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Expressivity and Metonymic Inferencing: Stylistic Variation in Nonliterary Language Use

1. Introduction

In line with its central interest in metaphor and metonymy as prominent principles of categorization, cognitive linguistics focuses primarily on everyday language. This empirical orientation is enhanced by the repeated identification of both phenomena as *conceptual mechanisms*, instead of merely *rhetorical figures of speech*. As convincingly illustrated in countless theoretical as well as empirical studies, this positioning has led to a remarkable turnaround in the tradition of metaphor and metonymy theory. Although already at an early stage the relevance of cognitive linguistic insights for the interpretation of literary texts was recognized (see, for instance, Turner, *Death*; Lakoff and Turner), little attention has been paid to aesthetic aspects of utterances in everyday language use as well. Precisely at this point, the present essay wants to raise specific interest in the impact of one conceptual mechanism, metonymy, on the realization of a stylistically marked (expressive) meaning in the context of nonliterary, everyday language use. For that purpose, two different types of utterances pertaining to equally different communicative settings will be discussed with regard to their expressive value (section 2). It will be shown, more specifically, to what extent metonymy may contribute to the instantiation of a general principle of Optimal Innovation (Giora, *On Our*), according to which "pleasurable" utterances require a balanced combination of conventional and innovative structures. First, however, sections 1.1 and 1.2 offer a brief sketch of the concepts needed for the analysis.

1.1. Cognitive Approaches to Linguistics and Stylistics

The emergence of cognitive semantics in the second half of the 1970s, with its focus on the embodied nature and dynamics of meaning construction in everyday language use, has brought about a renewed interest in figurative language, in the broadest sense of the word, including metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson; Lakoff and Turner; Jäkel; Kövecses, *Metaphor*), metonymy (Panther and Radden; Barcelona; Dirven and Pörings; Panther and Thornburg), irony (Gibbs, *Poetics*; Giora, "Irony," *On Our*; Attardo, "Irony," "Humor"), and recently also humor (Attardo et al.; Coulson; Giora, *On Our*; Brône and Feyaerts, *Cognitive*). Despite the near-exclusive attention to metaphorical mappings in the early cognitive semantic studies, a more recent development has given center stage to metonymy as another

major mechanism of construal, next to and in interaction with metaphorical (Goossens; Riemer) and blended conceptualizations (Fauconnier and Turner, "Conceptual," *The Way*; Turner and Fauconnier; Coulson and Oakley).

Although a striking parallel with earlier accounts of figurative language in literary theory and stylistics can be discerned (Jakobson; Mukařovský; Lodge), the cognitive framework has only very recently been adopted as a heuristic tool in literary analysis. This adoption has resulted in a newly emerging field of *cognitive stylistics* (Semino and Culpeper) or *cognitive poetics* (Tsur, *Toward*, "Aspects"; Gavins and Steen).[1] Insights from modern semantics, prototypically from conceptual metaphor theories and Blending Theory, are incorporated into stylistics as descriptive tools for the analysis of cognitive construal in literary texts. The effect is that of a pendulum swinging back, since figurative language, the focus of earlier research on "foregrounding" mechanisms in literature, later adopted by linguistics and studied as basic cognitive mechanisms, now once again forms the locus of stylistic research, albeit mainly in its cognitive function: "Cognitive stylistics combines the kind of explicit, rigorous and detailed linguistic analysis of literary texts that is typical of the stylistics tradition with a systematic and theoretically informed consideration of the cognitive structures and processes that underlie the production and reception of language" (Semino and Culpeper ix). Once again, only after the renewed attention that metaphorical structures have received as mechanisms of creativity, does a new line of research gradually arise, as a kind of counterweight, into the cognitive-stylistic function of the traditional *parente pauvre* of metaphor: metonymy (Bredin 45).

1.1.1. Metaphor and Conceptual Integration. The cognitive semantic research on metaphorical structures in everyday language and thought, fostered by George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Mark Turner, Zoltán Kövecses, and many others, has recently found its way into stylistics, resulting in the paradigm of cognitive stylistics mentioned above. The central interest in metaphorical structures is mirrored by the number of papers on metaphor in Elena Semino and Jonathan Culpeper, in the special issue of *Style* entitled *Cognitive Approaches to Figurative Language*, and in the special issue of *Poetics Today* entitled *Metaphor and Beyond: New Cognitive Developments.*[2]

A second line of thought in cognitive stylistics, related to and interacting with metaphor research, inquires into the utility of the recently developed theory of conceptual integration or blending (Fauconnier and Turner, "Conceptual," "Compression," and *The Way*; Turner, *Literary*; Coulson, *Semantic*) for uncovering more dynamic instances of meaning construction. Indeed, an account in terms of a unidirectional metaphorical mapping of structure from source onto target concepts does not always suffice for the analysis of the specifics of structure mapping and the inferential meanings that arise as a result of it (Grady, Oakley, and Coulson). Blending Theory (BT) aims at a unifying account of a number of semantic phenomena previously treated as independent mechanisms, like metaphor, analogy, counterfactual reasoning, humor, and others. In part because of

its flexibility, the framework has gained increasing acceptance in stylistics, resulting in a steadily rising number of publications (see, among others, Turner, *Literary*; Oakley; Turner and Fauconnier; Fludernik, Freeman, and Freeman; Sinding).

The present paper will analyze metaphorical mappings and blended conceptualizations in interaction with metonymic construal. As the analysis in section 2 will show, stylistic effects are frequently realized through a skilful intertwining of these mechanisms. Before turning to the analysis itself, we need to present a brief outline of our view on metonymy (1.1.2) and its function in establishing expressivity effects (1.2 on "optimal innovation").

1.1.2. Metonymy. Defining metonymy and limiting its scope has been the topic of discussion in recent publications (Panther and Radden; Barcelona; Dirven and Pörings). We will not fully pursue these issues in the present account (see Feyaerts, "Refining"; Riemer). Rather, we generally subscribe to the definition proposed by Radden and Kövecses:

> Metonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same idealized cognitive model.   (21)[3]

In this view, metonymy is defined in radically cognitive terms as a conceptual phenomenon that functions within an idealized cognitive model (ICM) or *cognitive frame* (Panther and Radden 9).[4] So, whereas metaphorical mappings connect concepts pertaining to different domains or domain matrices (Croft), in metonymic construal the vehicle/source and the target of the connection are associated in one cognitive frame (or domain [matrix]). In a classic example like "Plato is hard to read," the source element (*Plato*) is used as a reference point to refer to another element within the same cognitive frame, viz. Plato's work. Both source and target belong to the same functional domain.

It is, however, important to note that the above definition in terms of access points or *reference points* does not fully cancel the more traditional analysis of metonymy in terms of *contiguity* or adjacency, as long as it is defined as *conceptual contiguity* (Dirven 14).[5] Concepts in one frame are related to other concepts within the same frame through a relation of conceptual contiguity, whereas metaphorically related concepts in different frames/domains are connected through a conceptual similarity relation. Consider the examples (1) and (2) (taken from Gibbs, "Speaking" 66), which provide evidence for metonymic reasoning in the use of frames in everyday communication:

(1)   A: How did you get to the airport?
       B: I waved down a taxi.
(2)   A: How is her character?
       B: Well, she's had a difficult youth.

