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Muted metaphors and the activation of metonymies in advertising

Friedrich Ungerer

1. Introduction

There are several reasons why advertisements are particularly suitable for an analysis in terms of metonymy and metaphor. The products advertised are never really present in the advert, they are represented by a picture or a brand name, which metonymically stand for the item in question. Similarly, the act of buying, which is the ultimate goal of consumer advertising, is never executed in the advert, but is at best approached by requests like *Buy X. Go and get X right away. Don't wait. Order now. Fill in and post coupon now. Ring our hotline now.* More sophisticated adverts take pains not to address the act of buying or ordering directly and do not verbalize how desirable the purchase of the advertised item should be for the addressee. Yet there can be no doubt that this indirect kind of advertising works, indeed it is often more effective than the cruder, more straightforward variants. The reason is not just that we "know" what the purpose of advertising is (the pragmatic explanation; Nöth 1983, Vestergaard & Schrøder 1985). Taking a cognitive perspective, the link between the advertised product and the arousal of the consumer's desire seems to be established by another powerful conceptual metonymy, the "grabbing metonymy", which will be introduced below.

Turning to metaphors, their role in advertising can hardly be underestimated. No matter whether the advertised item is represented in the advert as a picture or a brand name, it is never presented in isolation, i.e. the conceptualization is never restricted to the concept of the item itself. The "link between the domain of the advertised item and other domains" (if we start out from this very broad definition of metaphor) may be expressed by linguistic means, either by an explicit, but rather ineffective statement like *This lotion is used by Royals and film stars* or, to take the other extreme, by the metaphorical potential inherent in many trade names, such as *Crown,* or *Royal* or *Provence,* or by some intermediate linguistic realization. What is even more important in modern advertising are the links between domains established by the pictorial elements of adverts. From a cognitive stance, these pictorial links can be understood as instantiations of conceptual metaphors just like the linguistic realizations with which they often interact. This is an area which has been explored for some time now, attracting the interest of both semioticians (Barthes 1993[1]) and general linguists interested in metaphor (Forceville 1996).

Compared with the huge range of research goals in the field, the scope of this paper is very restricted. Far from attempting a comprehensive description and evaluation of the role played by metaphors or metonymies in advertising, it tries to show in a very exemplary way how these two conceptual processes interact. The examples used are taken from consumer adverts, mostly from the magazines of British national Sunday papers published between March 30 and April 13, 1997. To keep the material manageable the paper concentrates on adverts with little copy, though the conceptual processes discussed should also be reflected in the bulkier adverts with more text.

As a first step, the basic setup of the GRABBING metonymy and the VALUE metaphor will be introduced in the next section. Further sections will discuss the function of INTEREST metaphors introducing the notion of muted metaphors and showing how they interact with various types of (conventional) metonymies. The final remarks will be devoted to trade names, which promise to offer a nutshell version of the essential conceptual structure of adverts.

2. The basic setup: the grabbing metonymy and the value metaphor

2.1 The GRABBING metonymy

One of the more noticeable occupations of babies and little children is that they tend to get hold of things. In the initial phase this is a matter of clutching the objects offered to them, perhaps a rather reflex-like movement, but later clutching develops into the action of grabbing the things that catch the eye, sparkling or noise-producing objects and the like. In the later stages of our lives this instinctive urge to grab desirable things is more subdued, but it is still active.

How can one claim that grabbing has something to do with the conceptual structure of adverts and how can it be explained in terms of metonymy? If we want to pursue this argument, we have to endorse two claims: First we have to agree with the judgment of psychologists that DESIRE is to be understood as an emotion, even as one of the basic emotions beside ANGER, SADNESS, FEAR and JOY (Johnson-Laird – Oatley 1989, 1992, Ungerer 1995: 187). The second claim we have to accept is that grabbing can be seen as a semi-volitional bodily movement, similar to the jumping up and down movements often accompanying emotions like JOY. This puts the action of grabbing into the range of physiological manifestations of emotions, which are covered by Lakoff and Kövecses' general metonymic principle that PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF AN EMOTION STAND FOR THE EMOTION (Lakoff 1987: 382). Figure 1 provides an overview of major physiological metonymies for basic emotions derived from metonymic expressions discussed by Kövecses (1986, 1990a, 1990b, 1991) and empirical data collected by psychologists (Ungerer 1995: 188-190).

Types of physiological phenomena	*Example*
(1) Change in body temperature	drop in body temperature for FEAR
(2) Change in skin color/skin condition	redness in face and neck area for ANGER
(3) Release of sweat, tears, saliva	moist hands for FEAR, tears for SADNESS
(4) Change of respiration and heart rate	quickening of heartbeat for ANGER
(5) Unnatural condition of stomach/bowels	feeling nauseated for DISGUST, FEAR
(6) Bodily tension /release of tension	fists and teeth clenched for ANGER
(7) Specific kinds of physical movements	slow, shuffling movements for SADNESS
	heavy walk, stomping for ANGER
	being startled for FEAR
	jumping up and down for JOY
	touching, hugging, kissing for LOVE
	grabbing for DESIRE
(8) Interference with functioning of senses/speaking, etc.	inability to see properly for LOVE
	inability to speak for FEAR
(9) General agitation	sense of being keyed up for ANGER, JOY

Figure 1. An overview of physiological metonymies for basic emotions (SADNESS, ANGER, DISGUST/HATE, FEAR, JOY, DESIRE/LOVE)

Looking at Figure 1, it is obvious that physiological metonymies include a wide range of phenomena, reaching from completely nonvolitional, vegetative symptoms like drop of body temperature, redness in the face and neck area or sweating (group 1-3) to the semi-volitional group of movements (group 7) and to borderline cases with psychological reactions such as the inability to speak and the general feeling of being "keyed up" (group 8 and 9). Against this background, the grabbing metonymy is justly placed in group 7, where it seems to hold a middle position, more volitional than being startled (as metonymy for FEAR), but less volitional than hugging and kissing (as metonymies for LOVE).

