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**Fine Art Painting**

**Metaphor in Word & Image**

by  
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# Introduction

If there *has* been a recent shift in critical method, it can perhaps best be characterised as a displacement from logical to rhetorical analysis, from a criticism concerned primarily or exclusively with the abstract truth or falsehood of statements, to one which deals with their use in specific social circumstances. .... And insofar as rhetoric also specifies the proper use of contradictory expressions (such as metaphors) it is also the site of the *ideological*. (Owens 1992, p. 279)

Social reality is the product of rhetorical persuasion. Although this statement is more or less accepted in the law courts and in the political arena it is now recognised as having validity in domains previously believed to be based on objective natural facts, e.g. science (Gross 1990) and medicine (Simons 1993). Analyses of the structures of power and accepted narratives of history, criminality, medicine, sexuality, race, etc., by writers such as Foucault have exposed their rhetorical nature and have led to the realisation that there was no absolute truth but only what resulted from an uncritical acceptance of a partisan view rhetorically presented.

Rhetoric is primarily a technique, not a mode of truth. The central aim of rhetoric is the persuasion of others and as such is performance-based. Its means are formal in that it employs argumentative structures that are independent of content. In this sense rhetoric, in its pure form, is amoral although writers such as Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian have included ethical guidelines in their works.

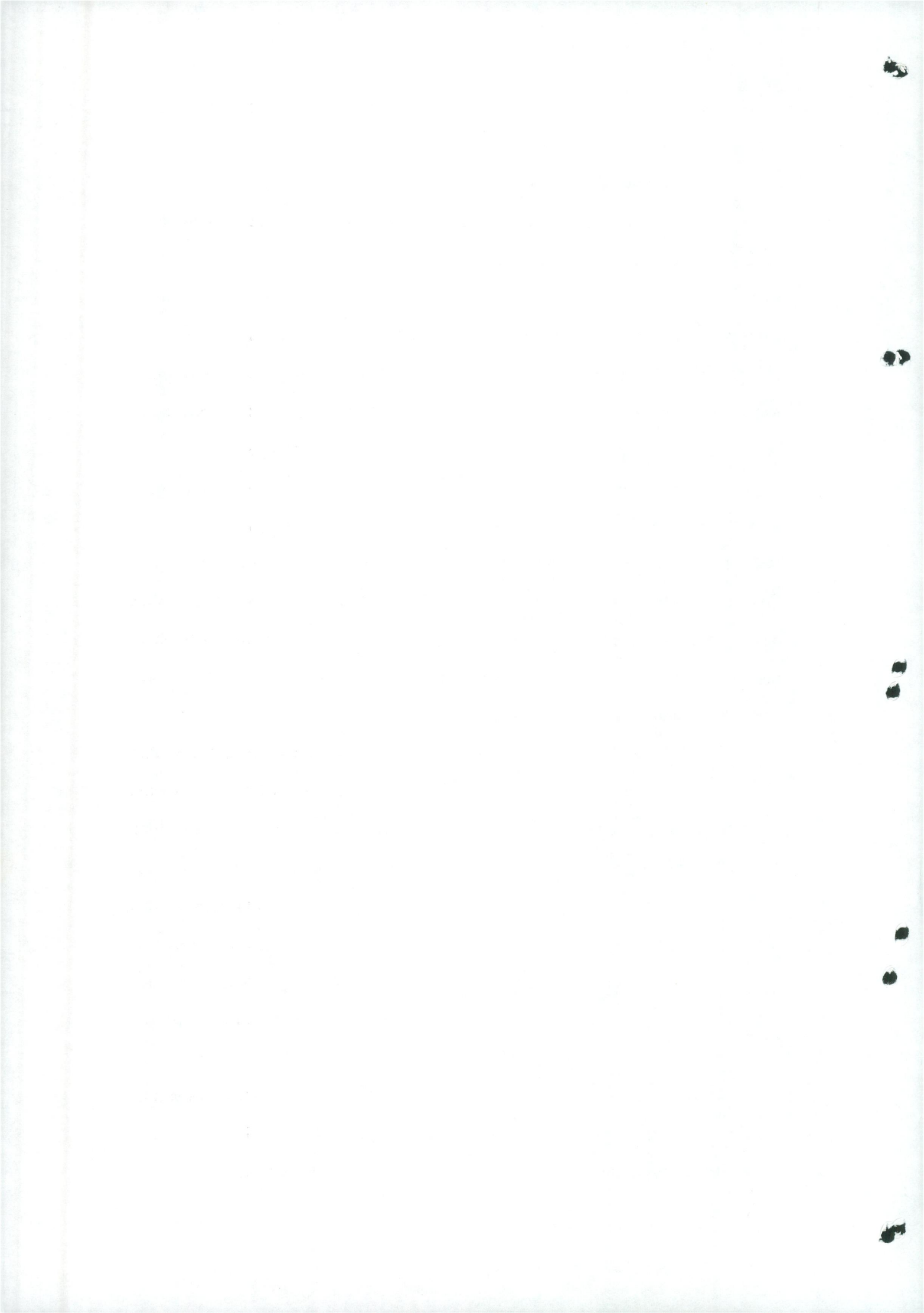
Although it is likely that the use of rhetoric predates Corax of Syracuse (flourished 476 BC) it is he who is traditionally credited with its invention and use in the settlement of land claims. From its inception it had a practical application, but rhetoric itself soon became a subject for theoretical analysis. The oldest surviving textbook is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* which is analytic in tone, dividing the art of persuasion into three modes of proof: logical proof (*logos*), emotional argument (*pathos*), and arguments whose validity is based on ethics (*ethos*). Later Latin writers



on rhetoric such as Cicero and Quintilian include treatises on the efficient use of speech to obtain the desired results.

St. Augustine, by his adaptation of classical rhetoric for the persuasion of the validity of Christianity, provided the impetus for its survival into the Middle Ages. One of the most influential books of the time, once thought to be by Cicero but now attributed anonymously, was *Rhetorica ad Herennium* which was virtually unknown when originally written around 84 BC. In September 1416, Poggio Bracciolini, while attending the Council of Constance, travelled to a monastery in St. Gall, Switzerland and discovered a complete version of the *Institutio Oratoria* of Quintilian which had been lost for six centuries. Until then, medieval rhetoric had largely consisted of fragmentary tracts which were technical treatises on specialised genres. The complete version of Quintilian's *Institutio* provided, for the first time since the Classical Age, a general political and social framework with a moral rationale for the use of rhetoric. Five years later, a complete copy of Cicero's *De Oratore* was discovered in the Italian city of Lodi. Like Quintilian, Cicero dealt with the humanistic concerns of the role of the individual in civic life. The assimilation of these two major classic works proclaimed the post-medieval era of rhetoric.

The dawning of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason as opposed to belief, was to herald the gradual decline in the importance of rhetoric within intellectual disciplines in the following century. But in the winter of 1872, Friedrich Nietzsche gave a series of lectures at the University of Basel entitled "The History of Greek Eloquence" and in 1873 published "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense". In both, he argues that language, the means of perception and experience, is rhetorical and therefore opinionated and partial, and as a result full knowledge and experience of reality cannot be achieved. Furthermore, he argues that as words are tropes and hence have meanings that are partial, transferable and reversible, then all ethical and epistemological systems are similarly partial, transferable and reversible: "The full essence of things will never be grasped... language is rhetoric, because it desires to convey only a *doxa* [opinion], not an *episteme* [knowledge]" (Nietzsche





1872, p. 23). In part III of his lecture notes Nietzsche drew attention to the differences between speech and writing, an issue which was later to be further developed by both Barthes and Derrida.

It is sometimes argued that of the three modes of proof described by Aristotle, it is the logical that is closest to the idea of discovering absolute truth. But this assumes that logic corresponds to laws of thought and causation in the physical world. This itself is a rhetorical conclusion. Logical arguments are based on abstract schemas such as the deductive syllogism: 'All X are Y; Z is an X; therefore Z is Y'. Such formal systems have been shown by the mathematician Kurt Gödel to be incomplete, in that there are logical propositions whose truth value is undecidable in that they can neither be proved true nor false (Hofstadter 1980). Although for almost all practical purposes this theoretical result is inconsequential, it does question the status of logic as the basis for absolute truth. A further attack on logic, this time as a means for discovering historical truth, is expressed thus: "insofar as logic proceeds formally, presenting its rules without reference to the time, place or circumstances of their use, is it not the mode of analysis most *inimical* to understanding historical processes?" (Owens 1992, p. 278).