In (1), speaker B wants to inform A that he or she has reached the airport by waving at a taxi, making the taxi stop, getting in the car, driving to the airport, and getting out again. On the basis of just one short sentence ("I waved down a taxi") person A is able to infer the entire *scenario* of temporally related actions. This one subpart of the complex action functions as a referential shortcut to the frame as a whole. Lakoff (*Women* 78) labels this ICM, "Going somewhere in a vehicle," which consists of a number of subevents (precondition, embarkation, center, finish, end point). In (2), person A asks a question that generally triggers an answer in terms of a character trait (cheerful, short-tempered, pessimistic, etc.). In reply, instead of directly referring to a characteristic, person B refers to a cause ("difficult youth") that is metonymically mapped onto a salient effect as target referent (e.g. depressed, sensitive, etc.). In other words, the intended target needs to be inferred metonymically from a prominent reference point (cause).

The examples (1) and (2) illustrate that in discourse, language users exploit the cognitive ability to metonymically infer via salient reference points. Complex frames, scripts, scenarios, or ICMs, which are stored in long-term memory, can be evoked by merely referring to a salient part of that frame (figure 1a for example [1]), and in much the same way a target referent can be accessed through a causally related reference point (figure 1b for example [2]) within the same frame. The dotted arrows indicate the metonymic construal from a salient (hence bold) reference point to a target referent (T), which can be the entire frame as in 1a, or a contiguously related element, as in 1b.
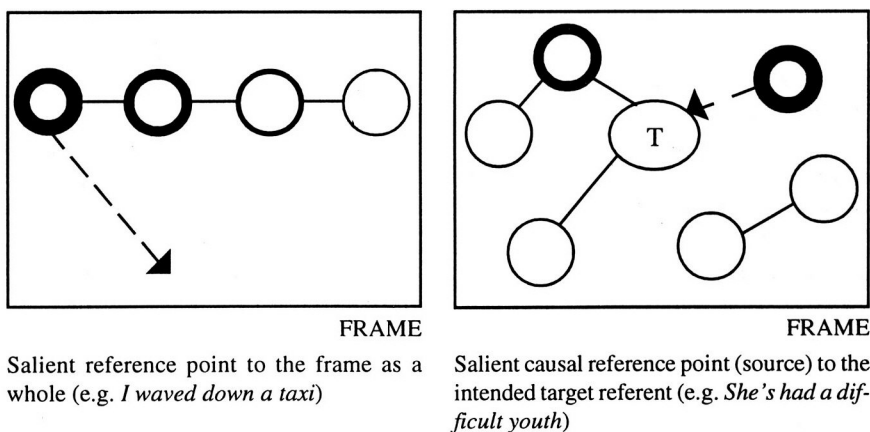

| FRAME | FRAME |
| Salient reference point to the frame as a whole (e.g. *I waved down a taxi*) | Salient causal reference point (source) to the intended target referent (e.g. *She's had a difficult youth*) |

Figure 1. Metonymic construal involving salient reference points

At this point, the question arises to what extent the redefined term *metonymy* can still cover the classic notion "substitution of names" next to the current interpretation, which includes phenomena that were previously analyzed as inferences and *conversational implicatures* (Grice).[6] Raymond Gibbs argues for a

distinction between the processing of metonymic language, as in sentences like *We need fresh legs in our team*, where "fresh legs" is to be interpreted metonymically on the basis of a PART-WHOLE relationship, and the metonymic processing of language, which covers inferences of the type in (1) and (2) as well as conversational implicatures ("Speaking" 69). Next to the purely communicative function of a relevant shortcut (Langacker, "Reference-Point"), the language users' cognitive potential to metonymically process language is exploited extensively for purposes of stylistic variation in literary as well as nonliterary language. How metonymic extensions are systematically exploited by the innovation eager mind is explored in the following sections.

1.2. Mechanisms of Creativity: The Optimal Innovation Hypothesis

The concepts of creativity, innovation, and especially expressivity have been applied in many different stylistic and linguistic paradigms, each time in a slightly or even radically different interpretation, from Russian Formalism (Victor Shklovsky's notion of *ostranenie,* or defamiliarization), Prague School Structuralism (Jan Mukařovský notion of *aktualisace,* or foregrounding;[7] Roman Jakobson's emotive and poetic functions of language), and pragmatics, to functional and cognitive linguistic approaches (Traugott; Halliday and Hasan; Martinet; Geeraerts).[8] Because going into details on the internal differences and similarities between these different views would exceed the boundaries of the present account, it suffices to note that we subscribe to the view proposed by André Martinet and others, which defines expressivity as a speaker's deviance from purely conventional referential language use for the purpose of expressing attitude or being creative.[9] Although expressivity cannot be viewed as fully isolated from the referential function of language, expressivity and referential transparency can compete as opposing forces. Being creative or stylistically expressive should not stand in the way of referential accuracy.

A recent account that explores the interaction and competition between the referential and stylistic-expressive poles is Rachel Giora's Optimal Innovation Hypothesis (Giora, *On Our Mind*; Giora et al.).[10] The hypothesis is embedded in a larger research project by Giora and her collaborators on the role of salience and accessibility in language comprehension and production, with a special focus on a range of language constructs generally labeled figurative language. Salience or prominence of a particular meaning of a word or construction, in Giora's account, is a feature coded in the mental lexicon, determined by a number of parameters, like frequency, familiarity, conventionality, and prototypicality. Pleasure, it is argued, is the effect not of pure novelty but rather novelty that allows for the recoverability of the familiar/salient:

> For innovation to be "optimal" it should involve
> a. a novel response, but
> b. such that would also allow for the recovery of a salient meaning from which that novel meaning stems, in order that the similarity and difference between them may be assessable.   (*On Our Mind* 176)

Optimal innovation thus can be considered as a reconciliation between expressive and referential forces, since pleasure hinges on simultaneously recognizing the innovation ("novel response") without losing track of the referential meaning ("recovery"): "aesthetic creativity is, at least to a certain extent, a matter of graded innovativeness" (178). A typical example of an optimally innovative stimulus, in Giora's account, is a phrase like "body and sole" (180), a meaningful variant of the fixed, salient expression "body and soul," based on the homophonic relation between *soul* and *sole*. The variant triggers a meaning transformation, without losing track of the encoded, idiomatic "source" it is based on.

Whereas Giora is interested mainly in empirically testing the hypothesis in its broadest application, covering a wide variety of "optimal innovations," the present account aims at uncovering one of the cognitive mechanisms underlying, and establishing, optimal innovation as a stylistic force: metonymy. Consider, as a preliminary example, the metonymic construal in (3), expressing a negative value judgment (stupidity, ugliness, . . .) in a highly unconventional, creative manner:

(3) *Er hat seinen Kopf nur, damit die Krawatte nicht rüberrutscht.*
He's only got his head to prevent his tie from falling off.

