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Chapter 4. Metonymy in Visual and Audiovisual Discourse.

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1. Introduction

In this chapter I propose to discuss pictorial and multimodal equivalents of what in Cognitive Linguistics (CL) is called ‘metonymy’. CL has long focused almost exclusively on metaphor, defined as ‘understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another’ (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p. 5) as the trope that sheds most light on how cognition works, since CL holds that human beings systematically understand abstract concepts metaphorically in terms of concrete phenomena. In the past decade, metonymy has gradually begun to attract sustained attention in CL scholarship as the trope that, on a par with metaphoricity, rules human cognition. The generally accepted difference between the two is that the two things combined in metaphor belong to different conceptual domains (e.g., ‘love is a battlefield’), while those in metonymy belong to the same conceptual domain (e.g., ‘count noses’). In short, in metaphor we get A-as-B; in metonymy B-for-A. But, as in metaphor research, the predominant focus in recent studies (Barcelona, 2000; Dirven and Pörrings, 2002) is on *linguistic* manifestations of metonymic thinking alone. However, it is important that claims about human thinking are not exclusively made on the basis of verbal expressions. Building on work pertaining to pictorial metaphor (Forceville, 1988, 1996, 2005a, 2007a, 2007b; Forceville and Urios-Aparisi, forthcoming; Whittock, 1990; Carroll 1994, 1996), Teng and Sun (2002), for instance, present proposals for the conceptualisation of pictorial oxymoron and pictorial grouping (see also Teng, 2006; Kennedy, 1982). The analyses offered here will

both help evaluate CL claims about metonymy and provide insights into regularities of multimodal discourse. My goal is to identify certain phenomena occurring in discourses that are not (exclusively) verbal, and propose to analyse these as metonyms. I will do so by first outlining CL views on metonymy, and then discussing salient metonyms in two advertising campaigns and two feature films. As a general background, I will assume that a communicator always has a *reason* to use a metonym, and to use one metonym rather than another. This is commensurate with Sperber and Wilson's (1995) claim that any act of communication is presumed, by its audience, to be optimised in terms of relevance; with Clark's view of discourse as a 'joint activity', in which, crucially, 'the knowledge, beliefs, and suppositions [the participants] believe they share about the activity' accumulate incrementally (Clark, 1996, p. 38); with Tomasello's insistence that it is the 'joint attentional frame' between speaker and listener 'which sets the context for the reading of the specific communicative intentions behind a word or utterance' (Tomasello, 2003, p. 89); and with Gibbs' idea that 'the recovery of communicative intentions is an essential part of the cognitive processes that operate when we understand human action of any sort' (Gibbs, 1999, p. 4-5).

2. Metonymy in CL

Metonymy 'allows us to use one entity to *stand for* another' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 36). Probably the best-known variant of metonymy is synecdoche, in which a part stands for the whole ('he is a *brain*'). Other types of metonymy include producer for product, object for user, controller for controlled, institution for people responsible, the place for the institution, the place for the event (Ibid., p. 38-39). Like metaphor, metonymy thus pertains to a relation between two phenomena, but whereas in metaphor the relation straddles what in the given context are to be understood as two different domains, a metonymy 'involves only one

conceptual domain, in that the mapping or connection between two things is within the same domain' (Gibbs, 1994, p. 322). Similar definitions can be found in Taylor (2002, p. 325), Kövecses (2002, p.14), and in Wales (2001, p. 252). Another aspect of metonymy needs to be emphasized: a communicator's choice to use a specific metonym (the source concept) rather than the entity to which it metonymically refers (the target concept) always implies some change in salience or viewpoint:

Metaphor and metonymy do not only involve a mapping of a conceptual network from a source domain onto a target domain, as claimed by cognitive approaches, but also involve a shift in perspective which makes possible the mapping from the one domain to the other by selecting suitable aspects of the source network, and also the source domain, which can be satisfied on the target domain (Bartsch 2002, p. 50-51).

