UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

The strategic use of the visual mode in advertising metaphors

Forceville, C.

Publication date
2014

Document Version
Author accepted manuscript

Published in
Critical multimodal studies of popular culture

[Link to publication](#)

The following is a pre-print version of a chapter published in 2013. If you want to quote *verbatim* from it, please check the published version. The publication details are:

Forceville, Charles (2013). "The strategic use of the visual mode in advertising metaphors." In: Emilia Djonov and Sumin Zhao (eds), *Critical Multimodal Studies of Popular Culture* (55-70). NewYork: Routledge.

Abstract

Metaphors present one kind of thing (a "target") in terms of another (a "source"), and are therefore ideal instruments for advertisers to make claims about products (the metaphors' targets) efficiently and creatively. Since the intended interpretation of metaphors is often not spelled out, advertisers often get away with suggesting meanings without taking responsibility for them by making skillful use of visuals as part of metaphors. This chapter explains how visual and multimodal metaphors in advertising work, and discusses some cases to show how metaphor analysis can be a critical tool in the evaluation of advertising.

Introduction

With their conveniently simple definition of metaphor as "understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another," Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 5) are the founding fathers of what has become known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) – although the influence of Ortony (1979) should not be underestimated. Briefly, CMT, rooted in Cognitive Linguistics, sees metaphor as a device that systematically structures the way humans conceptualize abstract and complex phenomena by comprehending them via concrete phenomena, i.e., phenomena that are experienced via the human body and its sensory organs. Examples of such structural metaphors, extensively studied over the past 30 years are LIFE IS A JOURNEY, TIME IS SPACE, and EMOTIONS ARE PHYSICAL FORCES (in the CMT paradigm it is customary to signal metaphors' conceptual level by using small capitals). But since its early days, CMT scholars have gradually begun to acknowledge that the "embodied" basis of metaphors needs to be complemented by cultural dimensions (e.g., Gibbs and Steen

1999, Kövecses 2005, Gibbs 2008). This work is expanding, but its focus is still predominantly on *verbal* manifestations of the *embodied* dimension of conceptual metaphors.

However, Lakoff and Johnson's emphasis that metaphors are primarily conceptual has not only spawned a rich body of work on how structural metaphors help shape our thinking, but has also given rise to a different type of research. If metaphor characterizes thought and action, metaphors must pervade non-verbal modes, and combinations of modes, as well. This insight has resulted in research focusing on creative pictorial/visual metaphor (e.g., Forceville 1996; see also Whittock 1990, Carroll 1996) and multimodal metaphor (Forceville 2006, 2007, 2008, Forceville and Urios-Aparisi 2009), the latter also addressing work in gesture studies (e.g., Müller 2008, Cienki and Müller 2008, Mittelberg and Waugh 2009).

A major strand in my own work focuses on this second type of research, that is, on the pictorial and multimodal manifestations of creative (rather than structural) metaphors. This work is as indebted to Black (1979) as it is to Lakoff and Johnson. In modern metaphor theory, Max Black was arguably the first to revalue metaphor as a central instrument of cognition, after philosophers had long ignored the trope. This neglect, according to Black, was due to the misguided idea that only true propositions can contribute to knowledge – and metaphors are typically propositions (if they take a propositional form in the first place) that are literally false. Black moreover made the important point that metaphors do not necessarily record a pre-existent similarity between the two parts of a metaphor (target and source, in modern parlance), but may *create* that similarity.

The genre within which I mainly analyzed such metaphors is commercial advertising. Contemporary advertising is rich in metaphors, and my goal to develop a model for the analysis of pictorial metaphor was well served by the clear purpose of this type of discourse: to sell or promote a product, service, or brand. In most of this work, I have aimed to answer questions pertaining to the formal qualities of pictorial and multimodal metaphor: what

qualities does a certain configuration of visual elements need to possess to qualify as a pictorial metaphor? Can we distinguish subtypes, and if so, which ones, and how can we tell them apart? How, if at all, does pictorial metaphor relate to other visual tropes, such as metonymy? What makes a metaphor multimodal rather than monomodal, and what modes or modalities (the two terms are here used interchangeably) can play a role? Does the choice of verbalization of a non-verbal or partly-verbal metaphor (necessary in scholarly publications) affect the range of interpretations? Such issues are important, and need to be addressed before it is possible to use insights into how metaphor functions in critical theory.