In (3) the target concept needs to be processed metonymically through an unconventional reference point (1.1.2). Despite the unconventional, innovative character of this expression, it is motivated by a productive metonymy defining intellectual abilities (e.g.,. STUPIDITY) in terms of features of the head as container (e.g., an EMPTY HEAD). Following this pattern are expressions like "airhead," "empty-headed," "headless," and many more, which all draw on the same conceptualized causal-metonymic relation between the physical features of the head and inherent mental capacities. Section 2.1 further explores the exploitation of metonymic construal in this kind of highly expressive, informal, and humorous language use.

2. Data Analysis

To corroborate our central claim that the realization of an *expressive* meaning in some cases crucially depends on the activation of metonymic inferencing, we focus on two different types of utterances, which are located in highly disparate types of communication. In section 2.1, a case of typically oral expressive communication will be discussed: a collection of humorous verbal insults in German is analyzed in function of its exploitation of causal-metonymic construal. In section 2.2, the analysis deals with a case of written language, looking at a specific type of newspaper headlines, which potentially generate an effect of "wit" next to their primary referential function. Interestingly, as different as these two kinds of utterances may appear, they do share a semantic feature with respect to the structural impact of metonymy on the processing of an expressive meaning.

2.1. The Fine Art of Calling Each Other Names

People have always been very creative in expressing a negative appreciation of others. When doing so, the onomasiological question of selecting an appropriate

linguistic expression is determined not just by a general communication principle of being referentially accurate but also by the need to do this in a nonroutine, expressive way. Applying both communication principles leads to a continuous renewal of the linguistic material in a specific domain. In humorous-expressive contexts, the intended target concept tends to be construed in an always-changing manner, so that in the end, an impressive network of lexical variation—including a majority of nonconventional expressions—emerges.[11] The analysis of approximately 650 German expressions referring to stupidity or ugliness (so-called *Fertigmachsprüche*), taken from a collection of dictionaries of colloquial language, reveals that metonymy provides an extension tool par excellence with regard to the realization of highly creative language use, thus instantiating the schematic principle of Optimal Innovation. Since expressions like these are used to describe a person as "having a great deal of some property," they can be categorized as instances of *scalar humor* (Bergen and Binsted). In their most explicit form, these insults consist of two clauses: the first one serves to predicate a particular (negatively valued) property of a person, whereas the second clause illustrates or legitimates the value judgment. This central structure can be represented as a construction of the type *X is so Y that Z*, as in (4), or *X is too Y to Z*, as in (5).[12]

(4) *Er ist so dumm, dass ihn die Schafe beissen.*
    He is so stupid that even sheep bite him.
(5) *Sie ist zu dumm zum Sterben.*
    She is too stupid to die.

In both cases above, the target concept is profiled in a causal structure, alongside with a hyperbolically structured effect of the property.[13] Expressions like these are conceptually transparent, as the target is expressed explicitly within a causal(-final) structure. Interestingly, this basic conceptual structure is elaborated in numerous variations such as the examples in (6) through (9), in which not the target property as such (STUPID) is made explicit, but a causally related aspect instead. In utterances of this type the target concept is structured metonymically in terms of its cause or effect.[14]

(6) *Bei deiner Geburt ist wohl etwas Dreck ins Hirn geraten?*
    At your birth a bit of filth got into your brain, or what?
(7) *Dich haben sie wohl mit dem Klammerbeutel gepudert.*
    You must have been powdered with the peg bag.
(8) *Er glaubt, Gott heisse Gerhard.*
    He believes God's name is Gerhard.
(9) *Sie weiss nicht, dass es zwei Arten von Menschen gibt.*
    She doesn't know that there are two kinds of people.

Whereas in (6) and (7) the target is structured in terms of a cause explaining the occurrence of the negative property, the expressions in (8) and (9) profile the target by way of one of its prominent effects or manifestations. In (6), the target concept STUPIDITY is metonymically triggered via an unusual cause: filth in the brain at the moment of birth results in irrevocable damage to the head. This cognitive pattern

of conceptualizing a state or property by referring to an event or action is a highly conventional one (Lakoff, "Contemporary"). In contrast, in (8) and (9), not the cause of the target concept is specified, but rather a significant effect: the fact that these persons believe something utterly absurd (8) or lack basic knowledge (9) is caused by failing cognitive abilities.

Generally, the metonymic structure in (6) through (9) is rather simple, as it involves only one causal step on a chain of events. Interestingly, however, most variation patterns in this domain extend beyond such first-degree extensions. Compare, for instance, examples such as (10) and (11), in which some effect of being stupid is itself conceptualized by way of another causal structure. This structure can be formulated as *[X is so Y that] A causes B* (square brackets indicate the nonexplicit target structure). The same goes for (12), where the cause of being stupid is elaborated in a spatial-temporal scene. Figure 2 illustrates the underlying relational structure for (10). Note the embedded construction, elaborating the effect of the superordinate causal structure.

(10) *Als dein Vater dich gesehen hat, hat er doch den Storch erschossen.*
         I suppose your father shot the stork after he saw you.
(11) *Dein Gesicht auf einer Briefmarke und die Post geht pleite.*
         Your face on a stamp, and the Post Company goes bankrupt.
(12) *Als Gott die Intelligenz verteilt hat, warst du wohl gerade auf dem Klo.*
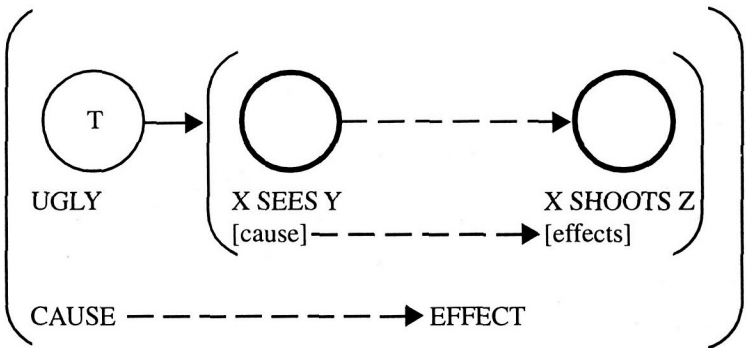   The moment God distributed intelligence, you probably were at the toilet.

Figure 2. Causal metonymic structure elaborating the effect[15]

These examples illustrate an important feature of metonymic reasoning, characterizing it as a highly dynamic construal mechanism. As opposed to metaphorical mappings, in which image-schematic and logical structures are projected from one domain onto another, metonymy allows the construction of conceptual chains, in which the target of a first metonymic extension also serves as the source for a second metonymy, and so on. This results in the processing of a *metonymic chain* in which the source concept presupposes the mental activation of several "intermediate" steps in order to reach the intended target. With respect to

the constant need for expressive renewal of lexical elements in a particular domain, this mechanism offers plenty of possibilities. A further illustration of the way in which stretched metonymies are built without losing coherence with the target is offered in the examples (13) through (17).