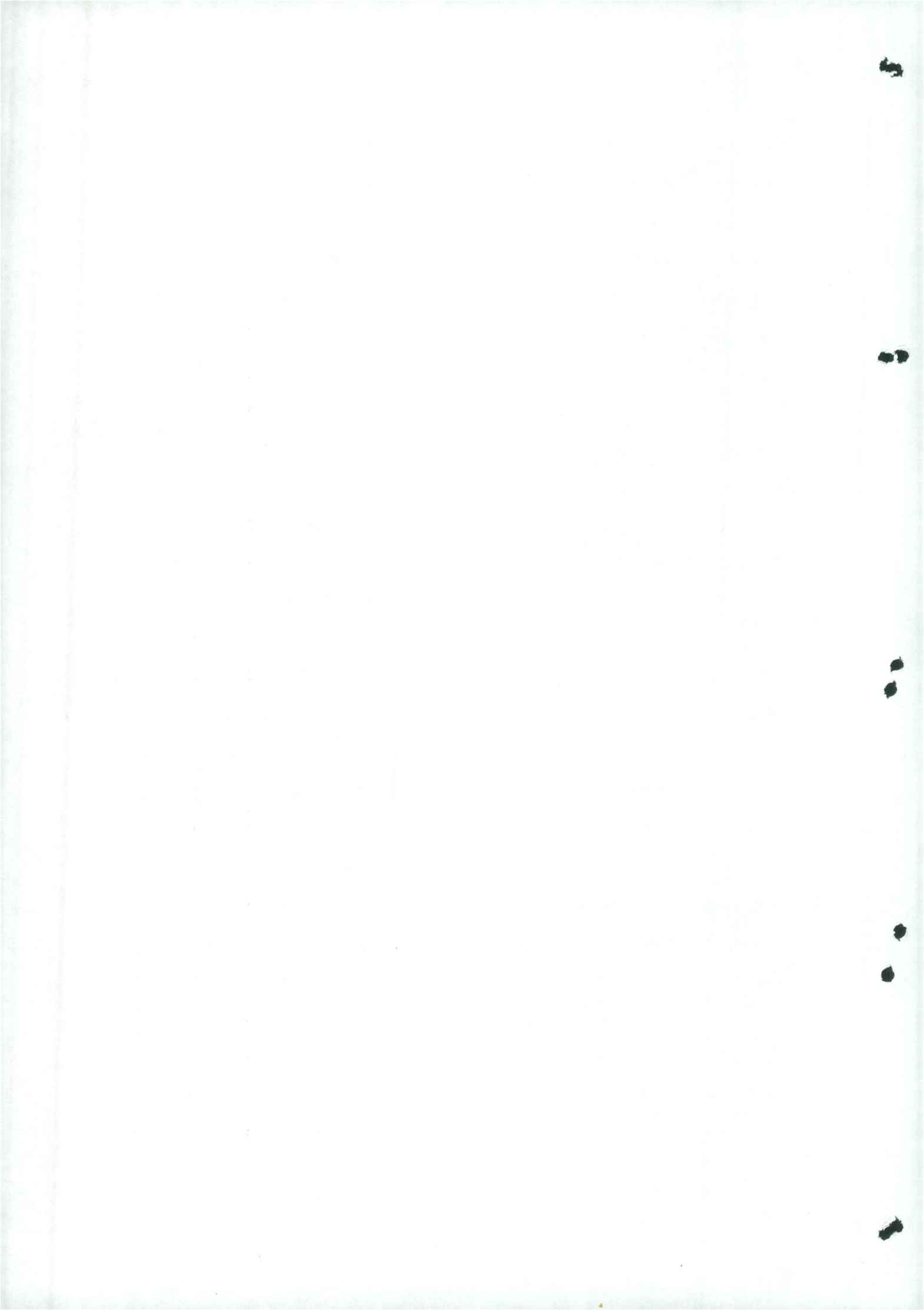
In their presentation of the "New Rhetoric", Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca advocate a return to the ancient traditions of Greek rhetoric and to those of the Renaissance, claiming that Descartes' dictum "Take well nigh for false everything which was only plausible" (Descartes, 1968) has been responsible for the fact that the study of proofs used to secure adherence to an argument has been neglected for the last three centuries. They advocate the use of dialectical reasoning, which they view as rhetorical, to run in parallel to analytic reasoning by the consideration of that which is probable in addition to dealing solely with logical propositions that are necessarily true.

Quintilian, in his *Institutio VIII*, defined a trope as " ... an artistic change of word or phrase from its proper signification to another" (Murphy 1974, footnote p. 185). This definition, being so similar to a definition of metaphor, may be responsible



for the confusion arising from, on the one hand, metaphor being considered equivalent to the general idea of a trope and, on the other hand, from metaphor being classed as one trope among many. Nevertheless, metaphor is now considered a master trope, albeit inextricably linked with metonymy and synecdoche, as will be discussed in detail in later chapters, and is arguably the most used rhetorical device. Although the reduction of the number of rhetorical tropes to the four 'basic' tropes, i.e. metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, dates to the first half of the sixteenth century, (Vickers 1988, footnote p. 439) it was not until two hundred years later that a detailed theory was formulated in favour of metaphor as "the most luminous and therefore the necessary and frequent[ly used of tropes]" (Vico 1744, p. 404). Vico argues that "the first poets attributed to bodies the being of animate substances, with ... sense and passion, and in this way made fables of them. Thus every metaphor so formed is a fable in brief" (Vico 1744). This idea of an original poetic language was further developed a decade later by Rousseau in his *Essay on the Origins of Language*.

Both Derrida in declaring that "the task is to consider philosophy ... as a 'particular literary genre', drawing on a set of tropic resources older than philosophy itself", (Derrida 1982, p. 293) and likewise de Man, with "the critical deconstruction that leads to the discovery of the literary, rhetorical nature of the philosophical claim to truth ... cannot be refuted", (de Man 1979, p. 115) argue that the use of tropes in philosophical writings proves that they are rhetorical by nature. Building on foundations laid by Nietzsche, they further argue that if philosophy, as expounded in writing, is rhetorical, it therefore cannot claim to deliver absolute truth. This leads to categorising philosophical writings as a branch of literature on a par with poetry. If the use of metaphor can result in such a devastating deconstruction of the 'Queen of Sciences', then it would seem worthwhile to deconstruct metaphor itself in order to try and understand the power and pervasiveness of this trope, especially in the visual media which dominate contemporary culture. This is the subject of this thesis.





The underlying premise of rhetoric is that communication can be deconstructed and its principles and modes of operation can be abstracted and analysed. Poststructuralist critiques, following the lead of Saussure, have exploded "the myth of [a] semantic correspondence between sign and referent" (de Man 1979, p. 6). Kenneth Burke considers "any slight bias or even unintended error" (de Man 1979, p. 8) in the link between a signifier and a signified, which he terms a deflection, to be the rhetorical basis for language. Following from this, de Man states that "rhetoric radically suspends logic and opens up vertiginous possibilities of referential aberration" and, using Peirce's model of a sign, distinguishes between the use of grammar and rhetoric in language, where rhetoric is, according to Peirce, the recursive interpretation of a sign by following a cycle whereby "one sign gives birth to another" (de Man 1979, p. 9). While de Man allows that "the existence of grammatical structures, within and beyond the unit of the sentence, in literary texts is undeniable" (de Man 1979, p. 7) he sees grammar as "simply generative", in that it relies on a mechanical application of rule-based substitutions of formal structures akin to logic and unlike Peirce's definition of rhetoric which allows for interpretation to be content driven. He summarises as follows:

Only if the sign engendered meaning in the same way that the object engenders the sign, that is, by representation, would there be no need to distinguish between grammar and rhetoric. These remarks should indicate at least the existence and the difficulty of the question, a difficulty which puts its concise theoretical exposition beyond my powers. (de Man 1979, p. 9)

This consideration is crucial and points to a major discontinuity between literary criticism and critical practice in the visual arts where an object can, and indeed often does, engender a sign by representation as in the case where a painted representation of an apple is a sign for the concept apple. If, as Saussure claims, that meaning results from the systematic interplay of differences among signs alone and not from a correspondence between the sign and the thing denoted, then this definition becomes problematic when applied to the visual arts where a concurrence between signifier



and signified can take place, as in the *Target* or *Flag* paintings of Jasper Johns, where the works both represent and actually are the objects concerned.

Theoretical writings on the nature of literary metaphor date from Aristotle to current times with almost an exponential growth of material since I. A. Richards's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, whereas there is as yet a dearth of investigation into the operation of pictorial metaphor. The next chapter will survey contemporary approaches to literary/verbal metaphor beginning with a cognitive classification by Lakoff and Johnson, followed by a linguistic classification by Miller. Beardsley's survey of mechanistic theories of metaphor will be outlined, concentrating on the most widely-accepted model, that of Black's Interactionism. Two pragmatics-based theories, that of Searle and of Davidson, will be briefly explored. The relationship between metaphor and simile will be then be examined. But perhaps the most controversial trope in relation to metaphor is metonymy. Jakobson sees them as partaking in an equal but oppositional relationship, but this view is opposed by Ullman and also by Culler. Finally, de Man's demonstration of the instability of their relationship will be considered.

This survey will be used to provide a theoretical underpinning for the following chapter, which will deal in detail with approaches to the analysis of pictorial material, beginning with the seminal work of Barthes in which he applies semiotics to deconstruct a photographic advertisement. This is followed by a discussion of the writings on metaphor by two film theoreticians, Metz and Whittock, with the latter providing a comprehensive classification of the forms of cinematic metaphor. But it is the work of Forceville, by extending the theory of Black into the domain of pictorial advertisements, that gives the greatest insight into the mechanisms of visual metaphors. The chapter finishes with a brief discussion of covert communication in advertisements based on the work of Tanka.

Finally, as an exercise in analysis the theoretical models will be used to examine the use of pictorial metaphor in the work of two contemporary Irish artists, Willie Doherty and Locky Morris.





# Chapter I Verbal Metaphor

Aristotle, in perhaps the earliest formulation of a definition of metaphor wrote:

Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on the grounds of analogy. (*Poetics*)

Metaphor occurs when one idea, the *tenor*, in I. A. Richards' terminology, is presented in terms of another idea, the *vehicle*, which in turn modifies our understanding of the original idea. The semantic gap between tenor and vehicle is crucial to a successful working of metaphor. Aristotle declares: "It is proper to derive metaphors ... from objects which are closely related to the thing itself but which are not immediately obvious". Disparities of meaning between tenor and vehicle are a consideration in the power of signification of metaphors. If the gap is too wide the metaphor does not work. If it is too narrow then the metaphor is banal and there is not enough scope for meanings to be created that are not explicit in the constituent terms. The gift of being able to construct metaphors relies on seeing similarity in diverse concepts and objects.

The effort required to see similarities between tenor and vehicle against the background of their dissimilarities gives rise to tension in the metaphor. The way we view the connections between tenor and vehicle is crucial to the operation of metaphor. If we accept them as literally true, then what is really taking place is analogical reasoning, whereas, in metaphorical reasoning the connections are always accepted figuratively. Literal connections are understood without any special considerations of interpretation and can be paraphrased without loss of meaning. While simple metaphors of substitution may be translated, it is traditionally accepted that it is difficult to paraphrase a creative metaphor.