Establishing grabbing as a physiological metonymy for DESIRE may not appease critics who hold more traditional views about metonymy. Indeed, the notion of a metonymic relationship between emotions and physiological phenomena requires an extension of the classical concept of metonymy. Physiological metonymies differ considerably from the relatively unambiguous relationships involved in part-for-whole (or whole-for-part), place-for-institution/event, or producer-for-product metonymies. The conventional metonymy they come closest to is causation, but even here the similarities are limited because the question whether the physiological phenomena are the effect (as is often assumed; Kövecses – Radden 1998:56) or the cause of the emotion has never really been settled. Considering the various arguments, it may not be beside the point to assume that in this type of metonymy the physiological phenomenon may simultaneously represent cause, effect and, in addition, accompaniment. More modern approaches, like Croft's (1993), which is based on Langacker's notions of domain and domain matrix, will also have their difficulties in pinning down the peculiar relationship involved in physiological metonymies. Yet in spite of the

evasiveness and ambiguity of physiological metonymies, the powerful part they play in the conceptualization of emotion concepts is not really disputed. Taking all this into account, it is still worthwhile to understand the grabbing phenomenon as a physiological metonymy, which, in the spirit of Lakoff and Kövecses, can be formulated as GRABBING THE DESIRED OBJECT STANDS FOR DESIRE.

Another advantage of the GRABBING metonymy comes to the fore when we consider that emotions can be seen as scenarios (Kövecses, etc.), as a sequence of stages, discontinuous as this sequence may often be. Yet wherever the notion of scenario has been claimed convincingly, the final stage is some sort of action. This is true of the negative emotions of ANGER and FEAR with their five-stage sequence of "cause-emotion-attempt at control-loss of control-action" (Lakoff 1987: 397-98; Ungerer – Schmid 1996: 141). It seems that this action stage is also a strong option in the case of the positive emotion of DESIRE, much more so than for the emotions of JOY or even LOVE. In other words, DESIRE has the inherent action potential that is proposed as the last element of the well-known AIDA formula (Attention-Interest-Desire-Action), which is not only recommended in practical guidelines for advertising copy writers, but also used in the pragmatic interpretation of adverts (Vestergaard – Schrøder 1985). Needless to say how welcome this action potential of the GRABBING metonymy is in the context of advertising.

Since cognitive linguists are also linguists, it is natural for them to ask questions about the linguistic or at least the communicative realization of conceptual structures, and this includes the GRABBING metonymy. One of the answers is to claim all the verbal imperatives quoted above (*Buy X. Go and get X right away,* etc.) as realizations of the GRABBING metonymy. The problem already touched upon is that these "hard-sell strategies" (Kwanka 1993 ms) are avoided or at least suppressed in the more sophisticated kinds of consumer advertising today. An alternative (though not really a linguistic one) is the visualization of the metonymy, which is probably felt to be less aggressive and may be regarded as a transition from hard-selling to soft-selling strategies. In print advertising the visualization of the GRABBING metonymy is limited to certain actions, especially licking ice-cream or picking a chocolate from a chocolate box, although a photograph of the actual application of a shampoo or toothpaste is also feasible (of course, there are many more possibilities in TV commercials).

The last, and at the same time, most radical option is to concede that often the GRABBING metonymy is not explicitly expressed at all, neither linguistically nor visually, but that it is to be regarded as an underlying, but nevertheless essential, conceptual component of the advert – the "missing conceptual link" that explains why the picture of a chocolate may be sufficient to evoke the desire and even stimulate the action that leads to its acquisition and consumption.

If for the time being we accept this conceptual status of the GRABBING metonymy, we can now proceed to investigate how it might help to explain the effectiveness, and sometimes the failure, of modern consumer advertising.

2.2 The VALUE metaphor and how it is linked to the GRABBING metonymy

What makes the GRABBING metonymy attractive for both advertisers and cognitive linguists is the object that is to be grabbed. For the advertisers the decisive thing is that the object is what they want to present to the customer in the hope of selling it to him or her, and they do so by showing its positive aspects to prove that it is desirable. For the linguist the focus is on how the positive, desirable aspects of the object are represented and put across. This can be done rather explicitly by verbalizing how good, exquisite, prestigious or healthy the advertised object is for the customer.

Sophisticated advertising prefers more indirect strategies, though, and perhaps the most important one among them is to establish a metaphorical link with a domain conventionally representing the desired quality. Precious stones and clothes are used to indicate exquisiteness; castles, royals and jet-set yachts are called up to suggest prestige; a beaming baby signifies health. On the surface these metaphors seem to offer all the advantages a metaphor can provide in terms of conceptual support. One of them is the richness of a well-structured source domain (jewels, castles, yachts) available for mapping onto the target domain (the advertised item) – consider all the details that come to mind when one thinks of jewels, castles, jet-set yachts. This is complemented by the fact that the source domains are – on the whole – prestructured for positive aspects, which can be carried over into the target domain in a seemingly effortless and natural way, i.e. there is no need for interpretive constraints, for anchoring devices and muting strategies, all the aspects that we will come across when we look at other types of metaphors below. Looking for examples, we find that they are more often expressed visually than by linguistic means. Yet conceptually, this does not make any difference. All the metaphorical links mentioned can be subsumed under the metaphor THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A VALUABLE OBJECT.

What we must not forget is that the VALUE metaphor (or any other metaphor involving the advertised item) is just one part of the conceptual setup and must be seen in conjunction with the GRABBING metonymy, with which it seems to interact in two ways, as shown in Figure 2.