As documented elsewhere (Feyaerts, "Metonymic"), the conceptualization of the value judgement "X is stupid" in German draws on a schematic metonymic pattern, according to which mental deviance is represented as physical deviance.[16] This schematic pattern is elaborated in several conceptually rich instantiations concentrating around the imagery of some "abnormality of the head," as both head and brain count as the locus of human intelligence. Accordingly, many expressions, as illustrated in (13), profile the target property STUPID in terms of a deviant content of the head.[17]

> (13)   *Er hat nichts / Wasser im Kopf.*
> He has nothing / water inside his head (cf. "airhead").

This primary, metonymically motivated structure is itself subject to metonymic extension, in that the contiguous relationship between the head and the brain (CONTAINER-CONTAINED) is further exploited: a content's quality/quantity may be structured as causally linked to the quality/size of its container. Whereas in (13) the target concept is profiled as a deviant content of a container (the head), in (14) and (15) the image of a deviant content—which conventionally relates to the target STUPID—is structured in terms of a deviant container. In (14), the lack of qualitative substance inside the head is metonymically structured by the comparison of a person's head with a sieve. Similarly in (15), a person's intellectual weakness is expressed in terms of the deviant size of his or her head, comparing it to the bigger heads of horses. In (16) the schematic concept DAMAGED CONTAINER (head) is itself subject to an additional metonymic construal: the image of a damaged head (hence, a damaged content of the head and therefore a stupid person) is represented by the image of a "violent contact" as its (possible) cause. Although these examples may count among the more or less conventionalized expressions for stupidity in German, other examples, like (17), definitely are less common. The motivation behind this utterance is the particular action people with thick skulls might lend themselves to: they could serve as a battering ram. This expression relates to the target "X is stupid" by the imagery of a skull that is so thick that it hardly leaves room for its valuable content (or for the entrance of valuable ideas).

> (14)   *Sie hat einen Kopf wie ein Sieb.*
> She has a head like a sieve.
> (15)   *Überlass das Denken den Pferden, die haben einen grösseren Kopf.*
> Leave the thinking to the horses, they have bigger heads.
> (16)   *Du hast wohl als Kind einen Schlag auf den Kopf bekommen?*
> As a child you must have had a blow on the head?
> (17)   *Mit ihm kann man Türen einrennen.*
> You can break down doors with him.

For the present purpose, it is important to note that many of these creative, metonymically structured expressions are situated at quite a conceptual distance

from the intended target. This is to say that, as an expression such as (16) is created, the target concept can only be reached through the activation of an additional metonymy. Linking the image of hitting somebody on the head with "being stupid" presupposes an intermediate causal link, according to which damaging the container implies damaging the content as well, which in turn stands for a "damaged" cognitive ability (seen as the "product" of the human brain). This construal of *metonymic chaining* can be represented as in figure 3. The arrows stand for metonymic inferences, the circles for conceptual entities. The asterisk symbolizes the negative value "deviant," the letter T inside a circle identifies the target structure, and increased boldness represents the metonymic reference point (conceptual location of the linguistic source structure).
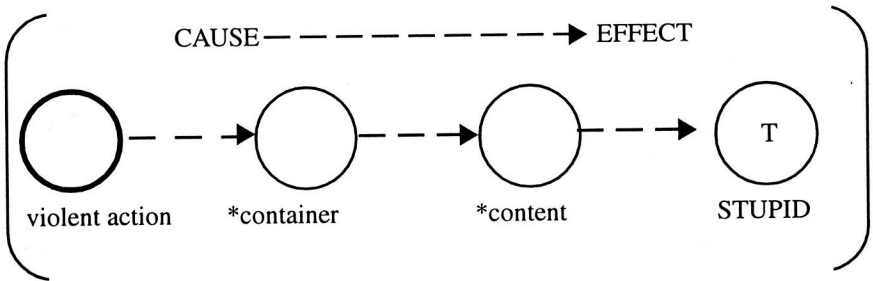
CAUSE — — — — — — — — → EFFECT

violent action   *container   *content   STUPID (T)

Figure 3. Causal metonymic chain elaborating the cause

Basically, the same goes for (17): stupidity is structured as caused by a brain that is too small, which in turn is conceptualized as the inevitable consequence of a skull that is too thick (deviant container). Both metonymic extensions are not coded: they need to be activated in order to link the image of the action in (17) to the target concept ("T"). Whereas in cases such as (16), the target is profiled along the lines of a metonymic chain that is oriented towards the "ultimate cause," the structure in (17) is less straightforward as it involves an additional metonymic elaboration of the causal metonymic chain. In this case, the ultimate cause itself happens to be construed in terms of a remarkable property (a potential action), which can be characterized as some sort of side effect. The metonymic chaining pattern underlying this expression can be represented as in figure 4. Comparing this structure with the one in figure 3 shows that in both cases the target is profiled from a peripheral spot on a causal event structure, thus implying a mental scanning operation alongside "intermediate" conceptual entities.

It is crucial to note that due to conventionalization, high frequency or other factors leading to enhanced salience, an "interpretational short cut" can be hypothesized between the source and target structure of expressions like these. It seems to be the case that creating novel expressions by stretching the conceptual distance between source and target can succeed only if the intermediate structures,
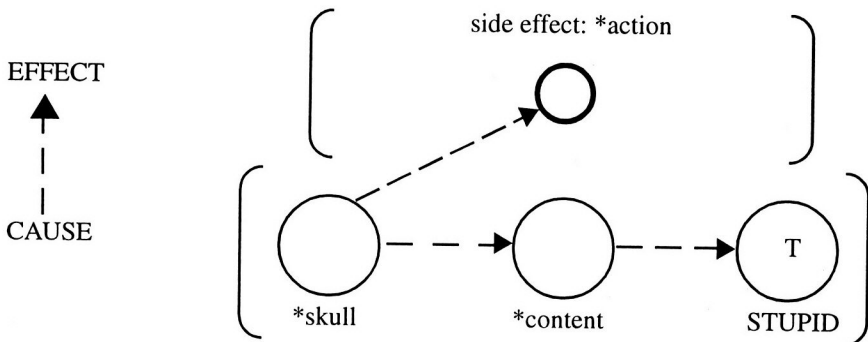
Figure 4. Causal metonymic chain with elaborating the cause

which are omitted from the (causal) chain of events, possess a specific degree of conventionalization (salience).[18] For the present purpose, suffice it to point out that the structural characteristic of metonymic chaining is a highly dynamic construal mechanism that serves the goal of providing a constant renewal of the lexical material in order to maintain the expressive value required by this type of utterance. Bearing in mind Giora's Optimal Innovation Hypothesis, we see that the chaining potential of metonymy provides an excellent mechanism for the construction of stimuli that are innovative (unconventional) but that, at the same time, link back to a (partly) conventionalized meaning. Particularly in the expressivity-driven material under analysis here, the possibility of a linear extension (e.g., cause-effect chains) yields productive patterns of "optimal" innovation.