In this chapter I will revisit the genre of advertising, and demonstrate how analyzing the modes used in pictorial and multimodal metaphor can contribute to a critical assessment of product and brand claims, and of the assumptions underlying the derivation of such claims. I will first give the bare bones of the model for analysis, then apply it to show how metaphors steer interpretation, and end with some conclusions and suggestions for widening the scope of this line of research.

Pictorial and multimodal metaphor

Let me begin by introducing and explaining some basic terminology. Each metaphor has an underlying A IS B form. Sometimes a verbal metaphor already manifests this A IS B form on the linguistic surface level. In the title of Pat Benatar's 1980s hit single the verbal "Love is a battlefield" and the conceptual level LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD coincide, but later on in the lyrics the phrase "when your heart surrenders," exemplifies the same conceptual metaphor.

A metaphor concerns one thing, its target (also known as "topic," "tenor," or "primary subject"), about which something is predicated by the source ("vehicle," "secondary

subject"). In our example, LOVE is the target and BATTLEFIELD the source. In "when your heart surrenders," the word "heart" belongs to the semantic domain of the target, and "surrenders" to that of the source. In a metaphor, there is in principle never any doubt what is its target, and what its source. Within CMT the irreversibility of target and source in metaphor is a central tenet (see e.g., Lakoff and Turner 1989, 132; Forceville 1996, chapter 2). This, incidentally, only means that *in a given context* target and source cannot be reversed; in other contexts one might come across metaphors where the terms have shifted slots (in CMT the classic example is "my butcher is a surgeon," versus "my surgeon is a butcher," both of which may make sense – but not in the same context).

The interpretation of a metaphor consists of deciding what features or connotations of the source can be mapped (Black 1979 uses the verb "projected") from source onto target. This mapping process involves some fine-tuning. What is literally fighting, shooting, being wounded, surrendering, etc. on the BATTLEFIELD becomes, say, not giving in to the lover's desires, trying to hurt the lover emotionally, being emotionally hurt by the lover, admitting to being in love with the lover, etc. after mapping on the target domain LOVE. Importantly, the mapped features can either be spelled out by the metaphor's creator, or they may remain implicit. In the former case, the maker of the metaphor makes explicit how he or she intends the metaphor to be, wholly or partly, interpreted. In the latter case, the metaphor's audience has more freedom for deciding on what is to be mapped. As long as the feature to be mapped is indeed part and parcel of the semantic domain of the source and the associations adhering to this domain, any such feature can be mapped – provided it is not incommensurate with pragmatic information that would show the mapping to be inappropriate. This has several possible consequences: (a) addressees may map one or more features that the metaphor's creator expects or hopes they will map; (b) addressees may map one or more features that the metaphor's creator did not envisage, leading either to minor or major miscommunication or to

unexpected enrichment; (c) addressees may, for whatever reason, subversively map features that go against the grain of the presumably intended message.

Consider the following dialogue between Shrek and Donkey from *Shrek* (2001), which focuses on the metaphor (strictly speaking: simile, but on the conceptual level similes are within CMT generally understood as being processed the same way as metaphors) "ogres are like onions":

Shrek: "For your information, there's a lot more to ogres than people think."

Donkey: "Example?"

Shrek: "Example? OK ... Ahhm ... Ogres are ... like onions!"

Donkey: "They stink?

Shrek: "Yes. ... No!"

Donkey: "Oh, they make you cry?

Shrek: "No!"

Donkey: "Oh, you leave them out in the sun, they get all brown, start sprouting little white hairs."

Shrek: "No! ... Layers! Onions have layers! Ogres have layers. Onions have layers. You get it. We both have layers."

Donkey: "Oooohhh ... you both have layers? You know, not everybody likes onions. ... Cake! Everybody loves cake!"