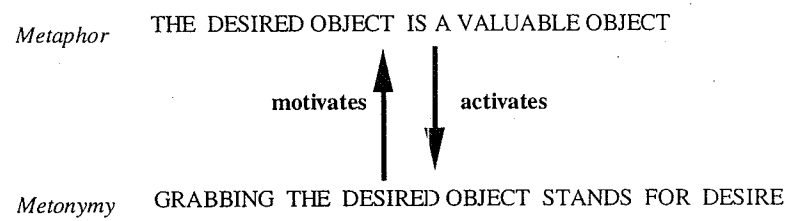

Figure 2. The interaction of metaphors and metonymies in adverts

On the one hand, the GRABBING metonymy, which stands for our desire to get hold of something, creates the need to justify why the object of the grabbing action is desirable, and this need is met by a VALUE metaphor; in this sense the VALUE metaphor can be said to be conceptually motivated by the GRABBING metonymy (indicated by the upward arrow in Figure 2). On the other hand – and this is probably more important in the advertising context – the VALUE metaphor makes the object in question attractive, and by doing so, it activates the GRABBING metonymy, even where the metonymy is not explicitly expressed (compare the downward arrow).

For the sake of clarity Figure 2 has been simplified. If we go back to the introductory remark that the advertised item is never physically present in the advert, but metonymically represented by a picture or a trade name, it is clear that normally one or several additional metonymies are involved, which mediate between the VALUE metaphor and the GRABBING metonymy, but do not change the basic conceptual operations.

The problem is that this beautifully simple interaction of VALUE metaphor and GRABBING metonymy does not always work as it should, and this is mainly due to the fact that conventional VALUE metaphors are often no longer powerful enough to fulfill their function. As advertisers have found, simple VALUE metaphors increasingly fail to meet the first two criteria of the AIDA formula, i.e. attract the customer's attention and interest. This insight has started off a frantic search for more powerful metaphors.

3. INTEREST metaphors: why they are used and why they are muted

3.1 Some general observations

If we assess the attention-getting potential of VALUE metaphors, these metaphors appear as a special case of a more general metaphor THE DESIRED OBJECT IS AN INTERESTING OBJECT and, we might add, is therefore worth grabbing. Figure 3 gives a first impression of the range of the INTEREST metaphors used in advertising.

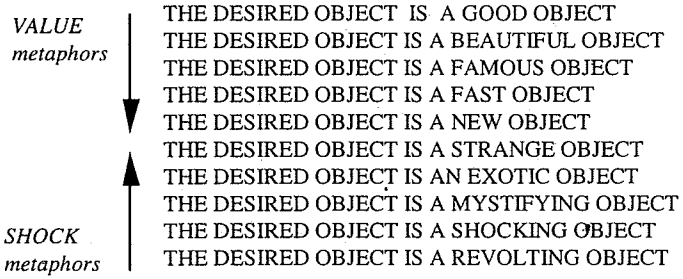

Figure 3. Types of INTEREST metaphors used in advertising

Figure 3 also shows that the various types can be arranged on a scale which leads us from our conventionalized VALUE metaphors, where the interest is created by the beneficial effects of the object, on to variants where interest is created by the strangeness, mysteriousness and even revoltingness of the metaphor. The extreme case is probably reached by the famous Benetton adverts which try to attract the customer's attention with shocking and cruel pictures of human misery.

The difficulty is that strange, mystifying and revolting source domains may indeed provide more powerful metaphors in terms of attention-getting, but this does not automatically raise their potential to activate the grabbing metonymy. As we travel along the scale from innocuous VALUE metaphors towards more powerful, but also less acceptable variants of the INTEREST metaphor, it becomes increasingly clear that we are less and less inclined to grab the object supported by these metaphors. Even little children intuitively stop grabbing things once they have classified them as revolting. How can this problem be solved?

At this point it seems appropriate to raise the discussion to a more general level and look at the potential of both conventionalized and innovative metaphors. The concept of metaphor which is used as a starting point is essentially cognitive, but tries to pick up major features of the traditional discussion (Leech 1969:148; Black 1993;[2] Goatly 1997:8-9; Forceville 1996:5-12). The concept rests on three parameters: the distance between the source domain (or vehicle, secondary subject) of the metaphor and its target domain (or tenor, topic, primary subject), the conceptual richness of the source domain as mapping potential and finally the constraints imposed on the metaphorical transfer in the mapping process (the cognitive version of the traditional notion of ground). These parameters are visualized in figure 4.

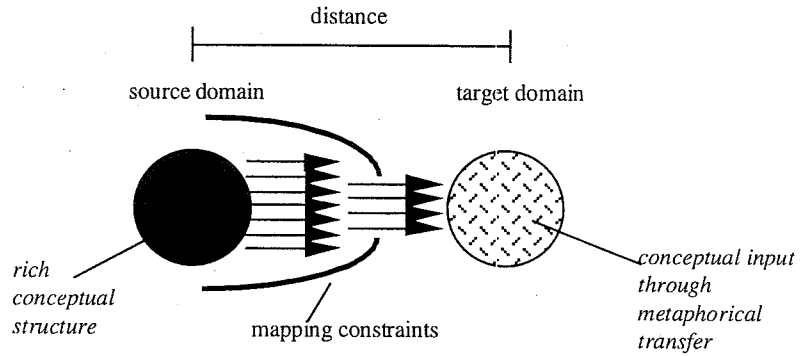

Figure 4. Conceptual factors in metaphor (distance, conceptual richness, mapping constraints)

While the distance (and linked with it the distinctness) of source and target domains are probably equally valid for all types of metaphors, this seems to be different for the other parameters. Although conventionalized metaphors, as found in everyday language and everyday visual communication (e.g. in traffic signs), benefit from the richness of the source domain in varying degrees, they only function as smoothly as they do because the conceptual transfer emanating from the rich but unordered source domain is channeled by suitable mapping constraints, either in the shape of Lakoff's invariance hypothesis (Lakoff 1990) or as an effect of underlying metonymies (Barcelona, this volume). As a result, a certain balance is maintained between the rich transfer potential of the source domain and the absorption potential of the target domain.