Warren draws attention to this phenomenon when she claims that 'the essence of metonymy is highlighting' (2002, p. 123), a statement she later specifies when pointing out that in metonymy 'the source expression ... forms together with the connector [i.e., shared property] a predication restricting the reference of the target' (Ibid., p. 126). Such channelling of meaning in the direction envisaged by the producer of a metonym, in turn, can only be achieved given a shared 'body of knowledge and belief encapsulated in an appropriate frame' (Taylor, 2002, p. 324-25; see also Gibbs, 1994, p. 339). Finally, Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco propose to distinguish between target-in-source metonyms, in which a superordinate domain (the 'matrix domain') stands for a subdomain (e.g., 'pill' for 'contraceptive pill'); and source-in-target metonyms, in which a subdomain stands for a matrix domain (e.g., 'hands' for 'sailors' in 'all *hands* on deck'). They propose to discuss the former in terms of 'domain reduction' and the latter in terms of 'domain expansion' (Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco, 2002, p. 495-99). On the basis of this very brief survey of CL views on verbal metonymy, let

me provide the following characteristics of metonymy, phrasing them in such a way as to be applicable to non-verbal and multimodal specimens:

1. A metonym consists of a source concept/structure, which via a cue in a communicative mode (language, visuals, music, sound, gesture ...) allows the metonym's addressee to infer the target concept/structure.
2. Source and target are, in the given context, part of the same conceptual domain.
3. The choice of metonymic source makes salient one or more aspects of the target that otherwise would not, or not as clearly, have been noticeable, and thereby makes accessible the target *under a specific perspective*. The highlighted aspect often has an evaluative dimension.

Before turning to real-life pictorial and multimodal specimens of metonymy, let us imagine some non-verbal variations on the endlessly cited 'The *ham sandwich* is waiting for his check' ([Lakoff and Johnson \(1980, p. 35\)](#)), as uttered by a waitress, Zoe, to alert a colleague, Luella, that a certain customer, wants to pay for his ham sandwich. Zoe's decision to use a metonym (here: of the source-in-target variety) can be explained by the relevance theory principle of least effort to achieve the desired communicative effect: 'the ham sandwich' takes less effort to process than 'the person who ordered the ham sandwich' (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 123ff.). The fact that the effort-saving is minimal does not invalidate the principle – and if Zoe and Luella communicate all day long in a busy snack bar, they save a lot of effort using such metonyms. The aspect made salient by this metonym is that the customer is considered in his capacity of paying consumer (PRODUCT for CONSUMER OF PRODUCT).

Now imagine that the customer is a scruffy, semi-drunk beggar who has a little mouth organ on which, to Zoe and Luella's chagrin, he never stops playing *Frère Jacques*. After the

man has signalled he wants his check, Zoe, instead of saying ‘the ham sandwich wants his check’ might also whistle ‘♪♪♪ wants his check’ to Luella. In the given situation, the four first notes of *Frère Jacques* uniquely refer to the pertinent customer, and thus is a perfectly appropriate metonym for ‘the man who ordered the ham sandwich.’ Apart from designating the customer, the metonym also evokes certain connotations. For instance, Zoe may thus convey that they will at last be rid of the annoying man. Or she may want to impress Luella by showing what an original metonym she has invented for the customer. In relevance-theoretical terms, Zoe does what all communicators do: optimise the effect-effort balance. Not only does she get across efficiently to Luella that the customer wants his check – the main ‘explicature’ of the message ([Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 182](#)) – she also hints at something more, say, ‘good riddance!’ or ‘Am I not funny?’ – a weak implicature (Ibid., p. 197 *et passim*). Zoe could of course choose yet other non-verbal metonyms: she could make sure that Luella looks at her and then silently mimic the customer playing his mouth-organ and add ‘wants his check’. Opting for this latter might allow her to warn Luella without alerting the customer by making the gesture with her back turned to him. Again, in the given context the gesture uniquely denotes the customer by means of a metonym that could be phrased GESTURE for PERSON PERFORMING THE GESTURE, while highlighting, in Zoe’s grimacing, her negative evaluation of the man’s behavior. In both cases, the chosen metonyms thus achieve an effect that differs from the effect resulting from deploying another metonym – or none at all. We are now ready to consider, in sections 3 and 4, some real-life case-studies.

3. Metonymy in Advertising Billboards: Two Case Studies

Advertisements sketch a problem, need, or desire that prospective customers may have for which the product or service advertised provides the solution or fulfilment. In line with this,

an advertisement always makes a positive claim for the product or service promoted. These genre conventions are part and parcel of the background knowledge governing the interpretation of advertising messages ([Forceville, 1996, p. 104](#)). Against this background, it will be argued, the two series of advertising billboards, *Interpolis* and *ABN-Amro*, make salient use of metonymy in a manner that is not, or not exclusively, verbal.