In this example, the conceptual metaphor OGRES ARE ONIONS is presented on the verbal level in the ready-made A-is-like-B form "Ogres are like onions," in which "Ogres" is the target, and "onions" is the source. But what is to be mapped? At first Shrek does not make explicit the mappings he envisages. This gives Donkey the opportunity, probably tongue-in-

cheek, to subvert the metaphor by volunteering mappable features of the source domain that are factually correct, but were definitely not what Shrek had in mind when proffering the metaphor – which is that onions have layers. After "translation" to the target domain, the layer-mapping presumably means something like: "is complex" and/or "is less simply structured than meets the eye." Donkey now acknowledges what Shrek means and volunteers a semantic domain that, he thinks, is a better source domain candidate given what Shrek wants to convey: cake. In Donkey's opinion, everybody loves cake, which is therefore a salient feature in the cake domain. Moreover, cakes in his view presumably have layers – so it is a better source than onions, since it is both universally liked *and* has layers. (The problem is that "having layers" is not a very salient property of cakes, and therefore is not so easily evoked by addressees of the metaphor "Ogres are like cakes." Moreover, Donkey may be too optimistic that *everyone* is fond of cakes, so that the "likeability" mapping is perhaps not as salient as he thinks, either.) The point here is that metaphor makers may be unaware of unwanted salient mappings in the source domain. This may either lead to miscommunication or to a deliberate subversion of their own metaphor, which may then boomerang back to them. Clearly, the sum total of things that interlocutors know, feel, and believe about a semantic domain heavily influences the possible mappings they recruit from it. Such misunderstandings of a metaphor become potentially greater when it straddles different (sub)cultures.

In the examples hitherto discussed, metaphors may make explicit the link between target and source verbally in the form of the copular "is" (or "is like"). Since in verbal metaphors both target and source are presented in the same mode, language, these cases thus belong to the "monomodal" type. But there is no reason why the elements in a metaphor should be verbal in nature: both a source and a target can be rendered in other modes. Now what counts as a mode/modality, is a question that has spawned much debate, but this has not resulted in much agreement (for discussion, see Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, Forceville

2006, various authors in Jewitt 2009, Kress 2010, Elleström 2010). I will not attempt to resolve that issue here but take a practical approach and for the purposes of this chapter distinguish the following modes: written language, spoken language, visuals, music, and non-verbal sound.

If this is accepted, this means, at least in theory, that one can have other types of monomodal metaphor than the verbal variety. We would have to postulate purely pictorial/visual, musical, sonic, or gestural metaphors if we should come across non-verbal discourses in which a perceptual configuration that invites metaphorical construal presents both the target and the source in the same modality. For pictorial metaphor, many species have been attested; whether monomodal *musical* or *sonic* or *gestural* metaphors should be distinguished is a matter for further debate.

But of course these modalities can be used in various permutations: a target can be presented in one modality, and a source in another. In order to distinguish multimodal from monomodal metaphors, I have suggested the following definition: "multimodal metaphors are metaphors whose target and source are each represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes" (Forceville 2006, 384). Again: whether all of the permutations actually occur in practice requires further research, but certain types, as we will see below, are widespread. Another caveat is in order: there is no law that forbids the maker of a metaphor to deploy more than one modality simultaneously to represent a target or source. Hence a target (or a source) can for instance be cued both visually and verbally. This means that the monomodal-multimodal metaphor distinction has fluid boundaries. Finally: modalities do not only play a role in the identification of target and source, but also in the cueing of mappable features. This can be done verbally, as Donkey does in the Shrek fragment ("they stink?"), but also in other modalities: in another situation, say in a cartoon, the onion's stench could be conveyed by showing an onion with waft lines above it, and somebody sniffing it with a

7

disgusted face or pinching his nose. Alternatively, Donkey could have procured an onion and held it suddenly under Shrek's nose, to activate the desired olfactory mapping in the visual modality.

Summarizing, analyzing a phenomenon as a multimodal metaphor requires that

- an identity relation is created between two phenomena that, in the given context, belong to different categories;

- the phenomena are perceived as being exclusively or predominantly conveyed in different modes;

- the phenomena are to be understood as target and source, respectively; they are not, in the given context, reversible;

- at least one characteristic/connotation associated with the source domain can be relevantly mapped onto the target domain; often a cluster of internally related connotations is to be so mapped (adapted from Forceville 1996, chapter 6; see also Black 1979).