It is important to realise that metaphor is not specific to the domain of language but is, as I. A. Richards relates: "... [an] intercourse of thoughts, a transaction between contexts. Thought is metaphoric, and proceeds by comparison and the metaphors of language derive therefrom" (Richards 1979, p. 94). Lakoff and Johnson claim "metaphor is primarily a matter of thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, p. 153). This insight is crucial to the extension of metaphor theory, which to date has been almost solely language-based, to the pictorial domain. They claim that most everyday use of metaphor is conventional in that these so-called "dead" metaphors, e.g. "a head of cabbage", are embedded in the language and as such are not normally recognised as metaphor. They distinguish conventional metaphors from creative metaphors which they see as mechanisms for organising our knowledge of the world into categories of thought. They describe three abstract types of metaphor based on their cognitive mechanism: Structural metaphors are used to depict structural analogies between concepts, e.g. a rational argument can be considered similar to war in terms of adversarial conflict; Orientation metaphors demonstrate organisation similarities between concepts; and Ontological metaphors are used to describe abstract concepts in terms of our experience of the physical world, e.g. love as a journey.

Miller (Ortony 1993, p. 357) classifies literary metaphors into three types: Nominals, where two nouns or noun phrases are linked by the verb "to be", e.g. "man is a wolf"; Predicatives, where a verb, verb phrase or verbal adjective express a metaphorical concept, e.g. "the rich perform leisure", as in the way the poor perform duties or actors perform a play; and Sentenials, which are statements that are not categorically false but are incongruous in the context of the surrounding discourse, e.g. "John has lost his marbles", in a context where playing marbles is not relevant. This classification is useful for a linguistic analysis of verbal metaphors, e.g. the tenor is usually the subject and the vehicle the object in a Nominal metaphor, but it does not transfer well into the domain of pictorial metaphors.





Beardsley (Edwards 1967, vol 5, p. 284) outlines four theories of metaphor. The first, the Emotive theory, proposes that the reason we can recognise the difference between a metaphorical statement and a meaningless sequence of meaningful words is because the former acquires an emotive force while the latter, although grammatically correct, does not. Beardsley dismisses this theory by pointing out that it does not explain how a successful metaphor "differs cognitively", i.e. has a meaningful interpretation, from a nonsensical phrase.

The Comparison theory views metaphor as an "elliptical simile", i.e. where 'like' and 'as' have been omitted. Beardsley dismisses this theory because although, unlike the previous theory, it does propose a method of cognitive signification through comparison, it does not account for the notion of tension between tenor and vehicle and hence cannot account for the creative potential of metaphor. The relationship between metaphor and simile will be discussed later in the chapter in connection with Ortony's work.

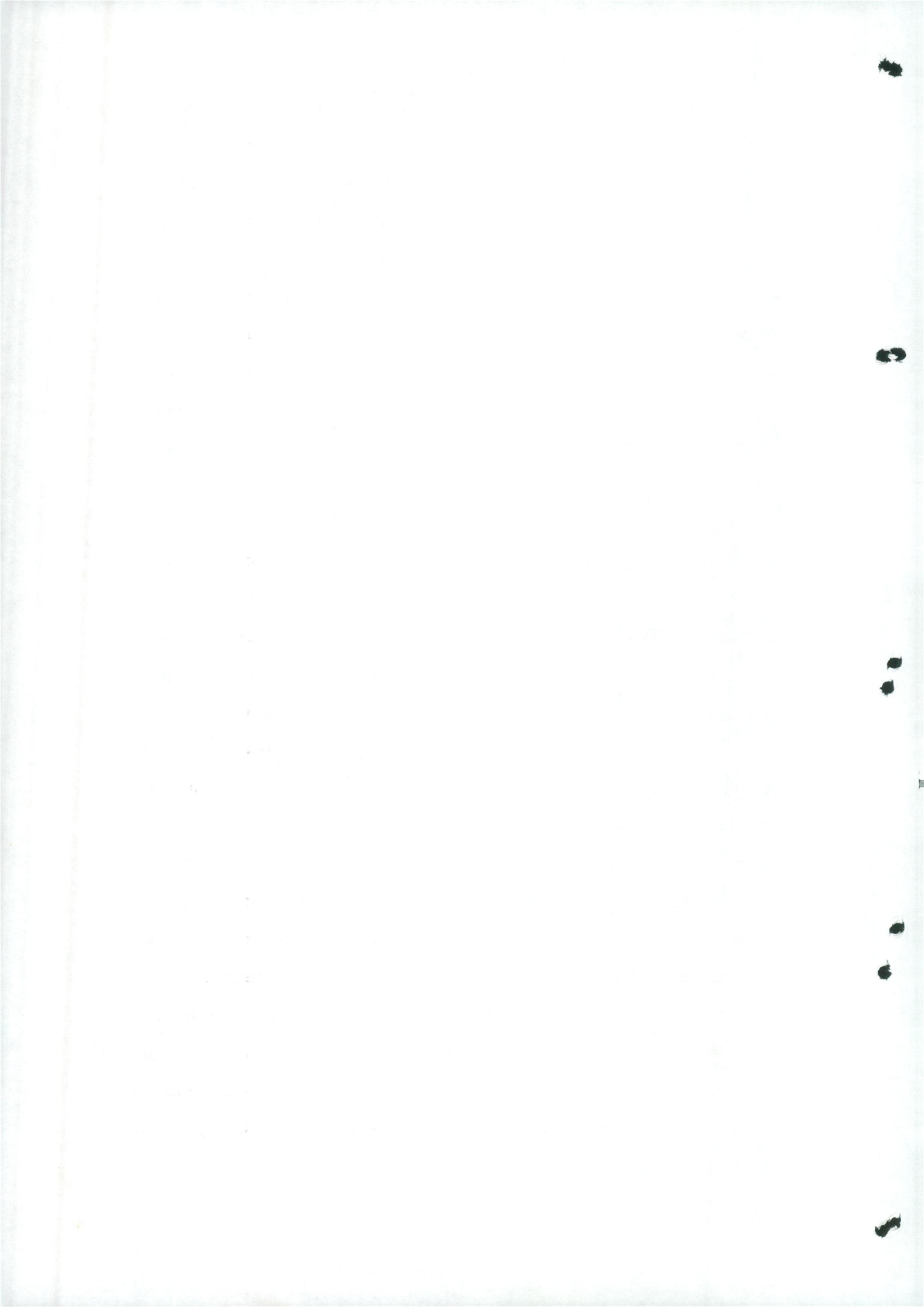
A derivative of the comparison theory is the Iconic Signification theory which proposes that the vehicle, if interpreted literally will indicate one object, event or situation which will act as like Pierce iconic sign, that is one that signifies through similarity or resemblance, to emphasise attributes of the tenor which are then interpreted figuratively. His only criticism of this theory is that it seems a variant of the comparison theory. But the fact that it distinguishes figurative from literal interpretation and, in addition, emphasises the catalytic role of the vehicle in selecting tenor properties for special attention, would seem to argue for its possessing some independent sophistication and may be seen as a precursor of interactionism which will be discussed below.

Beardsley's own theory, the Verbal-Opposition theory, declares that words have two meanings: primary, "central" meanings, i.e. the commonly accepted meaning as would be listed in a dictionary, and secondary, "marginal" meanings, i.e. associated or connotated meaning. When two words are combined metaphorically a conflict of central meanings signals us to select a subset of marginal meanings from



the vehicle which can be applied to the tenor. He argues that creativity arises from this new constellation of compatible meaning clusters. Hausman, on the other hand, criticises this theory by pointing out that it only increases the emphasis of already existing marginal connotations rather than accounting for the creation of previously non-existent connotations.

One major theory concerning the operation of metaphor is Interactionism, whose leading proponent, Max Black, proposes that a metaphorical statement, as distinct from a constituent word in the verbal-opposition theory, has two distinct subjects: a primary one, which is equivalent to Richard's tenor, and a secondary one, which is the vehicle (Black 1962). A metaphor also has two types of reference, the "focus", which is the figural interpretation; and the "frame", which is the literal context. A metaphor works when subjects from different domains are related in such a manner as to prohibit a literal interpretation. This triggers a search for a metaphorical one where the meaning properties of the primary and secondary subjects interact by inciting the hearer to select some of the secondary properties, an "implication complex", and project them on to a similar selection from the primary subject properties. In his oft-used example metaphor 'man is a wolf', we know this statement is not literally true, so a selection of the semantic properties associated with 'wolf', e.g., cunning, cruel, bloodthirsty, etc., are projected onto the concept 'man'. These properties are selected because they can be applied, in that man can be cunning, cruel, bloodthirsty, etc., while other properties of the concept 'wolf', such as having four legs and a tail, can not. Three points arise directly from this. Firstly, the selection of secondary properties need not have an absolute truth, e.g. wolves are not necessarily cunning, it is only necessary that the hearer accepts or believes in them. Secondly, the cultural context plays a major role in the interpretation of metaphor. In a totemic tribe with a wolf spirit the meaning of this metaphor could be entirely different. Thirdly, although Black does allow for "reciprocally induced parallel changes in the secondary subject", a metaphor is not reversible, e.g. to say 'a wolf is a man' does not have the same, if any, meaning. This is called the "intransigence of reversibility".





Black states that similarities have both subjective and objective aspects, by which he means that the character of a similarity is dependent on the degree of attention given it. This allows him to argue for a creative element in metaphorical thought, because if the similarities between tenor and vehicle were purely objective then their prior independent existence would collapse his theory into a variant of the comparison theory. Allowing similarities to have a subjective aspect which is highlighted by the metaphorical context, gives them a degree of mutability necessary for the creation of new perspectives of their nature. The role of metaphor is extremely important to the creative growth of language, whereby new experiences or concepts can be assimilated into our consciousness by linking them figuratively to already familiar concepts through language. Because a creative metaphor produces a new meaning complex, heretofore non-existent, no absolute truth test can be applied to it. Rather, its appropriateness must be judged in terms of the new insight or understanding it yields.