This balance, it appears, is tipped in favor of the richness parameter for innovative or active metaphors (Goatly 1997: 31-35), both in poetic speech (for pictorial metaphors also in art) and in advertising. In all these areas the richness of the source domain is the main concern (together with the undisputed distance from the target domain). Poets need it to capture the reader's imagination, advertisers to rouse the consumer's attention.

However, the difference between the poetic and the advertising use of metaphors emerges when we look at the mapping constraints. Undoubtedly, the transfer in poetic metaphors is also subject to regulation, often determined by poetic or cultural conventions, but the transfer is much freer than with conventionalized metaphors; it leaves room for individual interpretation and makes it possible that additional metaphorical relationships are extracted from the rich source domain with every new reading. This is, of course, what makes poetic metaphor so attractive for imaginative reception. What good poetry does not do is try to impose a certain limited interpretation of its metaphors on the reader.

It is this relative freedom of metaphorical transfer which advertisers cannot permit if they want to achieve their goal of presenting the advertised item in a positive light. Although they depend on innovative source domains to catch the readers' attention, and such "new" domains tend to embrace negative as well as positive attributes, they want to make sure that only the positive attributes are mapped onto the target domain of the advertised item. In other words, the metaphorical process cannot be left unattended (as it largely is in the case of poetic metaphors). The conceptual wealth of the source domain, welcome as it is as an eye-catcher, must be reduced: the metaphor must be "muted" to yield only a positive transfer. Compare Figure 5 for an idealized version of the muting process.

Admittedly, this diagram looks very much like Figure 4, suggesting close parallels between the muting of innovative metaphors in adverts and the mapping constraints of conventionalized metaphors. What is perhaps less obvious is that part of the similarities are above all of a technical nature: in both cases constraints are imposed on the metaphorical transfer. Yet what is the result of a long process which has led to a balance between transfer and absorption

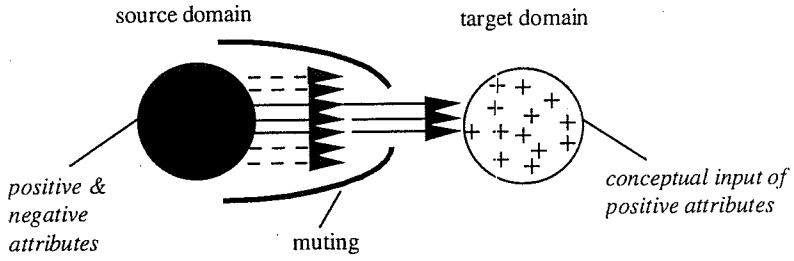

Figure 5. The effect of muting on metaphorical mapping – an idealized view

potential in the case of conventionalized metaphors (see above) is replaced by a carefully master-minded strategy, whose goal is the one-sided selection of positive attributes no matter what the conceptual structure of the source domain may be like. Muting may thus be defined as an attempt to impose artificial mapping constraints on innovative metaphors.

To accomplish the muting task, there are again several options to be considered. The most straightforward muting strategy is to establish an unambiguous link between the positive attributes of the source domain and the target domain, or as Barthes (1993: 1422) puts it in his study of "images" in adverts, "to anchor" the metaphor. In practice this means that a pictorial INTEREST metaphor with a strange, exotic, shocking picture as its source domain is accompanied by an explicit verbal guideline for how the addressee is to interpret the metaphor. An (invented) example would be a picture showing the impact of a hurricane with the verbal message: *No chance for dirt. Our new CLEANER has the strength of a hurricane.*

As even this relatively simple example shows, the positive effect of the muting strategy cannot be reliably predicted, but this is a risk present-day advertisers are increasingly prepared to take as long as they can lay hands on an attention-getting picture. In fact explicit anchoring as in our example is much rarer now than it used to be in the 1960s when Barthes investigated adverts (Forceville 1996: 73). One reason is probably that an explicit guideline tends to unmask the advertiser's intentions too quickly for the reader to get involved in the advert at all. To keep the reader fascinated by the source domain picture for as long as possible, muting strategies are now much more indirect and often distributed across several stages of a complex mapping process. This will become clearer when we now look at some examples.

