it for the specific interpretive modes Elgin and Scheffler discuss, e.g., exemplification. But, if this is their view, Elgin and Scheffler should not claim that their account "explains more" (335) than mine; our real disagreement is over whether it is nonetheless possible to give any kind of explanation of metaphor. That is, if this is Elgin and Scheffler's opinion, both of us agree that a context-sensitive mode of interpretation like exemplification does not furnish determinate, rule-like material for a semantic explanation of metaphor—in contrast, say, to the way in which denotation is determinate and rule-like (even if we "have" no rules; cf. MOM 332). For similar reasons, I argued in MAD that there are no "recipes," or algorithms, for determining the interpretation of a metaphor, i.e., its propositional content, whose determination (in a context) is a function of presuppositions subject to the very indeterminacy to which Elgin and Scheffler are sensitive.\(^{15}\)

What I also argued in MAD, however—and

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\(^{15}\) Compare with this my own discussion of the role of exemplification which I locate in the pragmatics, rather than semantics, of metaphorical interpretation (MAD 699, fn. 27). In addition to the considerations mentioned in the text, I would argue that, precisely because exemplification is a mode of symbolization not specific to language, it belongs, not to a speaker's task-specific linguistic (semantic) competence, but to his ability to apply that competence in use. Furthermore, exemplification does not seem to underlie the interpretation of all metaphors; e.g., metaphorical interpretations of natural kind terms sometimes draw specifically on presuppositions about their stereotypical properties (see MAD 700). And because
where Elgin and Scheffler appear to disagree—is that there exists another level of metaphorical interpretation, *metaphorical character*, which consists of fixed and general, though context-sensitive, rules which, in turn, are of the same semantic kind as those which govern one kind of "literal" language, namely, demonstratives. It is at this level of interpretation, and only here, where I would argue that it is possible to uncover semantic explanations of metaphorical interpretation, i.e., explanations of metaphorical interpretations which consist of semantic knowledge specific to metaphor.

This semantic knowledge underlying metaphorical interpretation, like the formally analogous knowledge underlying the interpretation of demonstratives, relates the content, or truth condition, of the expression to a context. Elgin and Scheffler's attempt to summarize this knowledge with the three words of "advice: Look to context" (335) omits its most important ingredients, however: (1) that 'context' here means specifically presuppositions as opposed to elements of the actual circumstance, including actual extensions, and (2) that the context in question is the context of utterance/interpretation of the metaphor as distinguished from the context, or circumstance, in which we evaluate its truth. Because we are typically concerned with the truth of a metaphor in its context of utterance, it is necessary, so I argued in MAD, to distinguish its character and content or, analogously, the interpretive role of the context in determining what is said and its evaluative role in determining the actual truth value of what is said (MAD 707–710). I would add now that there also exists cognitive significance specific to the metaphorical mode by which the content of a metaphor is presented—information in addition to its content in any particular context which is carried specifically at the

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16 Because of the conceptual confusions that ensue from failure to draw these distinctions, it is incorrect for Elgin and Scheffler to describe metaphorical character as "advice"—unless they would also so describe the character of an indexical like 'I'.
level of its context-oriented character; it is this character-istic information which, at least in part, is often felt to be lost in literal paraphrase and which is also central to understanding the specific cognitive contribution that metaphors make as metaphors to the explanation of human action.\[^{17}\]

What is wrong, in other words, with Elgin and Scheffler’s tidy formulation of my theory is that they indiscriminately lump together the importantly different ways in which “context” functions in determining the truth of a metaphor under one of its interpretations. It is this general problem which also underlies the specific difficulties discussed earlier. If one’s theory of metaphor is not to be descriptively inadequate, it is agreed that the information that determines the various contents of different metaphors must include more than “lexical meaning”—construed either extensionally or intensionally; it must incorporate all kinds of contextual presuppositions, common knowledge, individual beliefs, and associations (see MAD 695–700). But, unless one then draws some distinction like character/content, it is impossible to provide an explanation which purports to be a semantic theory (e.g., which makes substantive use of notions like literal meaning in its explanans) of presumably semantic phenomena (cf. MOM 335)—which is exactly how Elgin and Scheffler appear to conceive of their own theory.\[^{18}\] Their failure to draw any such distinction results, for example, in the individuation of “literal meaning” by unmistakable extralinguistic beliefs; i.e., the result is neither semantic nor much of an explanation at all.