Black's theory is elegant in that it is concise, has evidential support, gives us a mechanism for the interpretation of metaphor, and allows for further research. It has widespread following among researchers, many of whom use it as a base from which to build further extensions and refinements. Its predictive powers allow it to be extended into other domains, as Forceville's work on pictorial metaphor, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, demonstrates.

A point of considerable debate among researchers is the relationship between metaphor and simile. One definition of a simile is that it is an explicit comparison between two unlike things or concepts. Similes express analogies in a more literal fashion, whereas in metaphor the literal meaning of the comparison is false. Metaphors are often defined as compressed similes, e.g. the comparison theory, where the difference between them is described as merely stylistic (Ortony 1993, p. 342). Researchers such as Ortony, who subscribe to this view, then necessarily have a requirement to distinguish similes from ordinary literal comparisons. He gives two examples:



"Encyclopaedias are like dictionaries"

"Encyclopaedias are like gold mines"

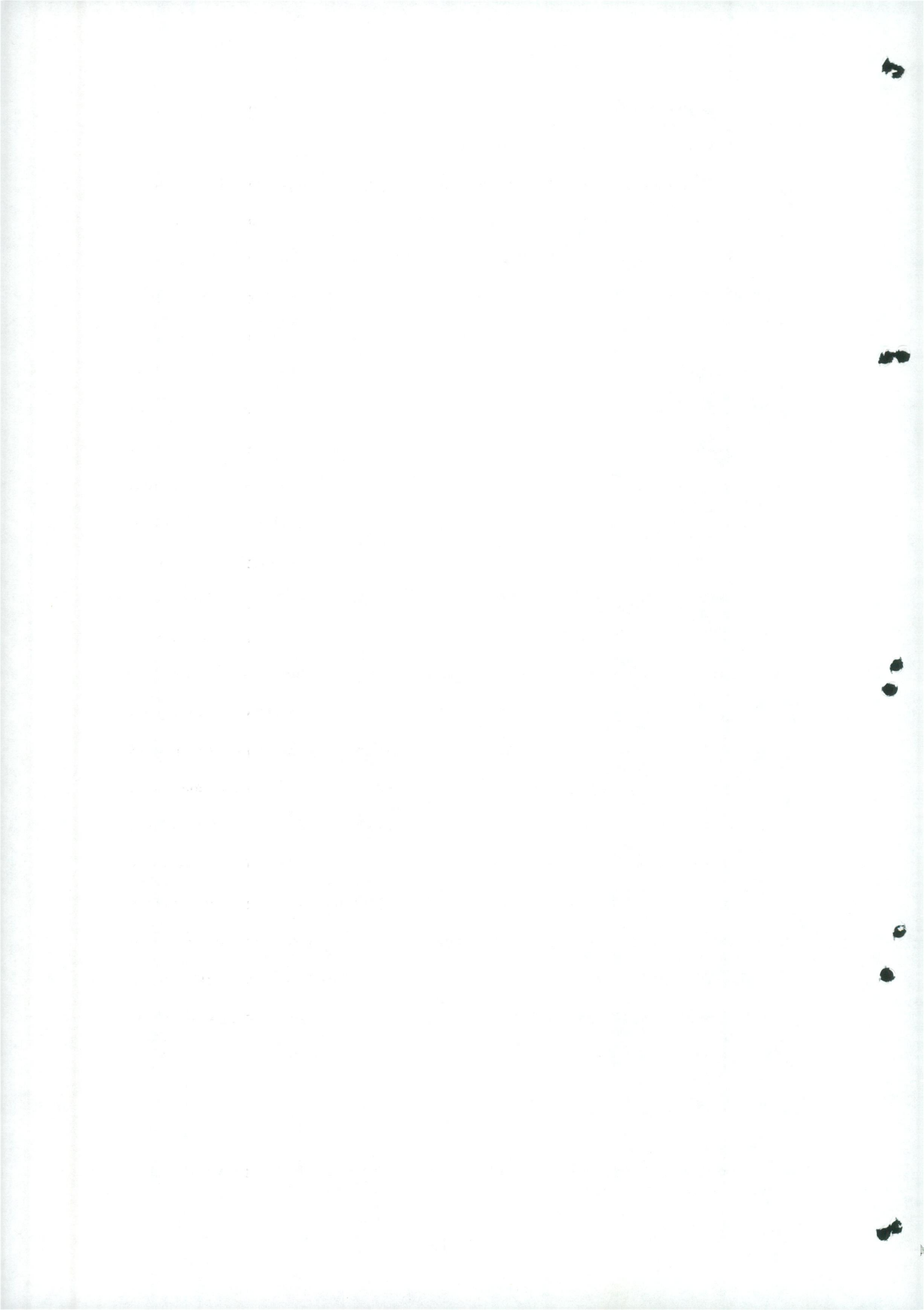
He argues that the first is a literal comparison while the second is a simile with a larger semantic gap between the terms of comparison, where the comparison crosses a categorical boundary, i.e. encyclopaedias and dictionaries are within a category while encyclopaedias and gold mines are not. Intuitively, this distinction feels appropriate. The key question is, is there an argument for a distinction between simile and metaphor? Verbrugge, amongst others, argues for this and has produced experimental results that demonstrate that one is more likely to experience an imaginary gestalt<sup>1</sup> fusion between tenor and vehicle in a metaphor as against a simile (Forceville 1996, p. 142). This suggests that the underlying cognitive processes for their interpretation are considerably different. One compromise among these conflicting theories would be to allow for a range of metaphorical types whereby those at one end of the scale would be considered similar to similes in form and interpretation, while those at the other end would be seen as having a more poetic structure.

Searle, within the framework of speech-act theory<sup>2</sup>, proposes that metaphor occurs when there is a deliberate discrepancy between sentence meaning, i.e. what the speaker actually says, and the speaker's utterance meaning, i.e. what the speaker intends to communicate. Recognising the inappropriateness of the sentence in the particular context prompts the hearer to generate possible alternate but related meanings and to select the best fit, and thus metaphor "conveys its truth conditions by way of another semantic content, whose truth conditions are not part of the truth conditions of the utterance" (Searle 1993, p. 111). It is this additional effort required on the hearer's part, as opposed to a more passive participation, that is responsible for their experiencing the expressive power of the metaphor. Searle's theory is useful in that it can be applied to related language phenomena such as irony and indirect speech

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<sup>1</sup> A Gestalt experience is one in which a structural completeness is perceived.

<sup>2</sup> Speech act theory, which seeks to account for the use of as well as the meaning of sentences, is a central part of pragmatic linguistic theory.





acts<sup>3</sup>, but one downside of its being couched within speech-act theory is that it is not easily transferable to the domain of non-verbal metaphors.

In a completely contradictory approach to almost all other theories, Davidson proposes that metaphors are devoid of any special cognitive content which, he argues, explains why they are difficult to paraphrase as one cannot say something another way if there is no original meaning. He argues that metaphors have only their literal surface meaning but that they somehow inspire or prompt us to search for the author's intended meaning. Coining a succinct metaphor, he opens his paper with the phrase "Metaphor is the dreamwork of language ..." (Martinich 1996, p. 427). Although Davidson's theory does not offer much in the way of a mechanistic explanation, it takes metaphor interpretation theory out of the structural domain of language and into the domain of use. Likewise Levinson, while maintaining that metaphor can be analysed semantically and pragmatically to some degree, admits that there are no adequate linguistic theories of metaphor and "that the problems largely lie beyond pragmatics in an essentially psychological theory of rhetoric" (Levinson 1983, p. 158).

Jakobson has foregrounded metaphor as the fundamental structure of all poetic texts and has written: "[P]oetry is nothing other than an utterance aiming to express" and has further claimed about art in general "that art is a part of the social edifice, one component in correlation with others" (Todorov 1977, p. 271). If one takes Owens' definition of poetic as "a particular process of establishing relationships between images" (Owens 1992, p. 10) and if the construction and use of metaphor is viewed as an establishment of correspondences between images, then the concept of expression within a social context would seem to imply that the use of rhetoric in issue-based art practice might be implicated via the use of metaphor. This will be explored further in Chapter III.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, sentences such as "Can you pass the salt?" which are really requests for action rather than questions.



He goes on to argue that the use of metaphor, particularly metaphor based on sensuous qualities such as sound pattern, tends to inhibit the signifying function of language and as a result becomes more opaque when a transparent reading is demanded of it. As a result of insight derived from his studies in aphasic<sup>4</sup> disorders in children, he has proposed two poles of language utterances in which the development of a discourse could be metaphoric where successive topics are linked by similarity or, alternatively, metonymic whereby topics are linked through a contiguity. He develops this binary opposition further by positing that in the symbolic process of Freudian dream interpretation, identification and symbolism are metaphoric, while displacement<sup>5</sup> and condensation<sup>6</sup> are metonymic and synecdochic respectively.