The genre of advertising

Unsurprisingly, advertisers are enthusiastic users of metaphors. An advertiser, after all, needs to make positive claims about a product (which here includes "service" and "brand"). Evidently, the advertiser must evoke positive attitudes toward, and emotions about products (Forceville 1996, 104) – and needs to do so very quickly, given both the cost of buying advertising space in newspapers, on TV or cinema, or on internet sites, and the low attention value of ads and commercials. Metaphors are very effective instruments to achieve this goal,

evoking the intended type of associations to a product in a space usually not exceeding a page or in a time-frame of some 30 seconds.

Generally the product is the metaphor's target, which is metaphorically coupled with a source domain that has (a structured set of) precisely those prominent features that will evoke the appropriate qualities of the product – that is, those the advertiser wants to claim for it.

Often, however, it is not in the advertiser's interest to spell out these features verbally, since this may result in corny, offensive, or simplistic claims, likely to be rejected by audiences. But presenting a source in the visual and/or sonic mode cues the audience to *infer* the mappable features for itself. This is more subtle – or insidious. As Pateman aptly observes, "Advertisers get consumers to do their dirty ideological work for them, and keep their own hands clean (Pateman 1983, 200).

Case Studies

The following examples of non-verbal advertising metaphors have been selected because they show how, by their clever use of the visual modality, the advertisers get us "do their dirty ideological work for them."

1. Mazda (1992)

An old billboard (1992) for Mazda cars shows a young woman with a bruised eye. The pay-off text is "United colors of Mazda," – an intertextual reference to the controversial "United colors of Benetton" campaign of the period. The bruise has various colors, each of which is indicated verbally: lines point to the designated area of the bruised eye with the color legend: "canarian blue," "classic red," "neat green," "elegant beige," and "space yellow" – followed

by some codes. These latter name the colors in which Mazda cars can be bought. Due to the fact that the colors are visualized as the bruised areas of the woman's eye, it is difficult to avoid construing a metaphor that could be verbalized as MAZDA CAR COLOR PROGRAM IS VARIETY OF COLORS IN WOMAN'S BRUISED EYE, where what is to be mapped, presumably, is the precise hues of the woman's bruised eye onto the Mazda cars series.
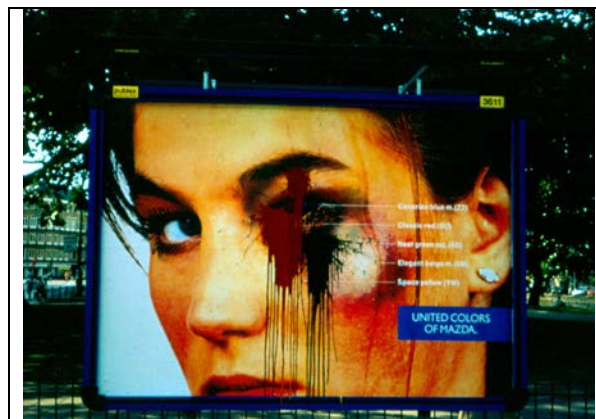

Figure 1. Billboard Mazda cars (Netherlands 1992), with paint thrown by protesters. Photograph by the author; thanks to Pieter Manders for helping to retrieve it.

At the time there was quite a lot of protest against this billboard in The Netherlands, since some people complained that it was bad manners to promote a car by showing an abused woman (figure 1 shows the billboard covered in paint thrown by a protester). What is interesting is that of course there was nothing in the billboard that warranted the conclusion that the woman was abused rather than that she had run into a door. The people objecting simply supplied information that is commensurate with, but not guaranteed by, the information in the billboard. It is probable that Mazda hoped that people would actually be angry on the basis of such inferences (a controversial Dutch Mazda commercial of the same period showed the functioning of the Mazda V6 motor as six midgets jumping quickly up and

down to the sound of a motor). The point to be made here is that the choice of modes (visual and verbal) making up the supposed metaphor creates a metaphor "scenario" (Musolff 2006) that is suggested but not explicitly communicated by Mazda. By contrast, a purely verbal variety of the metaphor, say, "Our car color program is inspired by the subtle/idiosyncratic/unusual etc. colors in an abused woman's bruised eye," or even " … in a woman's bruised eye" would have been far more explicit, sounding overtly offensive or ridiculous in a way that the multimodal metaphor deployed here is not.

2. Nivea (2010)

Figure 2. Advertisement for Nivea nail polish. Thanks to Agey Benali for alerting me to this ad.