3.1 *Interpolis*

The series of billboards (Holland, summer of 2006) promotes an insurance company. The text ‘Daarom, mannetjes die helpen bij vakantiepech’ can be translated as, ‘Therefore, chaps that help out with holiday misfortunes’. The pay-off, ‘Interpolis, glashelder’, translates as ‘Interpolis, crystal clear’. The billboard series, including the phrase ‘Therefore, chaps ...’ and the pay-off, tie in with a simultaneously broadcast TV commercial campaign. The recurrent implication of its various instalments was that Interpolis has a ‘crystal clear’ policy to help out clients, and that they do so quickly and without endless bureaucracy.

In one billboard (Illustration 4.1), a car has collided with a slightly out-of-kilter tower. Though there is the humorous suggestion that it was the collision that caused the tower to be unhinged, more important is that we recognize the tower as the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy. Because of its fame as a tourist attraction, the Pisa tower is a metonym for Pisa-as-holiday-destination; even for Italy-as-holiday-destination – and in light of the entire campaign, we could even say that it stands for holiday destination *tout court*.



Illustration 4.1 Billboard for Interpolis insurances, photographed in Haarlem, Holland, summer 2006; original in color.

Let us briefly ponder the criteria that the producer of the billboard, looking for an appropriate metonym, had to take into account – in a manner similar to the metonym Zoe had to decide on. Given the right context, there are many entities that can serve as metonymic sources for Italy: Catholic priests, the mafia, Latin lovers, pasta, etc. ([Casillo, 1985](#)). But here the producer needed a metonym that (a) is clearly depictable and uniquely identifiable; (b) shows something that can be damaged in a way covered by a good insurance; (c) evokes the connotation of ‘holiday’. There may be more constraints: the billboard occurs as part of a series, and the series should be recognizable as such. It is clear that the metonym’s source domain each time is a *building*: two other billboards show a car crashing into Paris’ Eiffel Tower and London’s Big Ben, respectively.

What makes this visual metonym in Illustration 4.1 an attractive advertising strategy? In the first place, the *visuals* of the building evoke the crash scenario in a more humorous manner than a verbal equivalent could do. Surely, ‘should you collide with the Leaning Tower of Pisa on your holidays, there are Interpolis chaps who take care of the damage’ is

less funny. Moreover, the scenario evoked by such a line would seem less plausible than the pictorial version under scrutiny. This also has to do with the image's cartoon style, activating innumerable experiences on the audience's part of improbable scenarios in comics and animation films. Another reason for the greater acceptability of the visual metonym vis-à-vis a verbal rendering may be the greater implicitness that inheres in visual than in verbal communication ([Forceville, 1996, p. 102](#)). The simplicity of the drawing could moreover be seen as echoing the 'crystal clear' of the pay-off. Finally, the metonym requires the viewer to solve a little puzzle (how is the picture the problem to which 'Therefore ...' is the solution?), which may enhance audience involvement.

3.2. ABN-Amro

The second example is part of a series of ads for the (formerly Dutch) ABN-Amro bank. Specimens of the ad appeared both in magazines and as billboards, for instance at Schiphol airport. The ad (Illustration 4.2) features a sheep, and the phrase 'haute couture', as well as the payoff-line 'making things possible' and the bank's name and logo.



Illustration 4.2: Billboard for ABN-Amro, photographed at Schiphol airport, Holland, 2006, original in color.

From these ingredients we have to construe a plausible scenario. Background knowledge supposedly possessed by people that have a reason to be at Schiphol, and/or readers of the kind of magazine in which the ad was published supplies the awareness that banks lend money to entrepreneurs, thereby ‘making things possible’. One line of business is creating ‘haute couture’. But what link is there between ‘haute couture’ and the sheep? I propose that this link is of a metonymic nature: the wool of the sheep is the fabric (or one of the fabrics) from which *haute couture* clothing is made. The sheep, then, is in a synecdochic relationship with the end product. The metonym has been advisedly chosen: the sheep’s wool is at the *basis* of the *haute couture* to be created, and wool is moreover a *natural* fabric. Without the material source from which clothes are made, there will by definition be no clothes at the end of the production process. The notion of basis or origin is no coincidental choice: another ad/billboard from the campaign shows a grape, with the accompanying text ‘grand cru’; a third displays a sprouting acorn with the text ‘forest’; and a fourth shows a brick and the text ‘skyscraper’. So, just as in the Interpolis campaign, the various metonymic sources chosen

display a single concept, here that of ‘being-at-the-origin’. The metonym is thus ORIGIN for END PRODUCT.