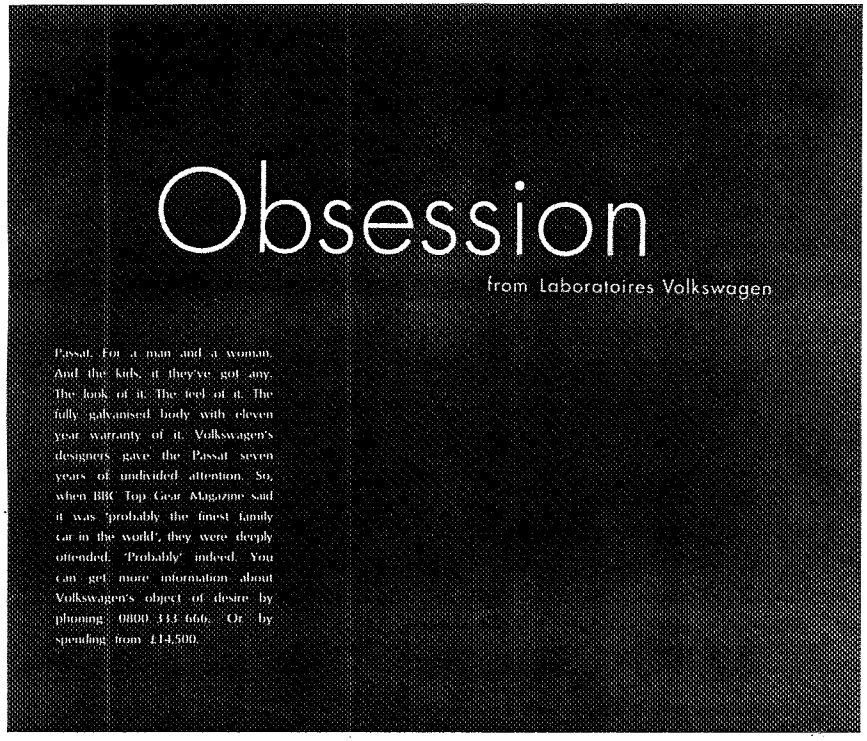

Figure 6. VW Passat advert

3.2 Muting strategies: some more advanced examples

Our first example is an advert for the Volkswagen Passat (Figure 6), which permits two kinds of interpretation, of which the simpler one will be presented here, while the more sophisticated extensions will be discussed in section 4.

As usual, the INTEREST metaphor is expressed visually, in this case by the picture of the car which is in the process of being examined by five men and a woman wearing white coats and suggesting a scientific laboratory check. Relating the car to the source domain LABORATORY CHECK can be seen as a more specific variant of the metaphor THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A STRANGE OBJECT and there is a good chance that this picture will be more successful in attracting the readers' attention than the picture of the car on the road. Yet however fascinating the idea of a scientific examination may be (which is supported by the message

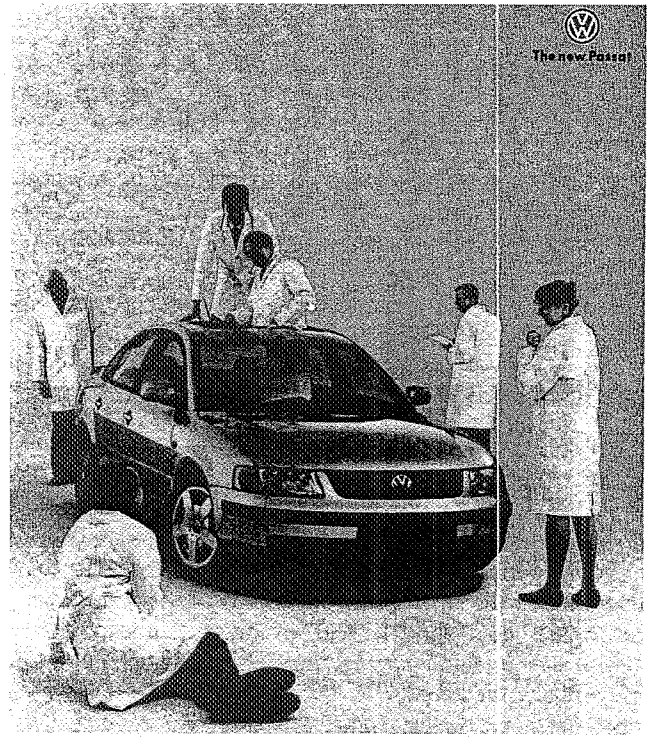

Figure 6 cont. VW Passat advert

"from the Volkswagen laboratoires"), it could also put off people who are somehow afraid of scientific methods and are more interested in getting a manageable and likable car. To filter out these undesirable "scientific" correspondences the metaphor has to be muted, and this is done in an indirect, but nevertheless striking way by prominently placing the word "obsession" on the opposite page of this two-page advert. What this strategy insinuates is that the picture stands for the obsession with which the Volkswagen company has developed the car; the rich source domain of scientific investigation is muted and reduced to the reassuring (and therefore positive) aspects of care and attention that have gone into the design and production of the car. Further support of this strategy comes from a paragraph of small print, which dwells on the topics of attention ("seven years of undivided attention") and reliability ("eleven year warranty"). Compare figure 7, which provides a diagram of the muting process.

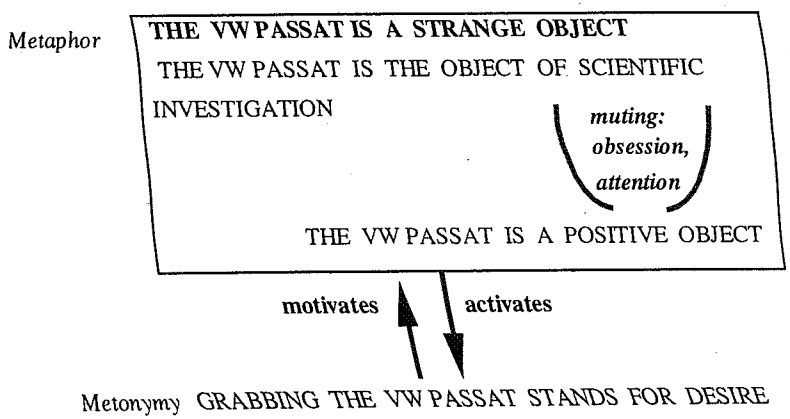

Figure 7. The VW Passat advert: First conceptual interpretation

What the figure does not show is that the positive view of the target domain (the VW Passat) is also supported by a second metaphor, this time a VALUE metaphor expressed verbally in the small print: THE CAR IS PEOPLE AND FAMILY. Finally, the references to "the look" and "the feel" of the car can also be seen as attempts to extinguish any remaining misgivings about the scientific approach of the pictorial INTEREST metaphor.

Our second example, the snake advert (figure 8) is more controversial, not only because of its aim (i.e. the promotion of smoking), but also because of the more circumstantial conceptual path it suggests.