The metaphor in the advertisement in figure 2 can be verbalized as FINGERNAIL(-TREATED-WITH-NIVEA-NAILVARNISH) IS TIN OPENER. Even without the anchoring text ("for extra strong extra long nails") we probably would have guessed that the feature to be mapped is "strength" and perhaps "sharpness" – since these are salient features of tin openers, so this would count as monomodal pictorial metaphor. While the choice of source domain cues the desired mappable features very well, some people may nonetheless have a problem with it in view of the semantic domains to which target and source belong. The metonymic link

between varnished nail and woman is uncontroversial, while opening tins is an activity primarily done in kitchens, so there is a metonymic link between tins and kitchens. The visuals in this advertisement thus forge a metonymic link between "woman" and "kitchen," which could be considered stereotype-reinforcing. (See Forceville 1996, 149-152 for another controversial gender-metaphor in an ad, aimed at adolescent boys, for a brand of motorbike.)

3 Peugeot (2007)

In this 25-second commercial, broadcast on Dutch TV, we see a car that, in slow motion, avoids hitting a number of small birds by a quick steering maneuver. The male voice-over text comments: "1 second. 25 wing-flaps of a hummingbird. Same second. 25 trajectory analyses by the sensors of the Peugeot 308. And for you: total control over the road" (my translation, ChF). At the end of the commercial there is a written pay-off, stating "Safety through control." (For a French version of the commercial, see http://www.adforum.com/creative-work/ad/player/34451361, last accessed April 2012.)

On the visual level the message appears to be that the car is technically so well-equipped that it can make a last-second swerve on the road in order not to clash with some hummingbirds in midair. That is, the presence of the birds is motivated by the "car-almost-hits-living-creature" scenario. However, the voice-over text mentions the hummingbirds in another sense, namely as the source domain of a metaphor that has the Peugeot car as its target. This is done subtly by comparing the "25 trajectory-analyses" (whatever they may be) of the car to the 25 wing flaps per second of the hummingbird. That is, we are invited to construe the pictorial metaphor PEUGEOT CAR IS HUMMINGBIRD. The mapped feature is presented verbally, and should be understood as something like the following: just as a hummingbird flaps its wing an amazing 25 times per second, so a Peugeot can do an amazing 25 trajectory analyses per second. It is to be observed that we are invited, not forced, to

construe the metaphor. In the first place the voice-over text does not use a copula to establish the relation between the car and the hummingbird. In the second place, there is a (quasi-)realistic motivation for the visual presence of the hummingbirds, so a metaphorical construal is not necessary to account for their presence.

If we accept the invitation to construe the PEUGEOT CAR IS HUMMINGBIRD metaphor, we can in our interpretation map the 25 wing flaps onto the 25 trajectory analyses of the car, with connotations such as "admirable," or "incredibly dexterous." But we need not stop here. Given the genre convention of advertising that a commercial always makes a positive claim for a product, we may well consciously or subconsciously map other features or connotations adhering to HUMMINGBIRD that we might find worthy of mapping, such as "cuteness" or "beauty," or "naturalness." It is thus possible that we end up remembering from the commercial that the car is presented as a "natural creature," perhaps environmentally friendly. To what extent such interpretations actually occur can of course only be assessed by experimental research. The points I want to make here are that (a) the hummingbirds are simultaneously part of the (quasi-)realistic scene, which "naturalizes" (Barthes 1986, 39) their presence, and constitute the source domain of a metaphor which has the car as target; (b) once we accept the metaphor, we may map yet other (positive) features and connotations on the basis of the visual qualities of the hummingbird and our knowledge of the world. These latter are *inferred* by us, at our own responsibility – after all there is nothing in either the textual or the visual modality of the commercial that makes these latter features explicit.

Figure 3a, 3b, 3c. Stills from various commercials in a Mac campaign, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5z0Ia5jDt4 [last accessed April 2012]

Personification is one of the most widespread varieties of metaphor. It has the basic pattern OBJECT IS HUMAN BEING/ANIMATE CREATURE. The series of TV commercials promoting the Mac show (always the same) two men who personify a PC and a Mac, respectively. In each commercial, this is made clear by the way they introduce themselves: "Hello, I'm a Mac … and I'm a PC." In each installment, a dialogue between the two ensues, which reveals Mac to be superior in one way or another to PC. Here is a sample of one them.