When comparing the two ads, one notable difference between the Interpolis and the ABN-Amro series is that in the former the metonym is conveyed in purely pictorial terms. That is, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Eiffel tower, and the Big Ben all serve as metonyms for the respective cities in which these buildings stand, a function the visuals would retain in most other contexts. This is so because these metonyms have acquired symbolic status. By contrast, the pictorial parts in the ABN-Amro series only assume metonymic status because of the link to the textual parts. In different contexts, the sheep, the grape, the acorn and the brick would not be metonyms for ‘haute couture’ ‘grand cru’, ‘forest’, and ‘skyscraper’, respectively, since the former are not symbols for the latter. A distinction must be made, then, between pictorial metonyms that can be identified *sui generis* and metonyms that can be identified as such only thanks to additional information provided in the text.

A related difference between the two campaigns is that in the Interpolis campaign, the metonym is purely visual; in the ABN-Amro campaign it draws on a combination of visuals and language. That is, in the latter *both* source and target are given – but in different modes. The puzzle to be solved here is figuring out *that* and *how* the pictorial part functions as a metonym for the verbal part. Analogous to the distinction proposed for metaphors ([Forceville, 2005a](#), [2006a](#), [2007b](#), 2008), the former type of metonym could be labelled monomodal, the latter multimodal. More specifically, the latter would be a ‘multimodal metonym of the verbo-pictorial variety’.

In print and billboard advertising, the pertinent modes are restricted to the pictorial and the verbal, although it is thinkable that gestures can play a role as well (e.g., Cienki, 1998; McNeill, 2005; [Müller, 2008](#)). But, as will be discussed in section 4, in moving images other modes, such as non-verbal sound and music, can also function in metonyms.

4. Metonymy in Art Film: Two Case Studies

In the medium of film, less-than-total representation of an object or human creature is standard practice. Trivially, we could say that *any* filmic depiction of a referent that exists in the ‘real’ world is a metonymic representation of that referent, if only because film involves a reduction from three to two dimensions. But in order to preserve metonymy as a concept with explanatory value, I will assume that it is possible to cinematically represent an object or creature or event both *in toto* and metonymically.

In cinematography, there is a limited number of standard framings to represent something less-than-totally: extreme close-up, close-up, medium close-up, medium shot, medium long shot (or *plan américain*). The two other conventional framings are the long shot and the extreme long shot, but since in these latter the pertinent human bodies are depicted in their entirety (namely: from a long and very long distance, respectively), these are here not considered as metonyms. Significantly, to explain the various framings, the authors of a canonical film analysis text book announce, ‘we’ll use the standard measure: the human body’ (Bordwell and Thompson, 2008, p. 191). Framings of other objects are labelled in analogy to those pertaining to the human body.

Since medium-close up, medium shot, and *plan américain* have become standard ways of portraying the human body, for present purposes the (extreme) close-up is of greatest interest, since it allows for most freedom. The most common cinematic close-up is that of the human face. This preference for the human face makes sense: it is a better signaller of identity and emotion than any other body part, and therefore very suitable for depicting people who are talking and for ‘reaction shots’ – shots that show the facial expression of a person responding to emotional events in the scene. In addition, it is usually informative for the viewer to be able to correlate a face with a voice via lip-sync depiction, since this helps to assess who is speaking.

But apart from a facial close-up, there are other, relatively standard ways of a cinematic synecdoche: hands, too, are privileged parts of the human body, and thus may be seen as deserving a close-up. One reason for this is that, because of the flexibility of wrists and fingers, hands are capable of many more actions than other body parts. It is no coincidence, for instance, that sign languages draw primarily on hand gestures and that parts of the hand are often used figuratively in linguistic expressions ([see Yu, 2000](#)). Moreover, hand and arm positions are important for the recognition of emotional states ([Forceville, 2005b](#); [McCloud, 2006](#), p. 112-113). Legs, though capable of a far less wide range of actions than hands, qualify for cinematic close-ups as well, since they typically convey the act of moving – and a character's movement to or from a certain place is often of great narrative import ([Forceville, 2006b](#); [Forceville and Jeulink, 2007](#); [Johnson, 2007](#)). Thus, when in a film scene a character appears whose identity is for narrative purposes not (yet) to be revealed, clearly that person's face should be hidden. One way to disguise the character's identity is to film other body parts. These can be legs or feet, for instance if it needs to be stressed that the character moves in forbidden territory, such as a burglar or a spy; or hands, for instance if the character is shown to perform some secret or illegal action such as stealing or manipulating an object, or stabbing or shooting someone.