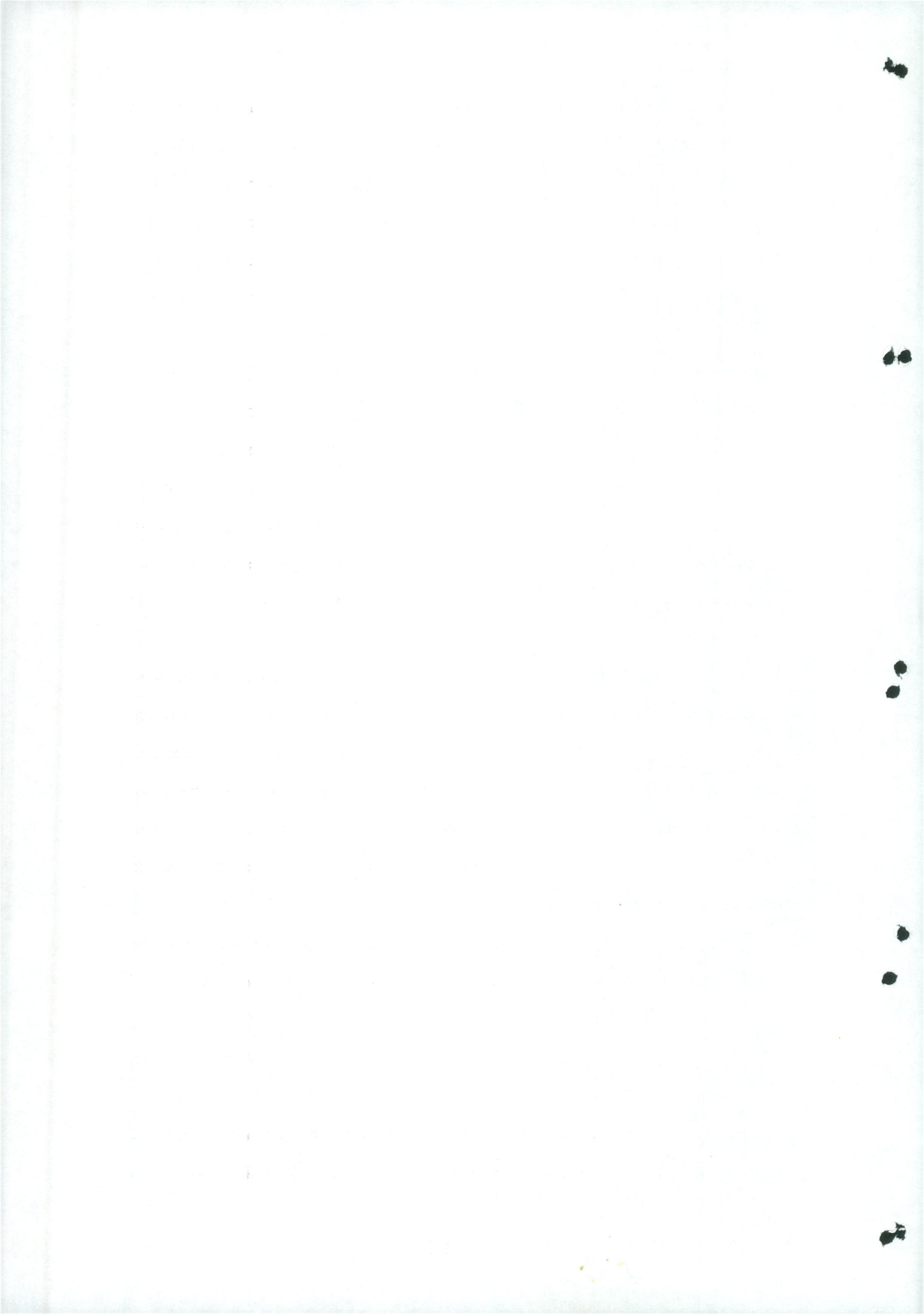
Jakobson proposed that expression tends towards either the metaphoric or the metonymic, giving poetry in general and Romanticism in particular as examples of metaphoric expression, and giving prose and Classicism and complementary examples of metonymic expression. Metonymy and synecdoche have traditionally been classified as variations of metaphor in that they are read figuratively rather than literally. Jakobson argues that metaphor and metonymy are structurally binary opposites in that their underlying construction mechanisms are from different language principles, selection and combination. Within the framework of Saussure's semiotics of language two opposing constructing mechanisms can be identified: *selection* for the vertical position and *combination* for the horizontal structure. For example, the sentence 'The cat sat on the mat' has the abstract horizontal structure <something did something>. One possible combinational change to this structure would be to add a time phrase to give <something did something at some time>. This could yield a sentence like 'The cat sat on the mat yesterday'. While a vertical

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<sup>4</sup> Aphasic disorders, which occur as a result of brain damage, have two forms. Similarity disorders, where sufferers use metaphoric type substitutions, e.g. the word 'spyglass' instead of 'microscope', and contiguity disorders, where metonymic type substitutions occur, e.g. 'knife and fork' for 'knife'.

<sup>5</sup> Displacement is where the latent content is disguised as a seemingly insignificant item.

<sup>6</sup> Condensation is a dreamwork process where constellations of latent contents occur around a single symbol which has multiple interpretations.





selection change in the first <something> position of the original structure could give a sentence like 'The cow sat on the mat'. This opposition of the two mechanisms of language construction has a parallel in two paired figures of speech, metaphor, which acts as a selector, and metonymy, which acts as a combinator in that it uses a contextualized attribute of an object to represent it, e.g. a crown for a king. Lodge illustrates this with an example of a notional sentence 'The keels of the ships crossed the deep sea' which would be uttered as 'Keels crossed the deep' (Lodge 1977, p. 73). In this case the use of the synecdoche 'keels', a part representing the whole of the ship, has been arrived at by a process of deletion, which is linguistically related to combination in that it is the opposite process. The least descriptively redundant phrase 'of the ships' has been deleted. Likewise, the metonymic figure 'deep', a property of the sea, is also arrived at through deletion. On the other hand the predicative metaphorical sentence 'Keels ploughed the deep', to use Miller's classification discussed above, involves the selection of the verb 'plough' and its substitution for 'cross'.

Contrary to Jakobson's claim that the two tropes, metaphor and metonymy, characterise two fundamental opposite constructors of language, Ullman argues that although by definition metaphor and metonymy are different in that the former acts on perceived similarities while the latter acts on perceived proximity (either spatial or temporal), interesting examples of metonymy usually reveal similarities between disparate images which have been juxtaposed and thus are metaphorical by nature and therefor can be assimilated into a subcategory of metaphor.

Culler has noted that this assimilation, allowing for the privileging of metaphor as a master trope, has important consequences for the status of rhetoric. If metonymy, based as it is on "accidental or contingent connections" (Culler 1981, p. 190) to its referent, is classified as an independent rhetorical strategy, then this arbitrariness of the accidental undermines the value of rhetoric as a cognitive enterprise. This viewpoint is arguable if one considers that the separation of metaphor from metonymy, which would be necessary to establish their independence from each



other, is not a simple matter, as de Man's deconstruction of figures in Proust demonstrates.

De Man has shown that this asymmetry between metaphor and metonymy and the related binary opposition between figurative and literal language is inherently unstable (de Man 1979). He analysed a passage from the novel *Swan's Way* in which Proust writes figuratively about the nature of figures where he favours the buzzing of flies, "the chamber music of summer", as evoking a more essential, metaphorical connection with summer than a real concert heard during the same period which he claims has only an accidental connection, i.e. a contingent metonymic association. De Man makes the point that this metafigural argument, i.e. using figures of speech to argue in favour of figurative over literal language, deconstructs itself because the basis for the "chamber music of summer" metaphor is the metonymic link that the buzzing of flies has with summer. Thus he argues that Proust's construction of metaphor is grounded in metonymy. Moreover, de Man asserts that this deconstruction is not just a critical addition but that it is an intrinsic component of the text and he further claims that this mode of deconstruction is similar to the one used by Nietzsche to uncover the rhetoric inherent in metaphysics. Thus rhetoric is the Trojan Horse that turns philosophy into literature.

This not to say that the strategy of de Man, and of deconstruction in general, has been without criticism. His methodology in turn has been deconstructed and he has been accused of limiting interest in rhetoric to one stage, then to one category within it, namely a specific trope which then becomes a fragile basis for a vastly elaborated theory "based on a small amount of text ... interpreted in a way quite different to that meant, indeed insisted on by the author" (Vickers 1988, p. 456).





# Chapter II

# Visual Metaphor

## Initial Approaches

Barthes, in considering the semiology of images, raises the question how if images are only analogies of reality and not systems of conventional codes, as is the case with language, they can be subject to a similar analysis (Barthes 1977, p. 32). He analyses an advertisement for a set of food products which depicts a net shopping bag containing both the products and natural foodstuffs [Fig. I] and discovers at least four signs which he sees as discontinuous in that they have independent readings: one signifying the business of shopping; another the "Italianicity" of the product; a third the naturalness and sufficiency of the product for the cooking of a meal; and finally a sign which evokes a classical still-life.

He identifies three messages in the advertisement. First, the linguistic message which is derived from the text of the advertisement itself and the writing on the product packaging. In general, he ascribes two functions to a linguistic message: anchorage, where the text functions to delimit possible readings that the image is capable of evoking and thus has a repressive value in proscribing meaning; and relay, which is more likely to occur in narrative pictorial structures such as film or comics where it serves to supplement meaning in an image. Barthes declares that anchorage is by far the more common of the two, but Forceville argues that in contemporary visual culture the balance is more even (Forceville 1996, p. 72).

The second message is the denoted image in which objects literally represent themselves, e.g. a photograph of a tomato represents a tomato. This analysis refers in particular to photography which he sees, disregarding any human intervention such as the selection of framing, distance, lighting, focus, etc., as purely an analogical matching of reality and not incorporating conventional coding as in the case where the arbitrary sound of the word 'apple' denotes an apple.



Barthes defines a system of connotation as "a system which takes over the signs of another system in order to make them its signifiers" (Barthes 1997, p. 37). He identifies a third message which he describes as connotational, which uses the signs of the denotational message, as signifiers for the four signs discussed above. The contents of the shopping bag as well as denoting objects such as tomatoes, onions, spaghetti, etc., also connote the pleasure of shopping and cooking. The printed text *PANZANI* as well as denoting the brand name also connotes an exotic "Italianicity" while the composition of the image as a whole connotes the art of still-life painting. Barthes sees this strategy as subversive in that the denotational system provides a surreptitious "naturalness" which masks the real intention of the image as a whole, i.e. to promote the advertised product. What Barthes finds particularly interesting about the connotative system is that it uses the same set of denotational signifiers to convey the four different signs, the difference in interpretation depending on the cultural knowledge sets of the viewer. In this case knowledge of shopping, Italian culinary taste, the practicalities of cooking, and art are required to successfully decode all four signs. This layering of signification systems is crucial for the legitimisation of the application of semiology to images in that it shows it is a true system of signs, analogous to language, and not just an agglomeration of naturalistic, i.e. non-conventional, symbols.