Mac: "Hello, I'm a Mac …"

PC: "… and I'm a PC."

PC: "What are you reading?"

Mac: "Just the *Wall Street Journal*"

[PC grabs paper from Mac.]

Mac: "No, no, no … PC, you know what?"

PC: "Oh, it's a review of you."

Mac: "Ddd … don't read it."

14

PC: "It's from Walt Mossberg, one of the most respected technology experts on the planet.

        … Fairly [?], you're the finest PC on the market, at *any* price.' Very nice!"

Mac: "Just one man's opinion."

PC: "I actually got a great review this morning, too …"

Mac: "Oh? Good for you."

PC: … They said I was awesome, and so, we're the same."

Mac: "Where was that in?"

PC: "The, ehm … awesome … awesome *Computer Review* …. *Weekly... Journal* …."

The verbal modality alone makes the point of Mac's superiority well enough for the commercial to work on the radio as well. The dialogue suggests that PC is impolite (grabbing the paper from Mac's hands) and unrealistic (considering the review in the *Computer Review Weekly Journal* as on a par with a review by the star technology reviewer of the *Wall Street Journal.* By contrast Mac is polite, modest ("Just the *Wall Street Journal*," "Just one man's opinion"), and embarrassed that PC might read the glowing review of Mac ("Don't read it").

But of course the visual appearance of the two men (figure 3a-3c) inevitably adds features to the personification in a way that invites further mappings. The PC man, left, in most commercials wears a suit or jacket with tie; the Mac man, right, is much more informally dressed (as an aside, it is interesting that while Mac always speaks first, it is PC who always stands on the left. It is tempting to understand this spatial orientation in terms of the "given-new" distinction proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen [2006]). Moreover, PC is Caucasian, with a conventional pair of glasses and haircut, and he is slightly overweight, while Mac is lithe and athletic, good-looking, with a more Latinate appearance; and he looks younger than PC. Clearly, it is difficult to avoid mapping these positive and negative

connotations to Mac and PC respectively, too, even though it is entirely our responsibility to infer them.

Moreover, although Mac and PC are personified, the viewer will probably also interpret them metonymically: they are the typical users of the machines – and clearly all of us had rather be a cool Mac type than a sordid has-been PC type of user.

5. Coca Cola

In the examples examined above, the recurrent theme is that pictorial and multimodal metaphors in advertising often surreptitiously invite addressees to infer meanings that would be considered unacceptable when spelled out verbally, and therefore deserve critical examination. But metaphors – in all modalities – can of course also be themselves used to make a critical comment, as Aristotle already realized: "And the source of the metaphor should be something beautiful; verbal beauty … is in the sound or in the sense, and ugliness the same" (Aristotle 1991, 225). That is, one can debase a product by turning it into a metaphorical target that is coupled with a source that evokes "ugly" connotations.

Figure 4. Found on a blog by Rob Le Pair (http://roblepair.nl/2/author/roblepair/page/3/ last accessed April 2012).

Consider figure 4, which undoubtedly suggests a metaphor. I was not able to determine its original provenance, and this allows for some important insights. If it is a non-manipulated photograph of a real object, it is not entirely clear whether we are to construe the metaphor PETROL IS COCA COLA or COCA COLA IS PETROL. If the former, the mapping triggered by the source domain Coca Cola may be the quality of the petrol; if the latter, the interpretation is presumably something like, "humans need Coca Cola just as a car needs petrol." In this case, the makers expect benevolent viewers to suppress unwanted connotations such as "bad taste." Since "taste" is such a salient feature in the target domain, the subversive "Coca Cola tastes like petrol" comes to mind fairly easily. It may thus well be that this photograph was photoshopped by somebody critical of Coca Cola. But given that a successful metaphor depends on viewers mapping the "right" feature or connotation, even if it is not manipulated, this Coca Cola promotion may be problematic for other reasons as well. Whoever is critical of consumer society's dependence on petrol may map connotations that were not envisaged or intended by the makers: humans are as dependent on Coca Cola as cars are on petrol, or even: COCA COLA DRINKERS ARE MACHINES.