Hitherto, cinematic metonyms have been discussed in terms of framing. However, in the post-silent film era, a target referent can be cued by a sound as well. If a sound occurs without concomitant visual depiction of the phenomenon in the story world from which it emanates, this is called 'off-screen diegetic sound' ([Bordwell and Thompson, 2008](#), p. 278-79). By and large, a clearly recognizable off-screen diegetic sound alerts the audience (and often a character in the story as well) to what happens in the story-world outside the place framed by the camera. Many such sounds have become standard metonyms for non-visualized events: the sound of a closing door indicates someone has just entered or left the room; creaking floor boards suggest there is an (unwelcome) visitor in the house, etc. There

can be good narrative reasons to opt for a sonic metonym: a filmmaker may want to show visually a character's response to the sound (i.e., in a reaction shot) simultaneous with that sound: anxiety or happiness at hearing the closing door; fear or excitement at hearing the creaking floorboards. But sounds can also be efficient ways of suggesting something going on elsewhere simultaneously with what is being shown onscreen. And inasmuch as the audience has to infer the pertinent events from the sonic metonyms, these latter can be regarded as attractive little puzzles for the audience to solve.

Once a sound or musical theme has been associated with an idea, event or character (as in the *Frère Jacques* example discussed in section 2), that sound or tune can be used as a metonym for the idea, event or character. For instance, in Fellini's *Casanova* (Italy 1976) the metonymic power of the music box theme that comes to be associated with the eponymous hero resides in its ability to invoke Casanova, even when not visibly present.

I will now turn to the two cinematic case studies, in which certain phenomena will be discussed in terms of metonymy, bearing in mind the observations and considerations provided above with reference to the medium of film.

4.1. *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (Carl Dreyer, France 1928, b/w)

Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc*, one of the classics from the silent film era, tells the story of the church's trial of Joan of Arc, who is accused of blasphemy on account of her declaration that God has instructed her how to save France. She resists all pressure to retract this claim, and is eventually martyred at the stake. The film is characterized by a large quantity of facial close-ups. Such standard close-ups show the person talking (the speech's contents are rendered via intertitles or have to be inferred from narrative context) or constitute reaction shots, registering the mood or emotion in which events are absorbed: anger, derision, pity, fear, exaltation, etc. However, there are a number of more unusual close-ups or extreme close-ups

– here considered as visual metonyms – that in view of their function deserve separate consideration.

There are several extreme close-ups of a priest's mouth, talking (Illustration 4.3). Here we have the metonym MOUTH for (TALKING) PERSON. It is relevant that language is associated with the Church in the film: Joan is often silent – and moreover illiterate. Thus, the metonyms of the extreme close-up of mouths emphasize the decontextualized, depersonalised 'formality' of church laws; the letter of the law as opposed to its spirit. This metonymic framing makes salient how Joan, and the audience with her, experiences the priest's words. Another close-up, occurring twice, is that of Joan's chained legs. The metonym (CHAINED) LEGS for JOAN-ON-TRIAL highlights that Joan, arrested, is fully at the mercy of the Church, which has complete control over her, at least over her body.



Illustration 4.3 Extreme close-up of priest mouth's shouting in Joan's ear (film still from *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, Carl Dreyer, France © 1928 GAUMONT)

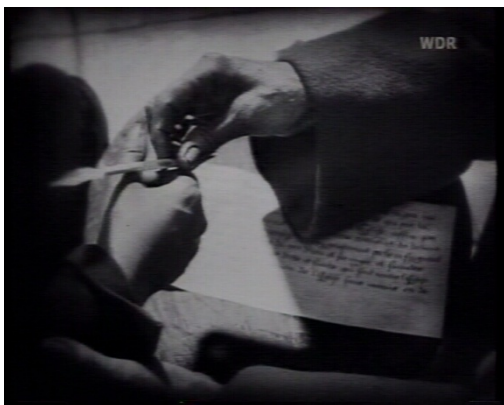


Illustration 4.4 A priest puts a pen in Joan's hand, urging her to sign a declaration she recants (film still from *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, Carl Dreyer, France © 1928 GAUMONT)