In the semiological analysis of images he sees an internal structural opposition between the syntagmatic relations of iconic images denoting items of reality and the paradigmatic, but discontinuous, system of signs which connote a symbolic message. He equates the denotational v. connotational split with the more general nature v. cultural opposition in that denotations are literal or "natural", while connotations are symbolic, i.e. figurative, or cultural. A parallel structural opposition, which he appears to deny in a footnote, (Barthes 1977, p. 50) could be derived where denotation is seen as metonymic in that a pictorial representation is directly related to an item, whereas connotation is metaphoric and symbolic in nature.

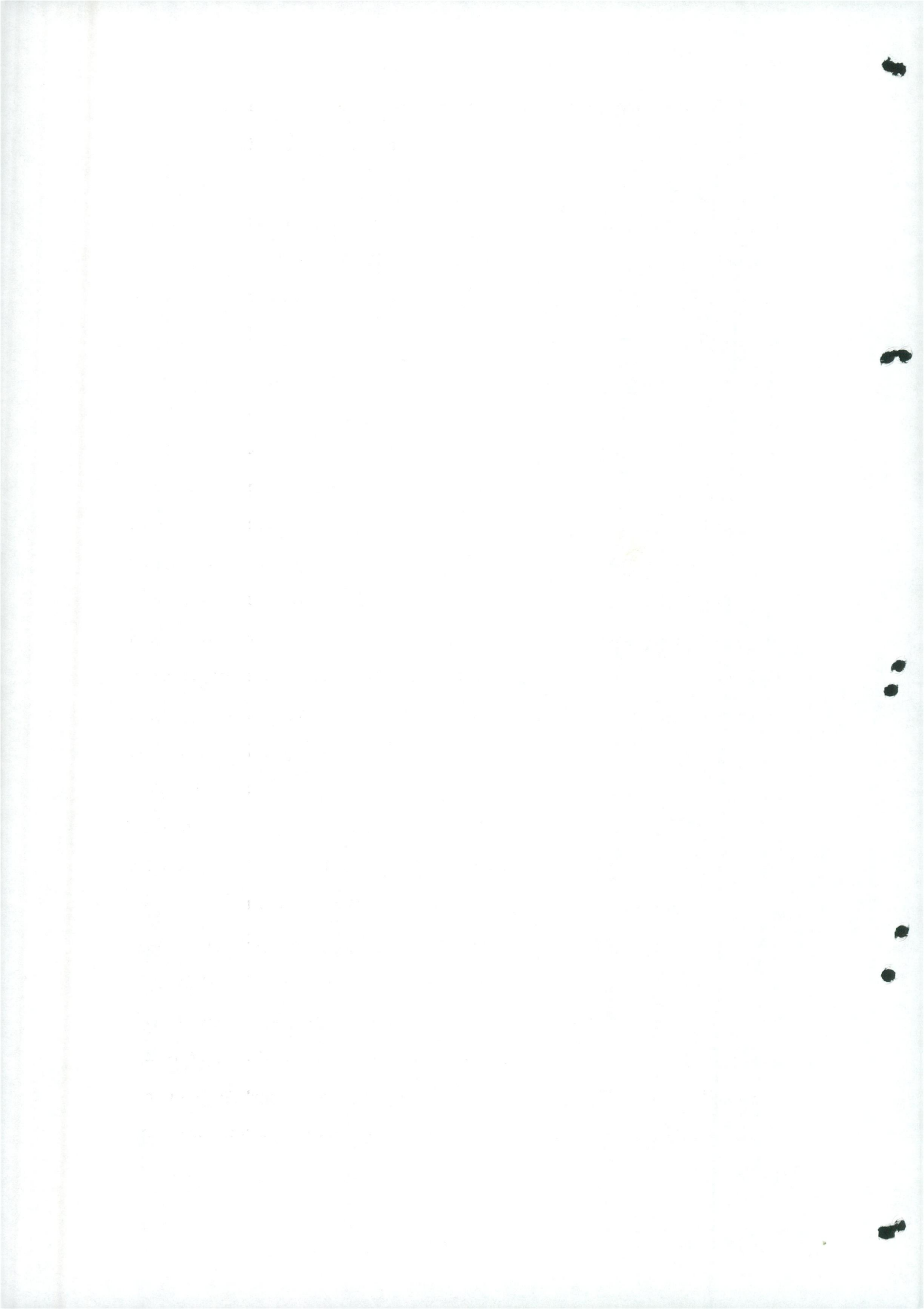




## Metaphor in Film

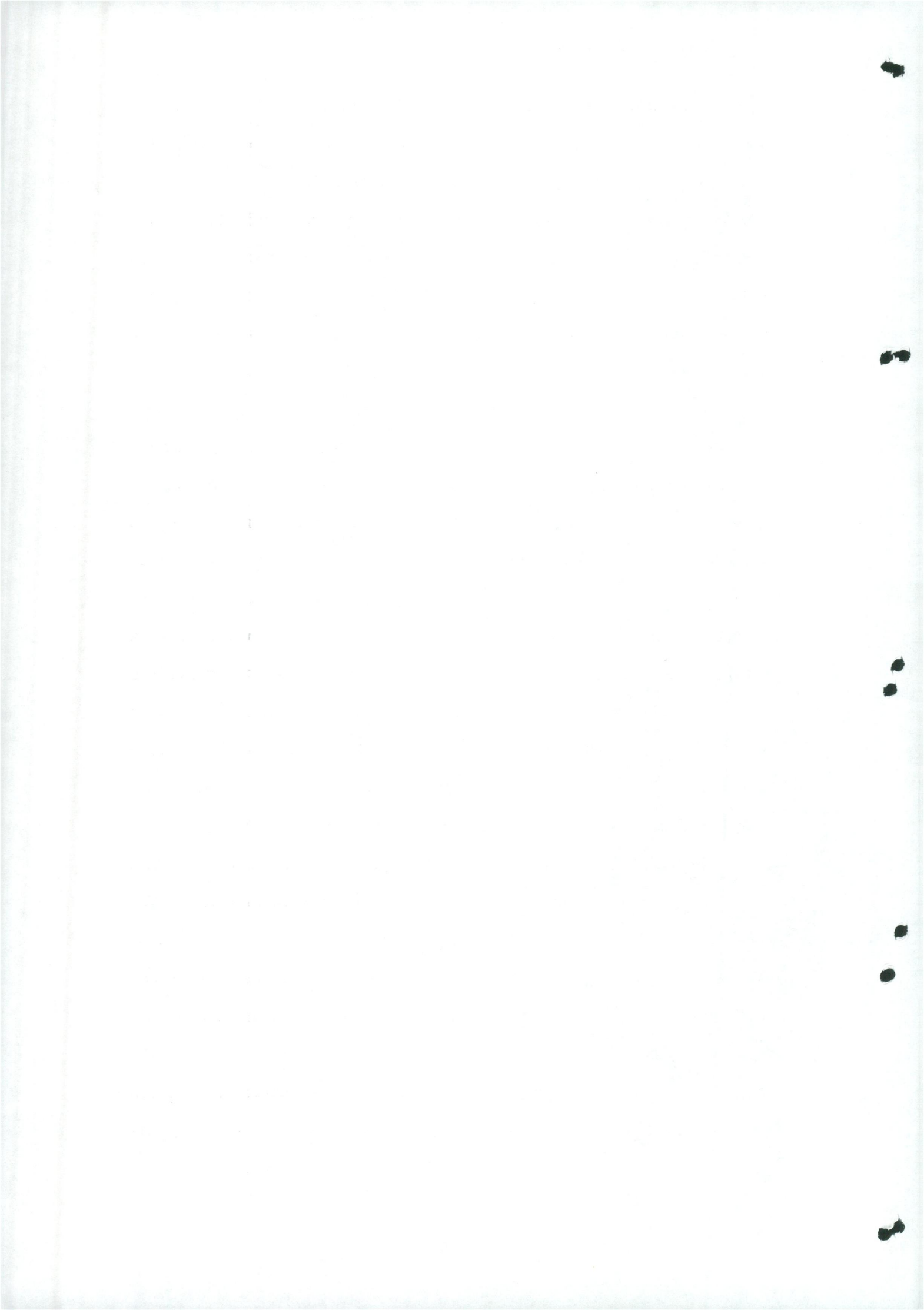
Writing on the semiology of film, Metz claims that metaphor, as defined by literary theorists, does not exist in the cinema, but that what really occurs is "syntagmatic juxtapositions entailing a semantic 'effect' which suggests resemblances", (Nichols 1976, p. 571) by which he means that in a montage succession of shots the spectator may make a "symbolic leap" between the two which can act as a comparison. He argues that in a literary metaphor such as 'a pencil of light' the vehicle, in this case a pencil, is not made explicit in that it is not a pencil that is evoked but a semantic feature of pencils in general, i.e. their thinness, whereas in a cinematic depiction of this metaphor there would have to be a representation of both the vehicle and the tenor. It will be shown below how Forceville demonstrates that this analysis is incorrect. Metz further argues that comparison is impossible as film does not have a representational equivalent of the word 'like'. He quotes the example of Chaplin's *Modern Times* (USA, 1936), where a shot of a flock of sheep is followed by a shot of a crowd of people. Metz argues that this is not a metaphor proper, i.e. people as sheep, as the two images are not fused as would occur in a literary metaphor. Neither is it a simile, from his point of view, in that the shots are in succession and thus do not allow for a synchronous comparison. He does however, allow for the possibility of split screens making comparisons explicit.

Metz's inability to recognise cinematic metaphor is an example of what can result when one tries to apply the strictly literary definition of tropes to a visual medium. Whittock, disagreeing with Metz, take less rigid definitions and identifies ten "metaphoric formulas", only some of which are metaphors proper, the rest being related rhetorical tropes, and gives examples of their use in film (Whittock 1990, p. 49). The category most closely resembling straight metaphor he terms Identity Asserted and gives the example of Hitchcock's *Psycho* (USA, 1960), where Marion takes a shower after deciding to return the stolen money. The washing is a metaphor for a spiritual cleansing. This category seems to fit Miller's Predicative type of



metaphor in that the actor performs an action in a visual equivalent to a verb. A related category, Substitution, is where the metaphoric vehicle is depicted and the tenor is absent. The example he gives is Polanski's *Knife in the Water* (Poland, 1962) where a flapping sail represents sexual activity. He neglects to mention that this type of visual metaphor is very dependant on context, in that it in itself has no special significance and relies for its metaphoric power on the preceding narrative. As one of the few systematic taxonomies available, which he does not claim to be exhaustive, it is worth summarising a condensed set of his remaining categories.