In realizing a creative, expressive meaning, metaphor and metonymy do not achieve the same effect. Metaphorical mappings bring about a paradigmatic perspectivization of one domain in terms of another, and thus this construal might be regarded as an aspect of creativity as well. Yet, in the process of creating novel, expressive utterances, metaphor unlike metonymy hardly serves the goal of constantly innovating the conceptual relationship between source and target concept without losing contact with the established, conventionalized imagery. Take for example the conventional metaphor of describing a stupid person as a monkey. When first confronted, this image might create a humorous effect; still it does not serve as the source for another metaphor placed on top of it. Rather, the expressive exploitation of this metaphor is achieved in the syntagmatic plane, where instead of the animal itself, some typical behavior can be used as a reference point, as in (18), in order to avoid an automatic processing of the intended target.

(18)   *Dich haben sie wohl mit einer Banane aus dem Urwald gelockt?*
       You have been lured out of the jungle with a banana, right?

Importantly, however, the application of conventional metaphors allows metonymic reasoning to unfold in different domains, which are all related to the same target structure. An illustration of this is provided by the examples in (19) through (24), which all share the same target property STUPID:

(19) *Sie hat einen Dachschaden.*
Her roof is damaged.
(20) *Bei dir haben sie wohl eingebrochen?*
You must have had a break-in, right?
(21) *Ihm haben sie wohl eine Ecke abgefahren.*
Someone must have cut off one of his edges.
(22) *Bei ihm ist eine Schraube locker.*
He has a screw loose.
(23) *Ihr raucht der Kopf.*
Her head is smoking.
(24) *Du brauchst wohl einen Schraubenschlüssel?*
You probably need a screwdriver?

In (19) through (21), stupidity is profiled through the image of a damaged container, which in these cases corresponds to the human body conventionally metaphorized as a building. Parallel to the examples in (14) and (16), the deviance as such is made explicit in (19), whereas the expressions in (20) and (21) focus on some sort of violent action causing the damage. A comparable pattern of metonymic innovation can be observed in (22) through (24), in which another conventional body metaphor is instantiated, according to which the human BODY is structured in terms of a MACHINE. Whereas in (22) the cause of the defect is the reference point, (23) expresses a prominent effect. In a slightly more opaque way, the utterance in (24) also highlights some sort of "consequence" of having a screw loose.

Figure 5 illustrates the complex interplay of metonymy and metaphor in the examples (19) and (24). Note that in (19), the deviance is made explicit, whereas in (24), only a secondary consequence of the defect (the need for a screwdriver) is referred to.
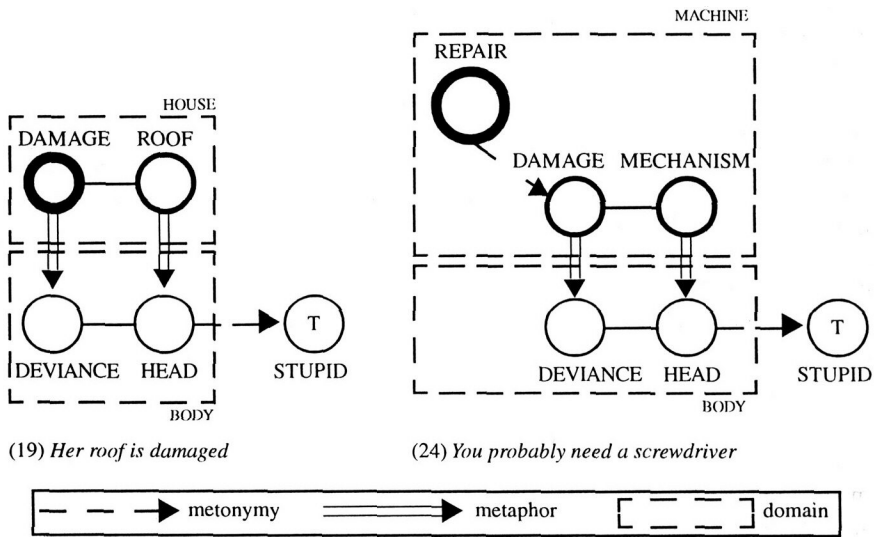

(19) *Her roof is damaged*   (24) *You probably need a screwdriver*

metonymy   metaphor   domain

Figure 5. Interplay of metonymic and metaphorical construal

It is apparent from these examples that whereas conventional metaphors commonly establish one or more additional perspectives on a target concept (domain), metonymic reasoning operates throughout each domain, exploiting its internal structure in order to meet the onomasiological challenge of creating ever fresh material.

2.2. Witty Newspaper Headlines

Not only highly informal utterances of the type analyzed in the previous section form the locus of complex conceptual structures involving both metaphorical as well as metonymic patterns. On the contrary, as the present section aims to show, a specific type of headline, intending an effect of "wit," draws on the very same mechanisms. It will be demonstrated that in this case as well, the expressive effect of wit resides not in a metaphorical mapping itself but in its metonymic exploitation instead. We will therefore make the claim that metonymy serves as a mechanism of construal, the innovative strength of which both lies on the conceptual as well as the stylistic level.

Analyses by linguists and discourse analysts have revealed a number of different communicative functions of headlines. Apart from their summarizing function (Mårdh; Bell), headlines frequently serve as eye-catchers to persuade the reader to continue reading the article they accompany (Alexander). Daniel Dor argues that both these functions serve the same goal on a higher functional level: headlines are designed to *optimize the relevance* of the stories for the readers. In the context of this paper we will uncover a particular blending network constellation, which simultaneously pinpoints the article topic and intends a subtle effect of wit.[19] Richard Alexander notes that headlines are "generally used to catch the attention of the reader in a witty fashion or to provide a wordplay that ties in with the subject matter of the article" (94). Of essential importance for the present purpose is the question how these witticisms are to be analyzed in terms of cognitive construal mechanisms such as metaphor and metonymy.

Consider the economic headlines in (25) through (27), where the use of a particular verb phrase indicates an instantiation of the conventional orientational metaphor QUANTITY IS VERTICALITY, which consists of two main submetaphors, MORE IS UP / LESS IS DOWN.[20]

   (25)   Bridgestone *bounces back* in U.S. market (*FT* 22 Feb. 2003)
   (26)   U.S. slowdown *punctures* Michelin's profits
   (27)   Airlines feel the pinch as cost of fuel goes *sky-high* (*FT* 27 Feb. 2003)

In (25), the verb *to bounce back* represents an increase of Bridgestone's solid earnings—following a strong financial setback—as an upward movement (MORE IS UP) . Although this verb instantiates a conventional metaphor, one might wonder why the positive economic result of Bridgestone is referred to as an indefinite "something" *bouncing back* in the market? Taken literally, only objects filled with air or highly elastic solid objects can be said to *bounce*. In this context, the name Bridgestone is to be identified as a tire-producing company, thus motivating a second interpretation, which offers an additional effect of wit to the headline. In a similar way, the verb *to puncture* in (26) fits into the conventional metaphor LESS