A third recurring close-up is that of a hand holding a pen, or writing. In one case, this is a monk writing down what is said during the trial, a metonym that, again, emphasizes the idea of the letter-of-the-law. Several other times, the close-up of a pen-holding hand is shown at moments when the judges try to pressurize Joan into signing a document testifying that she recants from her ‘blasphemy’ (Illustration 4.4). A close-up of hands features in another shot, namely when the presiding priest, confronted with a protest by Joan that a certain question is beside the point, turns to his fellow priests and asks them to indicate who supports his conviction that it *is* relevant. The row of metonymic hands here not only demonstrate the priests’ agreement; it also indicates the conformity of a de-individualized group to church policy. Other shots show soldiers’ hands putting a ‘crown’ on Joan’s head and giving her a ‘sceptre’ in a mockery of Christ’s passion; and a priest’s hand temptingly holding up the host for Joan, who fervently wants to go to mass, but is not allowed because she shows no remorse. In all these examples, because of the hostile actions they display toward Joan, the hands acquire negative connotations.

A series of metonymic close-ups that do not pertain to the human body are of torture instruments, after Joan is taken into the torture chamber, and later of the stake where she will be burnt. These are shots from Joan’s point-of-view, here suggesting that in her panic and fear she focuses on the gruesome, painful details.

4.2. *Un Condamné à Mort s’est Echappé/A Man Escaped* (Robert Bresson, France 1956, black and white)

Bresson’s sober film tells the story of a French resistance fighter, Fontaine, who is arrested and imprisoned by the Nazis during World War II. He has only one goal: to escape. Besides facial close-ups, hands again provide salient metonyms: handcuffed; reaching for a car door

handle (Illustration 4.5); writing a letter; hiding a letter. But above all, Fontaine's hands metonymically reveal activities that are to aid his escape from prison: using a pin to open his handcuffs (Illustration 4.6), sharpening a spoon into a chisel, whittling away at the wooden prison door, making a rope of clothes and bed springs, bending a piece of iron into a hook, etc. In the latter cases, the metonym could be labelled HANDS for ESCAPE-PLANNING FONTAINE. Occasionally the close-ups are of German soldiers' hands – waking up Fontaine, putting food in his cell, picking up a stick to beat up a prisoner. Here the metonym is HANDS for PRISONER-GUARDING NAZIS. Contrasting these series of HAND metonyms highlights their different valuations: in the case of Fontaine, the hands make salient Fontaine's urge to *do* something, and his inventiveness; in the case of the Nazis they emphasize their anonymity, their belonging – as in the case of the priests in *Jeanne D'Arc* – to a suppressive organization.



Illustration 4.5. Fontaine fiddles the car door handle, considering escape (film still from *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Échappé*, Robert Bresson, France © 1956 GAUMONT/NOUVELLES ÉDITIONS DE FILMS)



Illustration 4.6. Fontaine opens his handcuffs with a pin (film still from *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Échappé*, Robert Bresson, France © 1956 GAUMONT/ NOUVELLES ÉDITIONS DE FILMS)

But Bresson's film also draws strongly on the metonymic role of sound. Fontaine (and the film audience with him) hears clocks striking the hour, school children's distant chatter, the bells of trams passing outside the prison walls, machine gun shots indicating another execution, the moaning of a fellow prisoner being beaten up, the knocking from a neighboring cell to establish contact, the turning of a key to open or lock a cell, the guards' whistle to regiment prisoners' walking down the corridor, the sound of a passing train that allows Fontaine and Jost, his fellow escapee, to cover up their own noise when walking on gravel, the pacing of a guard, the creaky sound of another guard's bicycle Both the pictorial and the sonic metonyms are used in a highly functional manner: they all refer to objects or events that have a direct bearing on Fontaine's imprisonment and his plan to escape (for more discussion of both films, see Bordwell and Thompson, 2008).

5. Discussion

I will now reconsider the case studies in light of the criteria for metonymy formulated in section 2.