Simile is represented by his category Epiphor and he illustrates it with Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (GB, 1968), where a shock cut between a twirling bone weapon to a spacecraft makes the comparison between two types of technology. This example is very similar to the sheep/crowd one which Metz rejects. Whittock argues that the matching movements of the bone and spacecraft (and a similar argument would apply to the formal resemblance between the numbers and movements of sheep and people) act as a cinematic equivalent of the word 'like'. A related category is Juxtaposition where contiguity in time, e.g. montage, or space, e.g. mise-en-scène, is used to establish a metaphorical relationship between two images. By its very nature film is a constant sequence of literal juxtapositions in both time and space, so that a relationship intended to be marked as metaphorical should either have no obvious literal explanation or invite an additional metaphorical interpretation. He gives the example of Michelangelo Antonioni's *The Red Desert* (Italy, 1964) where a woman is seen against a wall covered in irregular blotches of differing colours. The literal reason for their presence is that the colours are being tested before painting the wall but their irregular shapes suggest a metaphorical reading mirroring the woman's emotional state. A further related category which he terms Chiming (parallelism) is where formal comparisons are made but do not have a strong semantic parallel as in a simile. He gives an example from *Psycho*, where a close-up of water and blood spiralling down the drain after the murder is matched with a close-up of the dead girl's eye.



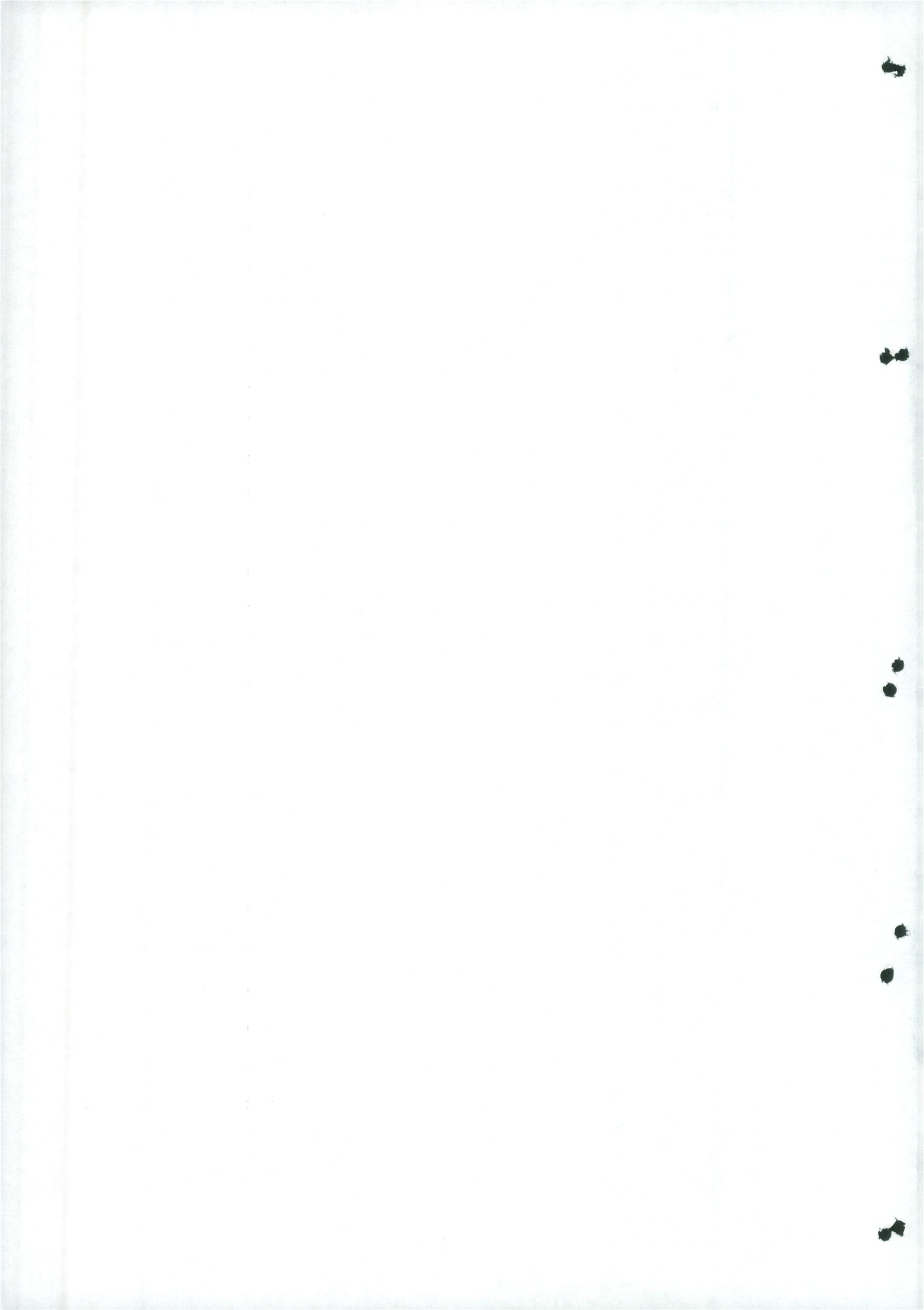


Whittock describes metonymy and synecdoche as subspecies of his Substitution category. This is open to debate as the Substitution category is one of his two which are the closest visual analogues of literary metaphor. His argument raises the vexed question of the ascendancy of metaphor over metonymy. He defines both metonymy and synecdoche in terms of Lodge's deletion process discussed above, e.g. 'keels' for 'keels of ships', and stresses the importance of the illogicality of the selection required to mark a figural selection as distinct from the abundance of literal ones that occur in film. He gives Godard's *Vivre sa vie* (France, 1962) as an example of metonymy where a clothes hanger is repeatedly associated with unerotic sex in prostitution. He suggests that undressing is the action portrayed and that the illogicality of selecting a clothes hanger to connote sexual intercourse comes from the fact that this represents the hanging up of clothes, an activity not primarily associated with prostitution. An alternative metaphorical reading, which he does not state, might be that the identity of the prostitute is as relevant as that of a clothes hanger. This double interpretation serves to underline the problematic relationship between metaphor and metonymy. He makes an interesting distinction between received metonymy, i.e. that which the audience brings to the film from their commonplace knowledge of the world, and contextual metonymy in which the association is built up in the course of the film. He gives an example of a special type of contextual metonymy where the deletion is not illogical, which he terms Objective Correlate. In Hitchcock's *The Birds* (USA, 1963) Mrs. Brenner finds broken teacups which are metonymically related to the birds' destructiveness but are also a metaphor for the fragility of the woman's peace of mind. Once again we see an inextricable connection between metaphor and metonymy. Synecdoche occurs so often in film that for it to be figuratively noticed by the audience it must be marked by an especially illogical selection of the part for the whole.

Two of Whittock's categories would seem to have no direct equivalent to literary metaphors. In the first of these, Distortion, he describes two types: mise-en-scène distortions as in the use of expressionistic sets in Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of*



*Dr. Caligari* (Germany, 1919), and filmic distortions which encompass any unconventional presentation of sound and/or camera shots. As with literary metaphors it is important that the audience recognises that some form of disruption is being presented so that they are triggered into searching for a figurative explanation. Unlike language which is relatively stable over time, film syntax changes rapidly and what was once seen as unconventional is readily absorbed into the canon of acceptability and like dead literary metaphors functions transparently. His final category, Rule Disruption, occurs when the mode of presentation switches. The new mode need not necessarily be an unconventional one, all that is required is a discontinuity. Godard quite frequently uses this strategy to expose the conventions of narrative structure in classic cinema where he deconstructs the metaphor of film as illusion rather than film as a slice of reality. A good example of this category is the dropping of the soundtrack in Francis Ford Coppola's *Rumble Fish* (USA, 1983) as a metaphor for temporary deafness. Although a further consideration of sound effects would venture outside the scope of this thesis, it is worth considering that pure pictorial representations are rare in that they are usually accompanied by a soundtrack, text, or a title as is often the case with plastic art works.





## Metaphor in Advertising

Forceville, building on the groundwork of Kennedy, isolates three key questions which must be addressed when trying to interpret pictorial metaphors: 1) how to sort out the relevant from the irrelevant, i.e. which representations are participating in the metaphor; 2) how to identify the tenor against the vehicle, bearing in mind the intransigence of reversibility; and 3) what meanings are projected from the vehicle onto the tenor and what role does context play in this? Taking Barthes as a role model, he uses the domain of static images from magazine and billboard advertisements and attempts to develop a cognitive model of interpreting pictorial metaphor. This restricted domain is useful in that he can test the predictability of his model as there is a high level of commitment on the part of advertisers to communicate a clear and unambiguous concept. In addition, the images are almost invariably accompanied by text which further reinforces the desired communication. He identifies four generic types of metaphor: those with one pictorially present term, those with two present, pictorial similes and verbo-pictorial metaphors.

