Ernie Lepore and Matthew Stone. *Imagination and Convention: Distinguishing Grammar and Inference in Language*. Oxford University Press 2017. 304 pp. $34.95 USD (Paperback ISBN 9780198797418); $53.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780198717188).

It is generally accepted that much of what speakers convey to their audiences is not linguistically encoded, but rather implicitly or indirectly communicated. What is controversial is how exactly to draw the line between these two kinds of meanings. While standard accounts of the semantics-pragmatics distinction tend to favor pragmatic explanations over semantic ones, Lepore and Stone build a case for the opposite view. The authors attack the Gricean picture of communication from two directions. In Parts I and II they build a case for the claim that linguistic conventions play a much more significant role than the Griceans are willing to admit. In Part III they argue that non-conventional meanings are not to be accounted for by rational reconstruction of speaker intentions on the basis of mutual assumptions of cooperation; instead, they observe the need for acknowledging a variety of different kinds of interpretive strategies. The title of the book captures these two aspects: on the one hand, the conventional part of linguistic interpretation is much more extended than Grice allows for; on the other hand, his account of non-conventionalized language use does not find a place for human creativity and imagination.

Grice's view, however, is not the only one under attack in the book. In Part I, after a detailed discussion of Grice's account of conversational implicature (CI), as the well-known neo-Gricean approaches, Lepore and Stone turn to psychological accounts of interpretation, such as Relevance Theory. Psychological approaches are found to be preferable to Gricean accounts in various respects: (1) they are better empirically informed; (2) they avoid making overly idealized assumptions about speaker rationality and cooperativeness, and, as a result, they are able to account for cases that fall outside the idealizations that Griceans work with; (3) they can make room for a looser notion of communication, as an open-ended process in which speakers prompt relevant inferences, but audiences are not constrained by any strict form of calculation of the indirect meaning to draw those precise inferences. However, Lepore and Stone ultimately find psychological theories of interpretation wanting, among other reasons, because they blur the line between utterance interpretation as speaker intention recognition and the recovery of information the speaker reveals through her actions (79-80).

Part II of the book presents various case studies for which, Lepore and Stone argue, accounts that place a greater emphasis on conventional rules of interpretation fare better than those that rely on pragmatic reconstructions of the speaker's intention. The authors propose to treat many alleged examples of CIs as literal meanings of the respective utterances. The process of interpretation involved would then be one of disambiguation rather than derivation of a CI. In chapter 6 Lepore and Stone argue that we should not think of the use of 'Can I have a French toast?' to make a request as an indirect speech act, on the Gricean model, but rather as a literal meaning of the sentence. They offer several argument for this view: (1') that 'please' – which is a conventional mark of requests – could be added unproblematically to the above request, but not to any indirect request ('I'm thirsty, please' sounds incorrect, for instance); (2') that the interpretation of the sentence as a request is non-detachable, as it is not available with 'Am I able to have the French Toast?'; (3') finally, 'a knock-down argument against the Gricean' (102) is provided by the cross-linguistic variation of speech act interpretations.

Chapter 7 discusses the implication of temporal order that 'and' sometimes carries. While they agree with Grice that the conjunction is not ambiguous in natural language, they argue that the

tense and aspect of verbs interacts with the temporal interpretation of 'and,' so that the latter is a matter of conventional meaning rather than general interpretive principles. Chapter 8 discusses the role of intonation in the interpretation of so-called 'scalar implicatures,' which Lepore and Stone think are not implicatures at all.

In Part III the authors turn to phenomena which are less amenable to treatments that assume that the relevant use is lexicalized (in contrast to the examples in Part II), including metaphor, sarcasm, irony, humor, and hinting. However, they find traditional pragmatic accounts unsatisfactory here as well, given that these phenomena involve a variety of interpretive mechanisms, and cannot be explained with the help of the general strategies of interpretation that the Gricean theory and Relevance Theory propose. What is specific to metaphor, they argue, following Davidson and others, is a special kind of perspective taking, which is not of a propositional nature, and should not be conceived of as carrying information: 'metaphorical thinking gives special insights that can't be paraphrased' (168). As a result, it is a mistake to reconstruct metaphor as involving the generation of a CI. In discussing irony, sarcasm, and humor, Lepore and Stone emphasize that they all require a particular kind of engagement with the speaker's perspective (186). In contrast to these, hinting does not require such perspective-taking. In hints, the speaker's 'point is to press the interlocutor to flesh out and push forward a direction to the conversation that the speaker will not or cannot develop further herself' (189). But hinting shares with these other phenomena that it also requires creative thinking (which includes relying on subtle cues to recognize the speaker's commitments and intentions), and that it is open-ended (as there is no specific propositional message that the speaker aims to get across).

Part IV addresses a more foundational question: that of characterizing meaning. In chapter 13 Lepore and Stone contrast Grice's account of meaning, which they call Prospective Intentionalism ('the view that the meaning of an utterance derives from the changes that the speaker plans for the utterance to bring about in the conversation' (200)) with Direct Intentionalism (the view that 'speaker's intentions determine the meaning of an utterance by linking it up with the relevant conventions' (200)). The latter is inspired by Kripke's and Putnam's view of the kind of intentions speakers must have in order to use words with the meaning they have in the relevant linguistic community. Lepore and Stone find various problems with Prospective Intentionalism: that it provides an incorrect analysis of cases in which the speaker is ignorant or confused about the meaning of the word she uses (218); that it requires that the speaker be always committed to making her utterance such that the hearer will recognize her communicative intention (223), which is not the case; and that it ignores the important distinction between conventional meaning and creative meaning (205).

Does Lewis's notion of convention offer a better alternative to the Gricean picture of meaning? Lewis follows Grice's steps in proposing a psychological analysis of semantic notions: while Grice focuses on *speaker meaning*, Lewis considers *linguistic conventions*, and he develops his account relying heavily on the concept of mutual expectations, instead of that of communicative intentions. But, chapter 14 argues, such mentalist reductions of semantic notions fit poorly with the standard view of the language faculty, as operating independently of our capacity for deliberative rationality: 'If speakers' choices match, it may be because the same mechanisms apply across individuals, not because speakers make their choices by taking learned expectations about one another into account' (244).

I find most of the arguments that Lepore and Stone present compelling. However, I also find a certain imprecision with respect to the scope of their conclusions, which are at times formulated in very ambitious terms. For instance, they write that 'we will invite you to conclude that the category of conversational implicature does no theoretical work.' (85) Even if the concept of a CI is not useful

in explaining the variety of linguistic phenomena discussed in the book, this conclusion is not warranted. Other phenomena could be best treated with this theoretical apparatus. Similarly, although Lepore and Stone make a convincing case for the claim that speakers do not always cooperate, I find little evidence to embrace the general claim that cooperation 'is not a guide for enriching or revising the interpretation of what they say' (193). As I see it, a useful debate should be framed around the question of the scope of Gricean explanations, rather than around the question of what to replace it with.

I also miss from the book a deeper engagement with the Gricean concept of *generalized* conversational implicature (GCI), as well as the variety of approaches to default interpretation that it has inspired recently. GCIs are non-lexicalized meanings for which there is a pattern of use mutually known to participants in the conversation, and so their interpretation does not require explicit calculations. In this respect, GCIs are, in some sense, in between particularized CIs and full lexicalization. This theoretical resource might be useful in order to avoid some of the problems (although maybe not all) Lepore and Stone find in the approaches to the semantics-pragmatics distinction they reject.

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