1. *A metonym consists of a source concept/structure, which via a cue in a certain mode (language, visuals, music, sound, gesture ...) allows the metonym's addressee to infer the target referent.* This is borne out by all of the examples discussed. There are also differences: in the Interpolis case, the metonym's target must be inferred from extra-textual knowledge, whereas in the ABN-Amro campaign both source and target are provided within the text (if either of them had been omitted, there would have been no metonym). What is unusual in the latter campaign is that the metonyms are multimodal. Note that in the films a referent that is at one stage cued metonymically may at a later or earlier stage be conveyed in its entirety. The sonic metonyms in *Un Condamné à Mort* sometimes do reveal, at some stage or other, the visual target to which they refer (clinking keys, ringing tram bells, cranking

bicycle, a guard's footsteps), and sometimes they do not (we never see the chatting children, the clock striking the hours, the train). But at a given moment, each of these sounds functions metonymically.

2. Source and target are, in the given context, part of the same conceptual domain.

The examples discussed fulfil this criterion – indeed, that is why they were chosen in the first place, since it is a defining criterion for metonymy. What may require some discussion is the qualification ‘in the given context’. ‘Domain’, after all, is a concept with fuzzy borders. I propose that in each case in which there is a contiguous relationship between two entities, there is the potential to exploit this relationship metonymically. But while in many cases the target of a metonym is inferable in conventional fashion from its source, as in the case of a character's body being inferable from any of its body parts, the metonymic relation is not always as predictable. Often, understanding the context is crucial for construing the metonymic relationship. Without the narrative context of *Un Condamné à Mort*, we might not recognize the target referents of some of the sonic metonyms (like Fontaine and Jost we cannot at first figure out what the cranking sound is they hear during their escape, until it is revealed to be the guard's bicycle). Moreover, the metonymic target may not be a simplex concept: A single metonymic source can be used to refer to more than one metonymic target within a single text (Brdar-Szabó and Brdar, 2007; Xianglan, 2007). The close-up of Joan's pen-holding hand obviously refers metonymically to Joan, but no less to writing, and signing. That is, a metonymic source may cue a target that, in a given context, is difficult to label precisely; and/or cue more than one target referent simultaneously.

3. The use of the metonymic source makes salient, perspectivizes, and/or evaluates one or more aspects of the target. Bartsch' (2002) point is supported by the cases examined here. In the Interpolis campaign, the chain of metonyms that can be summed up as BUILDING for HOLIDAY DESTINATION highlights the notion of something you can crash into, as opposed to other possible holiday misfortunes that can befall you, such as getting ill, robbed, flooded,

or earthquaked. The metonymic sources in the ABN-Amro series systematically underline what is at the base, or origin, of the targets. The metonymic close-ups of faces in the two films in standard fashion focus on the (lack of) emotion of people speaking or responding to events, but the more unusual metonyms of body parts favor different connotations: Joan's chained legs stress her status as prisoner, while the close-ups of hands, particularly those where HANDS stand for WRITING, make salient the power of the Church. In the context of the entire film, the metonymic chain goes further: WRITING is in turn a metonym for the CHURCH'S LEGALISTIC AND SUPPRESSIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH, to be contrasted with Joan's deeply devout belief in God (her illiterateness is telling). In Bresson's film, Fontaine's hands connote his escape-planning activities; those of the German's connote their anonymous power. The metonymic sounds in *Un Condamné à Mort*, too, are important for their evaluative dimensions: almost all of them either refer to phenomena that either aid or impede Fontaine's escape. The metonyms in the two films thus carry much narrative weight. What is highlighted is the protagonist's and audience's experience of the metonymic targets through the choice of metonymic sources – and all these entail hope and fear.

6. Conclusions

Finally, I propose the following general claims for further critical scrutiny and detailed analysis in both monomodal and multimodal discourse:

1. *Studying non-verbal and multimodal metonyms (and other tropes) helps illuminate their dynamic and highly contextualized character more than studying purely verbal specimens.* Having to make verbally explicit (for scholarly purposes such as writing the present chapter) non-verbal or multimodal tropes exposes the artificial character of this activity more than having to make verbally explicit metonyms that originally already were of a verbal nature. While the metaphoric A IS B and the metonymic B FOR A are convenient