This example is a reminder, then, that different (communities of) viewers may routinely activate different mappings in a metaphor, particularly in the absence of context directing them toward the "right" interpretation. The interpretation of a metaphor, as of any message, always depends on how a stimulus combines with an addressee's knowledge, beliefs, and emotions – what Sperber and Wilson call the addressee's "cognitive environment" (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 38; see also Forceville 1996, in prep.). Similarly, Max Black invoked the addressee's "system of associated complex," pointing out that the Hobbesian "Man is a wolf" would undoubtedly be interpreted completely differently by people who believe that wolves are the incarnations of dead humans (1962, 40). Formulated more generally, using metaphors is always a risky business, since addressees can always cue

unintended mappings, whether because they happen to misunderstand or because they deliberately subvert the sender's message (as Donkey does with Shrek's). For this reason, while metaphor is a trope beloved by advertisers, it is no less cherished by their critics (see e.g. Adbusters, http://www.adbusters.org/, last accessed April 2012).

Concluding remarks

In this paper I have aimed to show how an awareness of the functioning of metaphor provides an instrument for pinpointing how certain advertisements suggest debatable claims for their products, services or brands without actually making them, or to introduce or reinforce controversial assumptions in their audiences. What is crucial is that the ground for these claims resides in the visual modality. That is important, because a fundamental distinction between the verbal and the visual modality is that the former, but not the latter, has a "grammar" (*pace* Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). Only language (verbal language, that is) can make propositions, whether literal or metaphorical ones. Because of this property of language, verbal metaphors, particularly if they are given in the ready-made A is B format, can be questioned – as happens in the dialogue between Shrek and Donkey about "Ogres are like onions." By contrast, visuals can only have *structure*, in the sense of certain clusters or configurations of items; the interpretation of the relations between these items is in turn to a considerable extent governed by genre conventions. And that structure can be such that the visuals, alone or in combination with other modalities, make sense only or primarily as part of a metaphor or metonymy, while their makers could simply deny that a metaphor was intended.

Furthermore, from a critical perspective, the model for analyzing pictorial and multimodal metaphors presented in this chapter can be used to investigate patterns that may manifest ideological meanings. Given that any patterns in pictorial and multimodal metaphor use are revealing in how advertisers channel our perception of the world, questions such as the following are worth researching more systematically in corpus research:

- given a certain source domain (e.g, ART, MAGIC, TREE, FURRED ANIMAL, PETROL PUMPS …), with what different target domains is it linked (Kövecses 2010 calls this the "scope" of a metaphor)?;

- conversely, given a certain target (here: product category), with what different source domains is it linked (Kövecses 2010: the "range" of metaphor; see Forceville 2000, Koller 2009, Van Mulken et al 2010, Bounegru and Forceville 2011)?

- what presumably intended metaphorical mappings are cued in non-verbal modalities, and does this choice of modality downplay possibly controversial mappings?

Conducting such corpus research into the choice of metaphorical source domain in advertising directed at different audiences (men versus women, young people versus old people, blue collar versus white collar workers, Westerners versus Easterners …) could feed into research on stereotyping (see also Tseng and Bateman, this volume).

Finally, the model for analyzing pictorial and multimodal metaphors offered in this chapter constitutes an exhortation to examine which other classic tropes can be used non-verbally to create meaning. In as much as critically analyzing multimodal discourse depends on laying bare implicit meanings, developing an analytical framework for understanding certain visual and multimodal phenomena as manifestations of tropes such as oxymoron, pictorial grouping, metonymy, puns (see e.g., Abed 1994, Teng and Sun 2002, Teng 2009; Forceville 2009) will be a powerful tool for researchers hoping to unveil ideologically dubious patterns in all areas of multimodal discourse. This holds more specifically for

discourses pertaining to persuasive communication (advertising, cartoons, propaganda, documentaries, corporate websites, etc.).

References

Abed, Farough. 1994. "Visual Puns as Interactive Illustrations: Their Effects on Recognition Memory." *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 9: 45-60.

Aristotle 1991 [4th c. BC]. *On Rhetoric*. Translated and edited by George A. Kennedy. New York: Oxford University Press.

Barthes, Roland. 1986 [1964]. "Rhetoric of the Image." In *The Responsibility of Forms*, 21-40. Translated by Richard Howard. Oxford: Blackwell.