IS DOWN, according to which a diminishing quantity of something (decreasing profits) is represented in terms of reducing vertical size (deflation of an inflatable object). Again, however, the verb not only instantiates the conventional metaphor but also relates to the company in question (Michelin), thus providing a second interpretation, in which a metonymic link is exploited between the company and its product (tires). In (27), the verbal expression *to go sky-high*, characterizing the "rising" fuel prices, is only partially motivated by the conventional MORE IS UP metaphor. Since the utterance about the rising level of fuel prices is made with regard to its effect on airlines, the verb phrase offers an additional, metonymically motivated interpretation. *To go sky-high*, then, is also meaningful in a literal way with respect to airplanes in their role of major "instruments" of airline companies. Once again, an effect of wit is achieved by the selection of a lexical item that can be interpreted in two ways: along with the mappings of a conventional metaphor but also literally through a (rather distant) metonymic link, in which the thematic element of the headline is involved. This type of ambiguity, generated by the interplay of a contextually salient conventional metaphor and a covered metonymy, will be referred to as *double grounding*.[21]

From a methodological point of view, it is important to note that the metonymic link, through which in each of these cases an ambiguous interpretation is achieved, is established only within the local space of the headline itself. In "traditional" cognitive metaphor theory (CMT), it might be common to identify both this metonymic structure as well as the metaphorical interpretation of the verb phrase. However, its focus is mainly on separate conventional mappings rather than on dynamic interpretations, in which more than two statically oriented domains of knowledge are involved. In the case of metonymic "back projection," the lexical elements *bounce back*, *puncture*, and *go sky-high* activate their nonmetaphorical meaning as well. With regard to this kind of complexity, involving multidirectional interactions between several knowledge domains, Blending Theory (BT) provides an adequate descriptive tool.

In BT terms, each of the examples activates three input spaces, two of which represent the source and target concept (inputs 1 and 2 respectively) of the conventional metaphor QUANTITY IS VERTICALITY. Applied to the domain of economics, both input spaces are linked by cross-space mappings, construing, for instance, a cause of a negative economic development as the cause of a vertical movement ("Uncertainty about Iraq crisis *weighs down* stocks in U.S.," *WSJ* 25 Feb. 2003), a company (or its shares) as a vertically moving object ("Alstom SA: Shares *fall* as talks with EDS on outsourcing are ended," *WSJ* 26 Feb. 2003), and so on. In figure 6, representing example (26), solid lines between elements of the input spaces 1 and 2 represent the systematicity of this metaphorical mapping. In the context of the headline in (26), this conceptual metaphor is instantiated with respect to a specific company in a specific situation. Accordingly, MICHELIN 2001 constitutes a third, "representational" input space, which contains knowledge elements related to this particular company, such as a negative financial evolution, its activity as a tire producing company and so forth. Elements such as MICHELIN'S

PROFITS and U.S. SLOWDOWN instantiate the schematic target concept of the conventional metaphor (dashed lines),[22] and they are blended with elements from other inputs. In figure 6, the dotted lines leading from the elaborated target input MICHELIN 2001 to a new, integrated scene (the blended space) represent the selection of nonmetaphorical elements for the blend.

Crucially, one element in the blend (*to puncture*) is metaphorically motivated and has a particular relevance for the entire interpretation process. In interpreting the headline, this central element is meaningful not just along the lines of the conventional metaphor (*puncture* represents the cause of the deflation of an object); it may also be interpreted with respect to another input space, thus giving rise to a blend of two interpretations. In our example, the verb *to puncture* also relates to the representational space MICHELIN 2001, where its literal meaning is triggered by the metonymic interpretation of Michelin in terms of its product. This additional meaning is represented as the dashed arrow in figure 6. In the examples discussed so far, the envisaged ambiguous meaning presupposes the metonymic interpretation of MICHELIN, BRIDGESTONE, and AIRLINES as products ("tires") or instruments ("airplanes") of the respective companies. What supports the central aim of the present paper is the observation that only through this *metonymic mediation*, does each of the verb phrases (*bounce back, puncture, go sky-high*) activate its literal meaning next to the salient metaphorical one.[23] Once again, this observation relates to Giora's Optimal Innovation Hypothesis, in that the effect of wit is based on a dual activation of a conventionalized, salient interpretation and a local, unexpected but motivated reading.
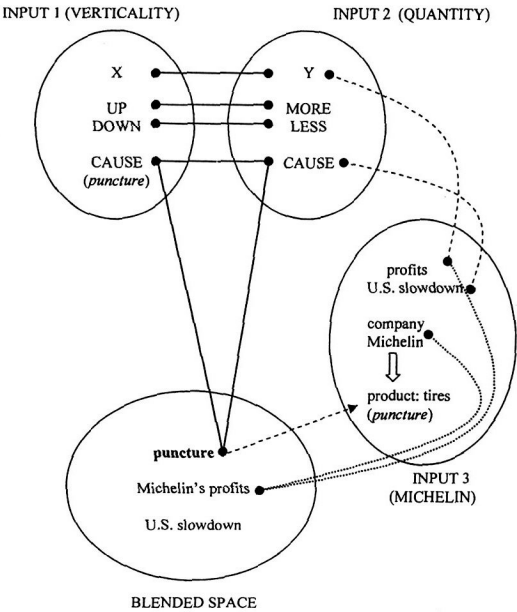

Figure 6. Double grounding constellation for *puncture*

The integration of elements from different input spaces into a coherent scene gives rise to a new conceptual structure in the interpretation process (*emergent structure*), which is not accounted for outside the blend. In double grounding, new structure emerges as the central lexical item in the blend (*bounce back, puncture, go sky-high*) profiles an additional meaning with respect to a second, highly elaborated input space (input 3). This secondary, less salient interpretation establishes a new mapping, which does not occur without the realization of the blend. Outside the blend there is no link between an element like *bounce back* in the metaphorical source and that same lexical element in the elaborated target input BRIDGESTONE. Both input spaces are connected through the activation of a metonymic link in the elaborated target structure.

To conclude our empirical exploration of this phenomenon we take a look at three more examples.

(28) Russia *takes froth off* Carlsberg results (*FT* 21 Feb. 2003)
(29) The Agnelli family is again in *the driver's seat* at Fiat (*WSJ* 26 Feb. 2003)
(30) Drug case may cause *chronic pain* for Bayer (*FT* 21 Feb. 2003)

The headline in (28) comments on the tumbling Carlsberg share following a negative statement concerning Russia, one of Carlsberg's growth markets. Parallel to the previous examples, two input spaces can be identified as the source and target structure of the QUANTITY IS VERTICALITY metaphor. In the economic context of this utterance, the schematic target concept expressing quantity is ultimately elaborated as SHARE VALUE CARLSBERG. This concept belongs to a third input space (CARLSBERG 2003), in which all knowledge elements relating to the actual situation of this beer-producing company are represented. From this representational space, both the brand name *Carlsberg* as well as the mentioning of (financial) *results* and *Russia* are projected onto the blend. From input 1 it is the verb phrase *take froth off* that is brought in, expressing a downward movement and, hence, a negative evolution of the share value. However, as one literally can take froth off a beer, this verb phrase prompts for a metonymic shift of CARLSBERG towards the brewery's product, whereas the verb itself also activates its literal meaning next to the metaphorical one. So once again, the conceptual integration of elements taken from different input spaces into a new and coherent scene brings about new relationships, which were previously not accounted for.