shorthand descriptions, we should never forget that they are ‘impoverished’ formulas requiring ‘enrichment’ ([Sperber and Wilson, 1995](#), p. 174 *et passim*) before it can be assessed how these tropes function in context. Müller and Cienki’s (forthcoming) warning about metaphors that ‘the formula of TARGET IS SOURCE problematically reifies the two domains as static entities’ is no less pertinent to metonyms (see also Forceville, 2006a; Brdar-Szabó and Brdar, 2007). Any interpretation of a metaphor or metonym boils down to considering which *predicates* and/or *evaluations* cued or evoked by the source are mappable to the target, and the dry TARGET IS SOURCE (in a metaphor) or SOURCE FOR TARGET (in a metonym) by its very form does not encourage such considerations. A related dimension that runs the risk of being underestimated is that metonyms, like metaphors, can have a very short-lived, ephemeral effect on the discourses in which they occur, or by contrast exemplify elements that are profoundly constitutive of these discourses’ meaning. A third dynamic aspect of metonymy that may get short shrift because of the B FOR A formula is the audience’s conditions of access. Somebody who has seen more than one billboard in the two series discussed, or has seen the entire films discussed, may interpret the metonyms more richly than somebody who has seen only one billboard, or only fragments of the films (cf. [Gibbs, 1993](#)).

2. *The stylistic form in which a metonym occurs affects its construal and interpretation.* Aspects of the specific *form* of the metonymic source can add to, or intensify the connotations made salient in the target. The cartoon character of the buildings in the Interpolis campaign contributes to the idea that we should perhaps take the scenario of the car crashing into a famous building with a pinch of salt. The brick chosen for the ‘skyscraper’ is of a solid, old-fashioned kind, which may be a connotation transferred to the to-be-built skyscraper. The metonymic close-ups in the two black and white French films discussed here are sober, but one could imagine that in other films choices in terms of coloring or (distorting) lenses, add relevant aspects to the metonymic source – and via mapping to its target. The same holds for metonymic sounds, such as those in *Un Condamné à Mort*.

Loudness, timbre, and pitch of sounds can all play a role in activating connotations that are attributable to the target. A second dimension of form relates to how a consistent style can turn a metonym into a motif. In all four cases discussed here, the metonyms have been advisedly chosen, not just for the content they make accessible, but also to create consistency across different billboards within an advertising campaign and across scenes in a film, respectively. Indeed, this argument works two ways: only because more than one instance of the ‘same’ metonym is used, we begin to understand the full connotative value of the metonym: The Leaning tower of Pisa is a *famous* building one could crash into; the sheep is an *origin-part* for the whole of ‘haute couture’; the hands in *Jeanne d’Arc* connote the *repression* of the Church; and in *Un Condamné à Mort*, the hands suggest, among other things, Fontaine’s *escape* plans, while the sounds in that last film acquire a value on the imprisonment-freedom continuum. Incidentally, there is no reason to suppose that these stylistic dimensions could not play a role in purely verbal metonymy as well: formal elements such as alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and rhythm are arguably verbal equivalents of extreme close-ups, camera angle, coloring, etc. And a novelist or a poet could consistently use the same (kind of) metonym to create a narrative motif in her art.

3. *In film, standard ways of framing the human body – and by extension other objects – can be usefully conceptualised in terms of conventional metonymy.* If this is accepted, metonymy provides a supra-medial tool that can help build bridges between the study of visual design, film, and CL. In addition, because of the way standard film frames take their cue from the human body, acceptance of this proposal yields further support for the CL notion of ‘embodied thinking’.

4. *Non-verbal metonyms are of the source-in-target rather than the target-in-source type* (see Ruiz de Mendoza and Díez Velasco, 2002). The advertising campaigns fit this model: in the Interpolis series the buildings metonymically refer to the matrix domains ‘cities’ or even ‘(holiday) countries’, and in the ABN-Amro series the visual element is part

of the matrix domain cued by the verbal target. In the film examples, the non-verbal metonyms are always subdomains that refer to a more inclusive matrix domain. This may well be typical of multimodal discourse.

5. *In multimodal discourse, a metonym can be cued in various modes.* In this chapter, the focus has been on visuals, sound, and language, but there is no reason to assume that metonyms cannot, just as metaphors, draw on music, gesture, smell, and touch (see [Forceville, 2006a, 2008](#)).

6. *If a metonymic source can be detached from its discursive context without losing its connection with its target referent, it moves into the direction of being a symbol.* Just as the Cross is a symbol of Christ's suffering in most contexts, so the Leaning Tower of Pisa is a symbol of Pisa, and by extension of touristic Italy. By contrast, a brick is not a symbol for a skyscraper. The fact that in both metonymy and symbolism we say that one thing 'stands for' something else already suggests that symbols are metonymically motivated. This issue deserves further research by cognition as well as aesthetics scholars.

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