Black, Max. 1962. "Metaphor." In *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, 25-47. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.

Black, Max. 1979. "More about Metaphor." In *Metaphor and Thought*, edited by Andrew Ortony, 19-43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bounegru, Liliana, and Charles Forceville. 2011. "Metaphors in Editorial Cartoons Representing the Global Financial Crisis." *Visual Communication* 10: 209-229.

Carroll, Noel. 1996. "A Note on Film Metaphor." In *Theorizing the Moving Image*, 212-223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cienki, Alan, and Cornelia Müller, eds. 2008. *Metaphor and Gesture.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Elleström, Lars, ed. 2010. *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Forceville Charles. 1996. *Pictorial Metaphor in Advertising*. London: Routledge.

Forceville, Charles. 2000. "Compasses, Beauty Queens and Other PCs: Pictorial Metaphors in Computer Advertisements." *Hermes, Journal of Linguistics* 24: 31-55.

Forceville, Charles. 2006. "Non-verbal and Multimodal Metaphor in a Cognitivist Framework: Agendas for Research." In *Cognitive Linguistics: Current Applications and Future Perspectives*, edited by Gitte Kristiansen, Michel Achard, René Dirven, and Francisco Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, 379-402. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Forceville, Charles. 2007. "Multimodal Metaphor in Ten Dutch TV Commercials." *Public Journal of Semiotics* 1: 19-51. http://semiotics.ca/

Forceville, Charles. 2008. "Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphor in Commercials." In *Go Figure! New Directions in Advertising Rhetoric*, edited by Edward F. McQuarrie and Barbara J. Phillips, 272-310. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe.

Forceville, Charles. 2009. "Metonymy in Visual and Audiovisual Discourse." In *The World Told and the World Shown: Issues in Multisemiotics*, edited by Eija Ventola and Arsenio Jesus Moya-Guijarro, 56-74. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Forceville, Charles. in prep. "Relevance Theory as Model for Pictorial and Multimodal Communication." In *Visual Communication*, edited by David Machin. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Forceville, Charles, and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, eds. 2009. *Multimodal Metaphor.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Gibbs, Raymond W., Jr. ed. 2008. *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gibbs, Raymond W., Jr., and Gerard J. Steen, eds. 1999. *Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Jewitt, Carey, ed. 2009. *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Koller, Veronika. 2009. "Brand Images: Multimodal Metaphor in Corporate Branding Messages." In *Multimodal Metaphor*, edited by Charles Forceville and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, 45-71. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Kövecses, Zoltán. 2005. *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kövecses, Zoltán. 2010. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kress, Gunther. 2010. *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. 2001. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*. London: Arnold.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. 2006. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Turner. 1989. *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mittelberg, Irene, and Linda R. Waugh. 2009. "Metonymy First, Metaphor Second: A Cognitive-semiotic Approach to Multimodal Figures of Thought in Co-speech Gesture." In *Multimodal Metaphor*, edited by Charles Forceville and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, 329-356. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Mulken, Margot van, Rob le Pair, and Charles Forceville. 2010. "The Impact of Perceived Complexity, Deviation and Comprehension on the Appreciation of Visual Metaphor in Advertising Across Three European Countries." *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 3418-3430.

Müller, Cornelia. 2008. *Metaphors Dead and Alive, Sleeping and Waking: A Dynamic View*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Musolff, Andreas. 2006. "Metaphor Scenarios in Public Discourse." *Metaphor and Symbol* 21: 23-38.

Ortony, Andrew, ed. 1979. *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pateman, Trevor. 1983. "How is Understanding an Advertisement Possible?" In *Language, Image, Media*, edited by Howard Davis and Paul Walton, 187-204. Oxford: Blackwell.

Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson. 1995. *Relevance Theory: Communication and Cognition* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Teng, Norman Y. 2009. "Image Alignment in Multimodal Metaphor." In *Multimodal Metaphor*, edited by Charles Forceville and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi, 197-211. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Teng, Norman Y., and Sewen Sun. 2002. "Grouping, Simile, and Oxymoron in Pictures: A Design-based Cognitive Approach." *Metaphor and Symbol* 17: 295-316.

Whittock, Trevor. 1990. *Metaphor and Film*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.