This is partly due to the restrictions imposed on this – now doomed? – type of advertising (e.g. that cigarettes must not be shown in the advert, etc.), but these restrictions have certainly favored the development of new and more ingenious advertising strategies. The advert is dominated by the picture of a snake which is obviously digesting its prey. Undoubtedly, the attention-getting potential of this metaphor (which seems to oscillate between the variants THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A STRANGE OBJECT and THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A REVOLTING OBJECT), is formidable, and this potential is heightened by the fact that in the *Sunday Times Magazine* the snake is spread in full length across three pages including a fold-out page. Yet the way in which the snake metaphorically supports the positive qualities of the cigarette is anything but self-evident.

If we go by the strategies observed in the Volkswagen advert, one would expect that the slogan provides a fairly straightforward guideline to ensure the desired positive interpretation of the SNAKE metaphor. Yet what the slogan ("longer than a light snack") suggests is a much more circumstantial conceptual path. True enough, the first element of the statement ("longer") indicates one major correspondence that is to be highlighted, the length shared by the snake

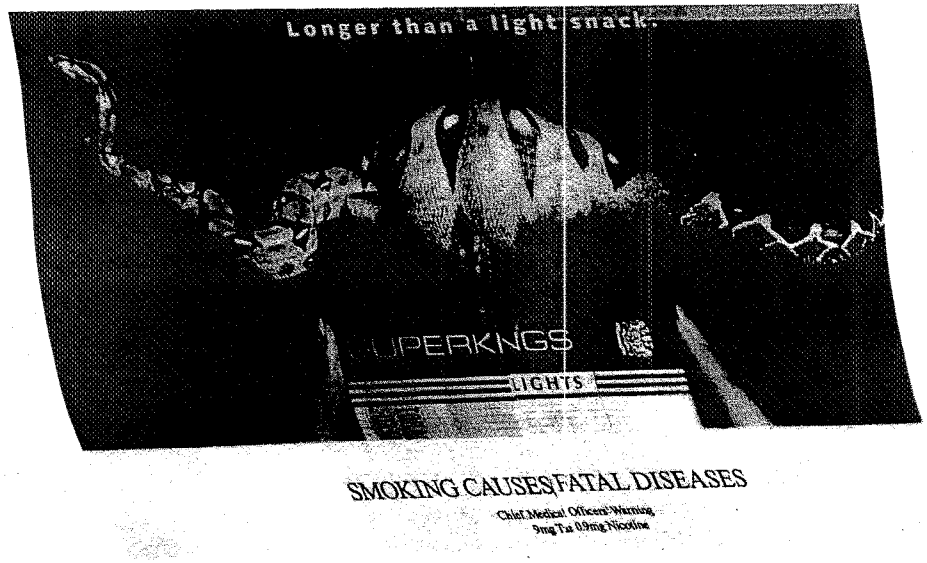

Figure 8. Superkings cigarette advert

and the kingsize cigarette and the duration of its consumption, and this can be seen as a first muting attempt.

But the comparison made explicit in the slogan concerns the time it takes to eat a light snack, not the time it takes to smoke the cigarette. In terms of metaphor, this means that an additional metaphorical link is introduced, THE SNACK IS THE SNAKE'S PREY, which supports the interpretation that the snake takes longer to digest its prey than the time needed to eat and digest a light snack. Taken at face value, the idea of a snake dealing with its prey will raise negative rather than positive feelings, yet it may nevertheless give rise to associations of a more positive kind. To a certain extent digesting the prey could be interpreted as enjoying its long path through the body, and this may even be supported by reminiscences of the opening passage of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, where the prey is the innocent secret of the Little Prince in a non-understanding adult world. More important perhaps, the introduction of the snack, a light harmless meal, brings with it the notion of "no harm" and this may be regarded as a very sophisticated muting strategy indeed. Even the pun created by the juxtaposition of *snack* and *snake* can be seen as supporting the innocent, playful aspects of the metaphor (Goatly 1997: 303). Taken together, it seems that we may already have taken a first step towards a positive interpretation. The second step is provided by the metaphorical link between the snack and the cigarette itself, and here the slogan yields yet another muting device, the attribute "light",

which is reflected on the cigarette packet and offers itself as a guideline for the interpretation of the metaphor THE CIGARETTE IS A SNACK. This complex process is illustrated in figure 9.

Compared with the car advert, where muting is a single stage process supported by the catchword and by various other elements, the cigarette advert takes a more risky path. Conceptual processing is divided up into several metaphorical processes, each with its muting component, which may need quite a sizable amount of processing capacity. Whether the addressees are prepared to make the effort to process the metaphors is decisive for the activation of the GRABBING metonymy and whether they have the knowledge to follow the advert into its literary allusions (joining the Little Prince in enjoying an innocent child's secret pleasure, i.e. smoking a cigarette, in a hostile adult, i.e. non-smoking, world) is even more uncertain. Or is there an alternative where the addressee is simply fascinated by the picture and at the same time takes in the brand name more or less as a separate element? And is this still a way of creating the desire to buy the advertised item?

This alternative becomes even more pressing when we think of the Benetton adverts mentioned above as examples of shocking and revolting variants of the INTEREST metaphor. In terms of our simple conceptual mechanisms these adverts involve an INTEREST metaphor like BENETTON IS AIDS and the GRABBING metonymy (GRABBING BENETTON STANDS FOR THE DESIRE TO WEAR BENETTON CLOTHES). But how is the muting accomplished which seems to be desperately needed to support a positive target domain of the metaphor ("Benetton clothes as the desired object")? Undoubtedly, this largely depends on the interpretation of the slogan as a whole: *United colors of Benetton*. If we consider that early adverts of the series showed children of different races, the slogan then suggested a multiracial, humanistic, and therefore positive, interpretation of the term "color" and the metaphor as a whole, thus providing a reliable muting strategy. The question is how the consumers will interpret the slogan in connection with the later pictures of the series (the AIDS patient, etc.), how much of its earlier muting potential will be carried over. Or are the addressees of the adverts prepared to actually honor the daring of the pictures as a positive quality? In other words, will the customers consider Benetton as a desirable object in spite of the shocking effect of the pictures?