In the analysis so far, we have looked at cases of double grounding, all of which appear to exploit the verticality metaphor in an opportunistic way. As appears in (29) and (30), however, this type of multidirectional interaction is not restricted to verticality metaphors. These headlines also primarily reflect conventional metaphorical mappings. The example in (29) features the metaphorical conceptualization of LEADING AN ORGANIZATION in terms of DRIVING A VEHICLE, which is in itself an instantiation of the more schematic metaphor DEVELOPMENT IS MOVEMENT (*the company is moving ahead slowly; a European economy that can go with the flow*). In consequence, taking over the leadership of a company is depicted as taking the driver's seat. In (30), company problems are

conceptualized metaphorically as PHYSICAL PAIN. Again, the representation is part of a larger metaphorical structure in which companies are thought of as living beings that can grow, get ill, recover, and die. However, an analysis in terms of linguistic reflections of conventional conceptual metaphors does not account for the local ambiguity created in these headlines. In both cases, the effect of wit is to be attributed to a double grounding mechanism, in which a secondary, literal interpretation is triggered for a relevant element in the headline. Just as in (25) and (26), the verb phrase expresses a process that can be associated with the product of the company involved. In other words, apart from instantiating the source concept of a conventional metaphor, *to be in the driver's seat* is additionally interpreted literally through a metonymic link in the elaborated target concept (FIAT). The same goes for (30), where the noun phrase *chronic pain* is part of the metaphorical source concept but at the same time triggers a less conventional metonymic link in the input space pertaining to the Bayer company. Through a contiguous relationship, the product of the company (medicines) is prototypically linked to the concept of pain, the source concept of the metaphorical projection.

Concluding our analysis of newspaper headlines, we have identified *double grounding* as one specific strategy of conceptual integration, in which the coactivation of two interpretations with respect to different input spaces reveals a witty effect of ambiguity. Of particular interest for the present purpose is the observation that only via a metonymic link in the elaborated target input is a secondary (literal) interpretation triggered next to the salient metaphorical one, thus leading to a stylistically marked, pleasurable headline. Because this structural feature holds for the other examples as well, a common blueprint for the space configuration in instances of double grounding can be revealed, as in figure 7.
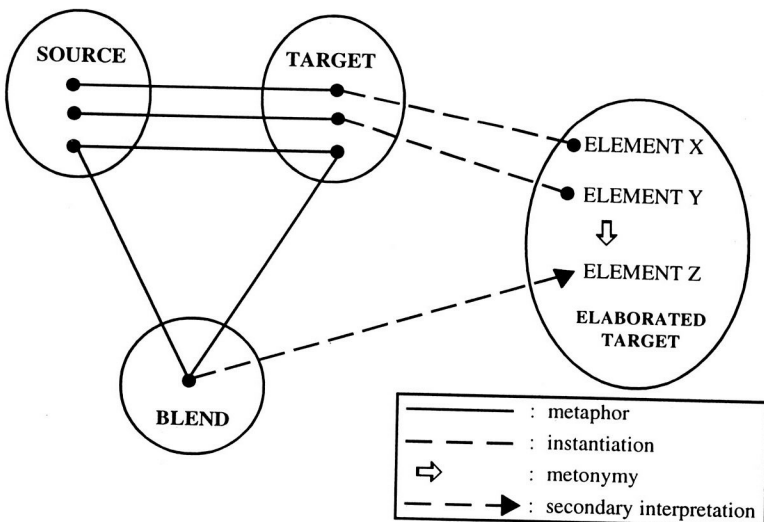

Figure 7. Double grounding blueprint

3. Summary and Conclusions

The analysis of two radically different types of utterances has illustrated the specific importance of metonymic reasoning for the realization of an expressive meaning. Although in both case studies the processing of a "pleasurable" meaning does seem to depend on the activation of a metonymic link, there are structural differences to be noted as well. Apart from the nearly opposite realms of communication, the main difference between both types lies in their discursive functionality. Expressions of insult aiming at a single target concept are generated by the expressive need for constant onomasiological variation. Combined with the potential of lexical instantiation, metonymic reasoning appears to be the structural driving force in this process, as it favors a construal of dynamic chaining. Metonymic extensions (e.g., causal links) are capable of stretching the relationship between source and target, the successful nonroutine processing of which establishes an effect of expressivity. This extension process does not occur in an arbitrary way, as the increase of conceptual distance between source and target—in the creation of a novel expression on an imagined causal chain of events—might well depend on the degree of conventionalization of previous (intermediate) conceptual steps. This restriction, then, illustrates the principle of Optimal Innovation according to which structural stability (conventionalization) and flexibility (innovation) must go hand in hand.

With regard to the achievement of an effect of wit, cases of double grounding count as one-shot creations involving no explicit onomasiological variation. However, the achievement of this semasiological effect hinges on the onomasiological matter of selecting one specific element that may be interpreted with respect to two different domains of knowledge (spaces). As far as the conceptual structure is concerned, instances of double grounding achieve their ambiguity effect beyond the realm of conventional metaphorical meanings, involving the activation of an additional, less salient metonymic link. Importantly, this metonymically motivated ambiguity depends heavily on the primary processing of a prominent, conventional metaphor. In our examples, unexpected reference is made to the product or instrument of a company (e.g., tires, airplanes, beer, medicine, cars), whereas the overall context—generated by the financial pages as well as the article's topic—focuses on financial aspects of the respective companies. Regarding the description of this complexity, the blending model provides the most adequate analytical tool.

Despite these obvious differences, both types of utterances present a common case in strong support of a characterization of metonymy as a cognitive mechanism of construal with a clear impact on nonreferential (stylistic, emotive) aspects of meaning appreciation. Both cases feature an outspoken interaction of metaphorical and metonymic structures, revealing that the major contribution to the realization of an expressive meaning is situated in the activation of a novel metonymic link. In each case, a conventional meaning (literal or figurative) serves as a base structure, which is exploited in a chained (scalar humor) or singular (double grounding)

pattern by a metonymic extension. Crucially, both types of creativity support the Optimal Innovation hypothesis, according to which innovative meaning extension requires a conventional semantic structure to serve as its reference point. As this contribution has shown for two types of utterances, analysis of other structures may further illustrate the way in which our urge to be creative is regulated by the cognitive principle of Optimal Innovation.

Notes

We would like to thank Gerard Steen and two anonymous referees for their valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper.

[1] For a review of Semino and Culpeper, see Brône.

[2] Among many other recent publications on metaphor are Freeman, *Metaphor and Poetry*; Gibbs, *Identifying*; and Yu, "Syntesthetic."