There are also independent reasons to distinguish character and content, or the different roles of context in metaphorical interpretation. Consider some of the different kinds of “metaphorical incompetence”\[^{19}\]: the different ways in which we can fail to “get” a metaphor right. Sometimes we fully understand the content of the metaphor but, out of ignorance of the facts, do not know its truth value. Other times we know that an utterance is to be interpreted metaphorically—i.e., we know that it is to be assigned a metaphorical character—but, for lack of knowledge of its context of utterance, we fail to learn the relevant presuppositions that determine its content in that context. In yet a third set of circumstances, we may not know

\[^{17}\] I discuss the cognitive significance of metaphorical character further in “Knowledge of Metaphor and Knowledge by Metaphor,” forthcoming.

\[^{18}\] This problem is not specific to Elgin and Scheffler’s extensionalism; cf. MAD 697, fn. 26 for a similar criticism of a nonextensionalist theory of metaphor.

\[^{19}\] I owe this phrase to Ted Cohen; for further discussion, see his “Figurative Incompetence,” MS., and my discussion of metaphorical disagreement in MAD 701. The four kinds of incompetence mentioned below are not exhaustive; Cohen assures me that there are always 613 ways to get things wrong.
whether a given utterance is to be interpreted metaphorically or literally; whether to assign it its standard ("literal") character or that of a metaphorical expression. And, finally, in a fourth class of cases, we may know that some utterance is not to be interpreted literally without yet knowing what it is to interpret an utterance metaphorically; say, we do not know that a metaphor depends for its interpretation on a contextual parameter (as opposed, say, to its literal meaning), or on a particular parameter different from that which determines whether its content is true. In this last case, in short, we have not yet mastered the function of metaphorical character.

Of these four cases, the incompetence exemplified by the first two is due to ignorance of a straightforward extralinguistic kind: lack of knowledge of the facts and of presuppositions that include, with much else, what Elgin and Scheffler would call "collateral information." The third case is an example of recognitional rather than strictly interpretive incompetence; it involves a failure to assign an utterance (token) its correct, or intended, linguistic description (type). Here the speaker may not lack the requisite knowledge of language but he fails to apply it correctly. Only in the last case do we have, I suggest, a clear example of linguistic incompetence; the lack of a kind of knowledge of language proper, similar to the linguistic incompetence of one who does not know that the content of (a token of) the indexical 'now' depends on its time of utterance—or (in contrast to metaphor) on its actual rather than a presupposed time.

A good, or even just adequate, theory of metaphor should have the conceptual resources to articulate and explain the differences among these cases. But, in order to do this, it is necessary to utilize the character/content distinction (or a similar one) which presupposes, in turn, a distinction between linguistic knowledge and extra-linguistic, or collateral, information.20 Such a semantic theory may not answer what, "for students of metaphor, is a (perhaps the) crucial question" (MOM 335), but it does take some important first steps toward understanding what a speaker knows when he knows the interpretation of a metaphor. And to know the answer to this question strikes me as a good thing.

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20 The boundaries of this notion of linguistic knowledge are not, it should be noted, themselves known a priori; what falls in a speaker's knowledge of language, as opposed to his extralinguistic knowledge, will be determined by empirical inquiry into the nature of the human faculty for language. Hence, this notion will not furnish the epistemological stuff for a linguistic doctrine of a priori truth and should avoid important objections to the analytic/synthetic distinction.