Looking back at the three examples it is clear that, driven by the competition for the ultimate visual impact, advertisers have moved a long way from the simple conceptual setup of the VALUE metaphor and the GRABBING metonymy, accepting ever more complex muting strategies. As it appears, an increasing number of advertisers seem prepared to sacrifice the conceptual links inherent in metaphors for the sake of mere eye-catchers, hoping that somehow, even without proper conceptual interaction, there will be a shortcut to imprint the desire for acquiring a certain item.

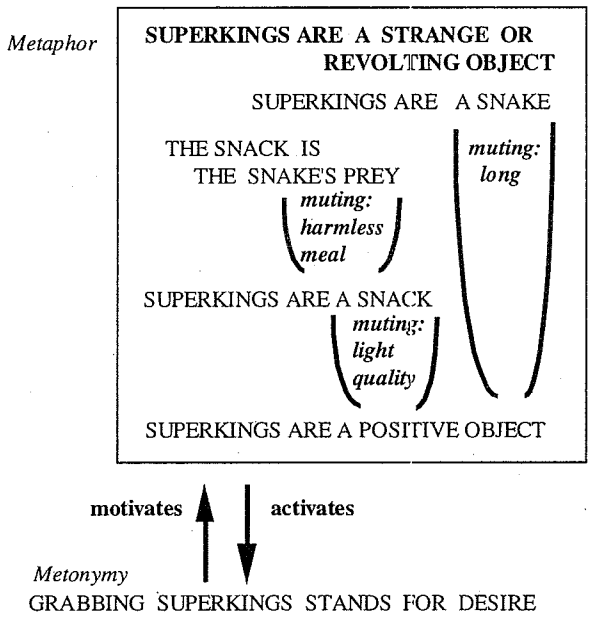

Figure 9. The Superkings advert: Conceptual interpretation

4. The role of "conventional" metonymies

One other thing that has emerged from the discussion of the examples is that the INTEREST metaphor may in fact involve several metaphors. This ties in with our earlier observation that normally several metonymies will be involved in an advert. Some of these metonymies, we have found, arise from the limitations of the medium. Thus the advertised object is never physically present in the advert but replaced by a picture. Food items and liquid items in general are represented by their packages or bottles, an example of the CONTAINER-FOR-CONTAINED metonymy, which is also legally enforced in some other cases, such as tobacco advertising. Another all-pervasive metonymy is THE NAME STANDS FOR THE PRODUCT. In a competitive society, where the majority of products are not monopolized by a single producer, it is, of course, crucial to focus the consumer's desire and action on one's own products and to identify them by using a name.

Yet this is only half the story. There is more than ample evidence that both the CONTAINER-FOR-CONTAINED and the NAME-FOR-PRODUCT metonymies are not just formalities (as we have treated them so far for the sake of simplicity) but have developed into powerful advertising tools which are extensively and consciously

used to support the conceptual interaction of the INTEREST metaphor and the GRABBING metonymy. For this purpose bottles of soft and alcoholic drinks, and even more so, the containers in which perfumes are sold, have been shaped in specific and exotic ways and are presented in the advert in unusual surroundings. Compare the perfume advert in Figure 10, where the advert is constructed around the attention-getting force of the container and the trade name *Joop !*

Here it is fairly clear that both the shape of the container and the trade name are used to identify the desired object and thus to activate the GRABBING metonymy. But how does this fit into our concept, and where does the metaphor come in?

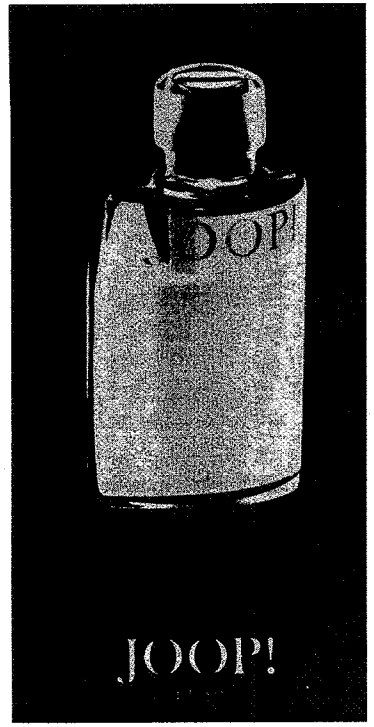

Figure 10. Perfume advert.

As shown in Figure 11, the CONTAINER-FOR-CONTAINED metonymy can be seen as an extension of the metonymic component, so that the basic conceptual setup of the advert is not really affected. True, the INTEREST metaphor is not directly motivated by the GRABBING metonymy, but by the intervening container metonymy. Nevertheless, it remains unchanged apart from acquiring a slightly different target domain, reflected in the variant: THE CONTAINER (OF THE DESIRABLE OBJECT) IS AN INTERESTING OBJECT. Conversely one might say that the mysterious bottle, and the INTEREST metaphor based on it, activate the container metonymy and, as a consequence, also the GRABBING metonymy. It goes without saying that a parallel process is to be assumed for the NAME-FOR-PRODUCT metonymy, though here the INTEREST metaphor will often appear as a VALUE metaphor based on the reputation of the trade name (The underlying metaphor would be THE NAME (OF THE DESIRED OBJECT) IS A GOOD/FAMOUS NAME).