[3] Idealized cognitive models (ICMs), in Lakoff's terminology, define people's structuring of knowledge in cultural or "folk" models (for a discussion on the relation between frames, domains, and ICMs, see Radden and Kövecses 19). The label *idealized* serves to stress that ICMs "don't fit actual situations in a one-to-one correspondence but relate many concepts that are inferentially connected to one another in a single conceptual structure that is experientially meaningful as a whole" (Gibbs, *Poetics* 58).

[4] Although the concepts of frame, ICM, domain, script, scenario, etc. are used with slightly different interpretations in cognitive psychology, artificial intelligence, and linguistics, these differences are of minor importance in the present account. Henceforth, we will use *frame* as a cover term (for a similar argument, see Radden and Panther 9).

[5] For a discussion on the applicability and scope of the notion of contiguity, see Bredin 47; Eco 79-82; Feyaerts, *Refining* 62-64; Koch 148; and Weinrich 107.

[6] For an overview of the current research on the metonymic basis of conversational inferencing, see Panther and Thornburg.

[7] Renan explores the applicability of foregrounding or "disautomatization" in explaining humor mechanisms ("comic deviations") and is thus of particular interest to the present account of humorous (2.1) and witty (2.2) effects through the use of novel metonymies.

[8] For these and other linguistic approaches to expressivity, see Willemse.

[9] In this paper we use the terms *expressive* and *creative meaning* interchangeably.

[10] Giora acknowledges and briefly discusses the affinity to the traditional accounts of novelty and expressivity, like those of Russian Formalism and the Linguistic Circle of Prague (*On Our Mind* 179).

[11] Although many conceptual studies in cognitive semantics restrict the empirical scope of their analysis to conventionalized expressions, it is important

that within the same usage-based model, "each and every expression related to a concept . . . be examined if we wish to uncover the minute details of a concept" (Kövecses, *Emotion* 44). This requirement presupposes the inclusion of both well-established (conventional) as well as nonconventional expressions, such as novel creations, ad hoc modifications, etc., into the material.

[12] Bergen and Binsted restrict their analysis of scalar humor to examples of the first constructional type.

[13] The profile of an expression is the aspect of its conceptual focus that is in focus. Langacker refers to the profile as "the entity designated by a semantic structure" (*Foundations* 491).

[14] This is not to say that in (1) and (2) no metonymic structure is present. Although explicit reference to both the target (*dumm*) as well as the relevant causal(-final) structure (*so . . . dass*; *zu . . . um*) prevents these examples from being categorized as prototypical instances of metonymy, both cases do involve a causal processing of the intended property and thus evoke a cognitive process labeled "metonymic processing of language" by Gibbs ("Speaking").

[15] It should be noted that the arrows represent the logical causal structure. Obviously, this order should not be confused with the directionality of the metonymic inference in the specific utterance. The reference points shaping the specific construal of this causal structure are indicated in bold.

[16] This relates to observations made earlier in person perception psychology emphasizing the dynamic nature of human observation: "In forming impressions of a person, we usually start with partial information. . . . These circumscribed bits of evidence generate nonetheless a host of inferences about a person, inferences that are made with varying degrees of certainty. One 'knows' more about a person than what seems to be immediately connoted by the acts one has witnessed or the information one has gained about him. To 'know' is not used here in the sense of 'know correctly'" (Brunner, Shapiro, and Tagiuri 277).

[17] The abnormality may be located on a qualitative (wrong content) or quantitative (not enough) dimension.

[18] It would be interesting to investigate on an experimental basis metonymic flexibility with regard to nonconventional material. This will be a topic of future research.

[19] Note that the use of witty effects in headlines and cartoons has been thoroughly explored in previous research. Among the many useful references are Alexander and Nash.

[20] Our text material is collected mainly from a one-week survey of two financial newspapers: the *Financial Times* (*FT*) and the *Wall Street Journal* (*WSJ*). Example (26) was taken from *Financial Times Online* <http://www.ft.com>.

[21] See also Brône and Feyaerts, "Headlines." Fauconnier and Turner discuss a similar example and label it "opportunistic recruitment" (*The Way* 279).

[22] On the basis of this relationship of elaboration alone, one might question the representation of this concept as a separate input space, but with regard to its role in both the metaphor and metonymy involved in this complex interpretation, the representation seems appropriate. As these examples indicate, input spaces (or domains in CMT) cannot be delineated apart from any specific context or situation. Moreover, they are essentially defined by the relationship in which they are involved (Feyaerts, "Refining").

[23] This metonymic complication is what distinguishes cases of double grounding from "ordinary" puns, in which the ambiguity often resides in the simultaneous activation of two conventional meanings in a single context (e.g., "Two men run into a bar. A third one ducks").

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Abstracts

GERARD STEEN, "Metonymy Goes Cognitive-Linguistic"/ **1**

To provide a context for the essays published here, this introduction to the special issue on metonymy highlights a number of aspects of the cognitive-linguistic discussion of metonymy of the past twenty-five years. It briefly sketches the development of metonymy studies in poetics, linguistics, and philosophy, emphasizing that the cognitive-linguistic approach to metonymy of the past decades represents a return to the semantic views of metonymy advocated in structuralist semantics. This development was triggered by the extensive study of metaphor, but metonymy has now emancipated itself as an autonomous field of study that displays complex and unresolved relations with metaphor. This introduction also attends to the new insights added by cognitive linguistics to such a semantic approach to metonymy, suggesting that metonymy has indeed gone cognitive linguistic.

KURT FEYAERTS AND GEERT BRÔNE, "Expressivity and Metonymic Inferencing: Stylistic Variation in Nonliterary Language Use" / **12**

Metonymy has received renewed attention in recent cognitive linguistic research as a prominent cognitive construal operation underlying many types of everyday language use. However, the same conceptualization mechanism is exploited for the realization of expressivity effects as well. The present paper explores the way in which metonymy contributes to the creation of an expressive meaning in different types of nonliterary language use. In two case studies dealing with highly informal expressions (verbal insults expressing stupidity) and more artificially construed language (newspaper headlines), a structural pattern of stylistic variation is revealed, one generated by the activation of a process of metonymic inferencing. In both types of expressions, a careful equilibrium emerges between an innovative, expressive meaning and well-established, conventional structures. This observation is supports Giora's Optimal Innovation Hypothesis.

DANIEL C. STRACK, "Who Are the Bridge-Builders? Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Architecture of Empire" / **37**

This essay examines Rudyard Kipling's short story "The Bridge-Builders," specifically focusing on how it uses bridge-building as a metaphorical expression for imperialism. The typically positive connotations of bridges must be reevaluated with reference to the narrative context of empire-building and the individuals associated with it. Who are the bridge-builders? Analysis of the story in light of the PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT metonymy exposes the problematic nature of bridge-building in the imperial context. From the critic's perspective, analysis of the bridge-building metaphor reaffirms Kipling's notorious role as propagandist for the imperialist cause while examination of metonymy reveals another side of Kipling: his idealistic vision for imperial reform. At the theoretical level, this examination