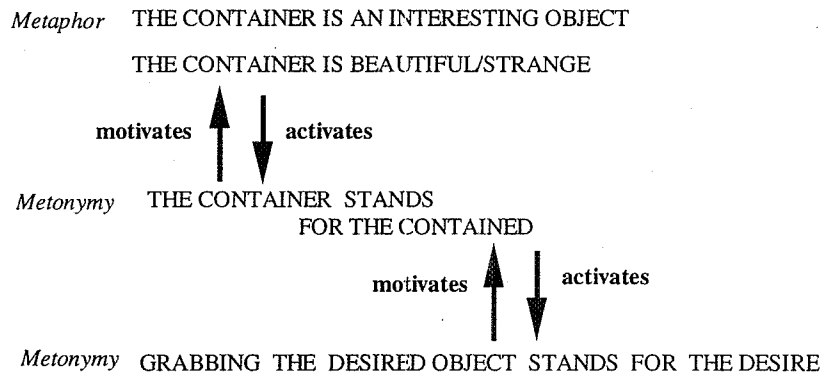

Figure 11. The interaction of metaphors and metonymies in adverts

The sophisticated uses to which the NAME metonymy can be put in conjunction with other metaphors is illustrated by the extended interpretation of the VW Passat advert. If we pursue the allusions connected with the terms *obsession* and *laboratoires,* which in our first simplified interpretation we just took at their (English language) face value, they lead us into the realm of perfumes. As regular readers of Sunday and women's magazines will know, *laboratoires* can be taken to refer to *Laboratoires Garnier*, which stand for a range of perfumes in a PRODUCER-PRODUCT metonymy. *Obsession* also stands for a perfume as a NAME metonymy. Perfumes in turn are well-suited as source domains of VALUE metaphors, and equip the advertised item with additional attractiveness, and this adds its share to the activation of the GRABBING metonymy.

Figure 12 is a attempt to come to grips with the extended interpretation of the Passat advert including the linguistically expressed FAMILY metaphor and the additional hints at "the look" and "the feel" of the car, which were already mentioned above. As with circumstantial muting strategies, it is difficult to decide to what extent this complex interaction of metaphors and metonymies is realized by the average addressee. At least we will have to assume different

degrees of conceptual penetration, but if this is a way of satisfying different tastes and different intellectual standards at the same time, advertisers will not be unhappy.

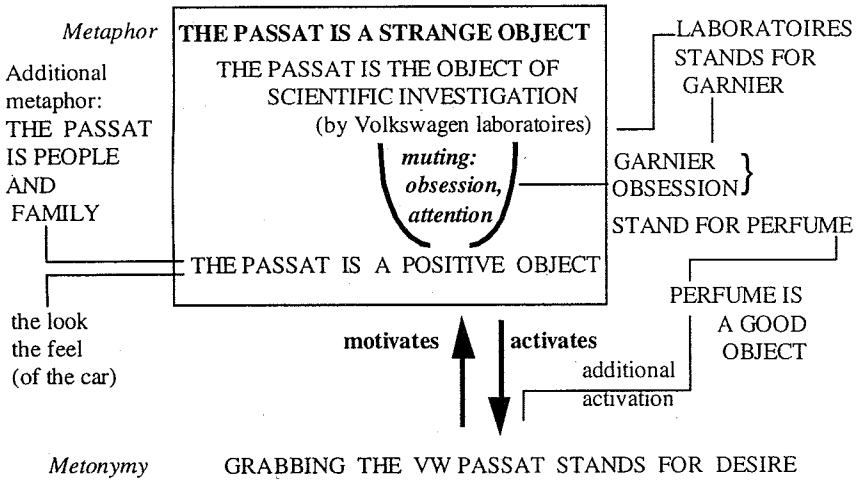

Figure 12. The VW Passat advert. Extended conceptual interpretation

5. Final remarks on metonymies and metaphors in trade names

The names used in the NAME metonymies are very special names, trade names or even registered trade marks, and this is particularly true of brand names. What is more or less excluded, either for legal reasons or because of their low attention potential, are existing common nouns, e.g. calling a new brand of perfume "perfume" or calling a new automobile "car". One of the results is that a large number of trade names rely on a metonymy or metaphor (for other sources see Ungerer 1991: 144). The most common metonymy is probably the PRODUCER-FOR-PRODUCT metonymy based on the name of the inventor or company (which may itself also have a metonymic background). Widely used metaphors involve source domains suggesting prestige such as ROYALTY or DIPLOMATIC SERVICE, natural phenomena like SUN or TIDE or animal concepts.

If we stick to the last-mentioned area and think of names of cars, such as *Jaguar* or *(Ford) Mustang* (Gläser 1973: 229-231), the underlying metaphor could probably be expressed as THE CAR IS A WILD ANIMAL, which could be seen as a variant of the general metaphor THE DESIRED OBJECT IS AN INTERESTING OBJECT. Indeed, one would claim that the coining of a trade name is to be regarded as a nutshell version of the conceptual structure of an advert. Again the starting point

(and the goal of the advertiser) is the GRABBING metonymy, which motivates an INTEREST metaphor, and is in turn supposed to be activated by this metaphor. The INTEREST metaphor can be rather tame and ineffective, as with trade names like *Crown, Queen* or *Embassy*. (The underlying metaphor would be THE DESIRED OBJECT IS A PRESTIGIOUS OBJECT.) The more daring metaphor-based trade names like *Jaguar* or *Mustang* raise the same problems as the more provoking type of visual metaphors in the newly-designed adverts discussed above. Since animal concepts like JAGUAR do not only generate positive correspondences, they have to be muted.

As one may assume and should perhaps further investigate, the muting was carried out explicitly when trade names such as *Jaguar* were introduced, but the muted version is now generally accepted and mapping constraints which favor a positive interpretation have been established. This is why analyzing the conceptual background of trade names often gives the impression that one is looking at yesterday's adverts and tomorrow's conventionalized metaphors.

Notes

1. This article was written in 1964.
2. Black's article was first published in 1979, with the first edition of Ortony's book.

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