Forceville gives nine examples of metaphors with only one pictorially present term. In all but one, it is the tenor, either depicted or metonymically referred to, that is represented. This seems natural enough in advertisements, as producers tend to want their product highlighted. The first example [Fig. II] is an advertisement for shoes. We are triggered into looking for a metaphorical interpretation by the incongruity of a shoe in place of a tie on a shirt front, an example of an unexpected location switch. In answering his first question, we can identify one of the terms, the shoe, by its representation along with additional shoes on the right-hand side, and also through the accompanying text "Look at my Shoes!". We infer the second term, the tie, indirectly through its absence. While the literal reading is false, in that a shoe is not a tie, there are enough similarities, as both a tie and a shoe are pieces of apparel in an elongated form, to allow us to attempt an imaginative "seeing-as" comparison. In answering the second question, we determine the tenor is a shoe through the context



of an advertisement that depicts and refers to shoes in addition to displaying a brand logo, which may or may not be known to the viewer. The role of context is crucial in making this decision in interpreting a pictorial metaphor. Unlike some forms of verbal metaphor, such as Miller's Nominal types, the use of the verb *to be* gives a linear, ordered and grammatical indication of the tenor and vehicle. For example, with the statement "man is a wolf" we identify "man" as the tenor because it is the subject, and "wolf", the object, as the vehicle. Again, in answering the third question, context aids our identifying which semantic features are transferred from vehicle to tenor. We assume the advertiser is attempting to maximise our impression of the worth of the product and that only positive features will be transferred. The point of the metaphor is to view the shoe as an aesthetic object that allows one to project personal taste while keeping within the domain of conventional business dress. Additional features of a tie such as the fact that it is made of cloth and can be folded are not transferred as they are not relevant.

He deconstructs three further examples [ Figs. III, IV & V] of unexpected location switch, seeds as wine in a wine glass, beer as champagne in a wine cooler, and alcoholic spirit as a typical old Dutch house. The last is also an example of hyperbole in that the size of the bottle is exaggerated to that of a house. In a similar manner he discusses two examples [Figs. VI & VII] where the tenor is transformed. Airline tickets, metonymically representing the airline, become respectively a deck chair and skis. Although they are not directly depicted their shape is, and thereby referred to as absent vehicles. The advertisement encourages us to view the tickets as end rather than means. An example [Fig. VIII] in which metonymy, as opposed to direct representation, is used to depict the tenor is an advertisement for a morning newspaper where the hammer of an alarm clock is replaced by a nib. Forceville states that the nib, by its connection with writing, is metonymically closer to a newspaper than it is to an alarm clock. The point of the advertisement is that the morning newspaper, in being seen as an alarm clock, wakens one up both because it arrives early and because it informs one about what is happening in the world. It is arguable





that this example does not fit into his category where only one term is present in that in this advertisement both the vehicle, the alarm clock, and the tenor, as referred to metonymically by the nib, are represented. An example [Fig. IX] where the vehicle is depicted but not the tenor, in this case Dunlop tyres, is given with life buoys, representing safety, taking the place of tyres on a car travelling across sea. Physical similarity between tenor and vehicle is crucial to the success of this metaphor.

In interpreting metaphors with two pictorial terms present, Forceville argues that context is not needed to identify both term. But the role of context becomes even more important in identifying which is tenor and which is vehicle. In an advertisement featuring the earth and a candle as one object [Fig X] it is not immediately obvious which is which. One has to read the text to find out that the advertisement is for energy conservation in order to recognise the metaphor as earth, the tenor, viewed through the vehicle, a candle, which is a finite energy resource, that will eventually burn out. An interesting example [Fig. XI] is provided where the tenor, in this case earphones, as modified by the vehicle, bricks, portraying weight and insensitivity, is referring antonymically to the advertised qualities of the product.

He defends his classification which distinguishes between the number of terms present in that it represents a distinction found in verbal metaphors between *metaphor in praesentia* and *metaphor in absentia*<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately, two of his examples for the appearance of both terms, the ear pieces of an Indian head-dress in conjunction with the airline ticket in [Fig. XII] and the nib among a set of keys in [Fig. XIII] seem remarkably similar to examples given for metaphors with only a single term present. This makes their classification under either category problematic.

Forceville illustrates his third category, pictorial similes, with examples in which both terms are juxtaposed and comparisons are invited from the viewer. A girl in a swimsuit [Fig. XIV] is shown in similar diving position to that of a dolphin. The contextual surroundings do not play a role in identifying both terms but we only

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<sup>1</sup>He gives the examples, taken from Ricoeur, of "Jim is an ass" for the first type and "What an ass!" for the second.

Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is arranged in several lines and appears to be a list or a series of entries.

recognise that the girl in the swimsuit is the tenor because of the text. He argues that this category is different from the first because both terms are depicted and that it differs from the second because the terms are juxtaposed but separate rather than depicted as a fused hybrid. Although there is a striking physical similarity between girl and dolphin, e.g. the curve of the dives, the sheen on suit and skin, similar light angles, the girl's hair and the dolphin's fin, they form different conceptual categories, i.e. human as opposed to animal, and thus the advertisement is analogous to a verbal simile rather than a literal comparison.

His final category is that of Verbo-Pictorial metaphors where one term, usually the advertised product as tenor, is rendered pictorially and the other by text. One example is a magazine advertisement for liquorice [Fig. XV] with the accompanying text "Black Gold" which suggests that the reader view liquorice as coal. At first view this does not seem to be a successful metaphor, notwithstanding their similarity of colour, as liquorice is an edible product while coal is not. Once again context plays a decisive role. The advertisement appeared in a trade journal for retailers where the point of the metaphor was not to stress the edibility of the product but the value of it as a retail commodity, hence the comparison with coal and the encouragement to stock up and make a profit. He concludes his discussion of verbo-pictorial metaphors with an interesting example of an advertisement that could be said to fit more than one category. A billboard poster for motor lubrication oil [Fig. XVI] depicts an upturned bottle with a narrow stream of liquid pouring downwards and is accompanied by the text "Intensive Care". The viewer is encouraged to see oil as having similar life-sustaining properties for a car as an intravenous drip can have for a human. One test for the identification of a verbo-pictorial metaphor is to see if elimination of the text results in elimination of one of the terms and hence the metaphor. While this would certainly be the case in the liquorice example where all that would remain would be a picture of liquorice, in the lubrication advertisement the depiction of an upturned bottle and the line of oil strongly suggests an intravenous





drip and thus the billboard could be classified as a pictorial metaphor with only one term present.

In an analysis of British and Japanese advertisements, Tanka has argued that communication can be of two types: ostensive, where there is "an intention to alter the mutual cognitive environment of the speaker and hearer"; (Tanka 1994, p. 41) and overt, where "the intention of the speaker is to alter the cognitive environment of the hearer ... without making this intention mutually manifest" (Tanka 1994, p. 41). She suggests that covert communication is deliberately engaged in for two reasons: firstly, to disguise the fact that the real reason for communication is to sell a product; and secondly, to avoid the responsibility for the derivation of messages that might seem socially unethical, e.g. sexual innuendoes [Fig. XVII 1 & XVII 2] or the promotion of snobbery. In the following chapter examples of covert communication will be demonstrated in issue-based art practice.



## Chapter III Metaphor in the Visual Arts

Derrida has stated "... there is nothing outside the text ... [it is] the represented and not the representer [which matters]" (Derrida 1976). This allows that the interpretation of a text does not necessarily coincide with the author's intention. Critical practice concerning artworks quite frequently occurs without explicit authorial input. And, as identification and interpretation of metaphorical content would seem to be an important aspect of such practice, then it would seem appropriate that a rigorous methodology be applied to this process. There are serious problems in trying to analyse the metaphorical mechanics of an artistic "text" in that these are usually open-ended systems of signification, unlike more semantically-restricted systems such as advertisements where a great deal of effort is expended to communicate an unequivocal message. Forceville's initial attempt at analysing pictorial metaphor was in the domain of Surrealist art but he later declared that it was "unwise" as the works "defy a decisive ordering of primary and secondary subject; and since they are difficult or even impossible to interpret conclusively" (Forceville 1996, p. 60). This result would seem to indicate that an art practice with a narrow focus, such as political or issue-based art, would be more amenable to analysis based on a model derived from advertisements. In this chapter the works of two Irish artists, Willie Doherty and Locky Morris, will be analysed using mainly the framework developed by Forceville as outlined in the previous chapter.

A two-part work by Doherty consisting of a pair of black and white photographs with text, each 183 x 122 cm, can be read as an example of Forceville's fourth category, verbo-pictorial metaphors where the vehicle is depicted and the tenor is suggested in the title. In the first photograph *STRATEGY: SEVER Westlink, Belfast 1989* [Fig. XVIII] we see a dual carriageway divided by a central protective barrier. The Westlink motorway severs the Catholic Lower Falls area from the city centre of Belfast. (Fisher 1990) One interpretation of this work is that it communicates the





message that the placement of the motorway is part of an official strategy to isolate a section of the Nationalist Community. The protective barrier, as vehicle, has the semantic feature 'separates and protects one from the other' which can be mapped onto the strategic intentions of the authorities, the tenor, which Doherty implies lies behind the positioning of the motorway. The protective barrier severs one set of traffic lanes from the other. The carriageways as a pair have the semantic features 'travel in opposite directions' and 'dangerous if collision occurs' which can be mapped on to the two opposing political groups. Doherty both highlights this covert use of social engineering, and at the same time presents a critique in that the barrier does not look particularly strong, and in that it is well known that cross-boundary pile-ups do occur on motorways. In this work he uses a metaphor/metonym complex whereby it is a part of the motorway, the barrier, which is synecdochically related to the motorway, that is used as a metaphor for the strategic thinking that Doherty believes lies behind the placement of the motorway.

Similarly, in *STRATEGY: ISOLATE Divis Flats, Belfast 1989* [Fig. XIX] we see a footbridge covered in protective mesh which has the appearance of a bird-cage type of prison cell. The wire structure is for protection but gives a feeling of claustrophobic containment. If we know that this is a photograph of "the only solely pedestrian access [to Divis Flats]" (Fisher 1990) then we realise that this is a critique of the isolation of the residents of the flats from the rest of the city. The semantic feature 'containment disguised as protection' from the caged bridge, as vehicle, is transferred to the strategy of the authorities, the tenor. Again, a metaphor/metonym complex is used whereby a part of the footbridge, the cage, is used metaphorically to represent what Doherty believes the function of the footbridge really is, i.e. the isolation of a population through the official policy of only providing a single walkway.

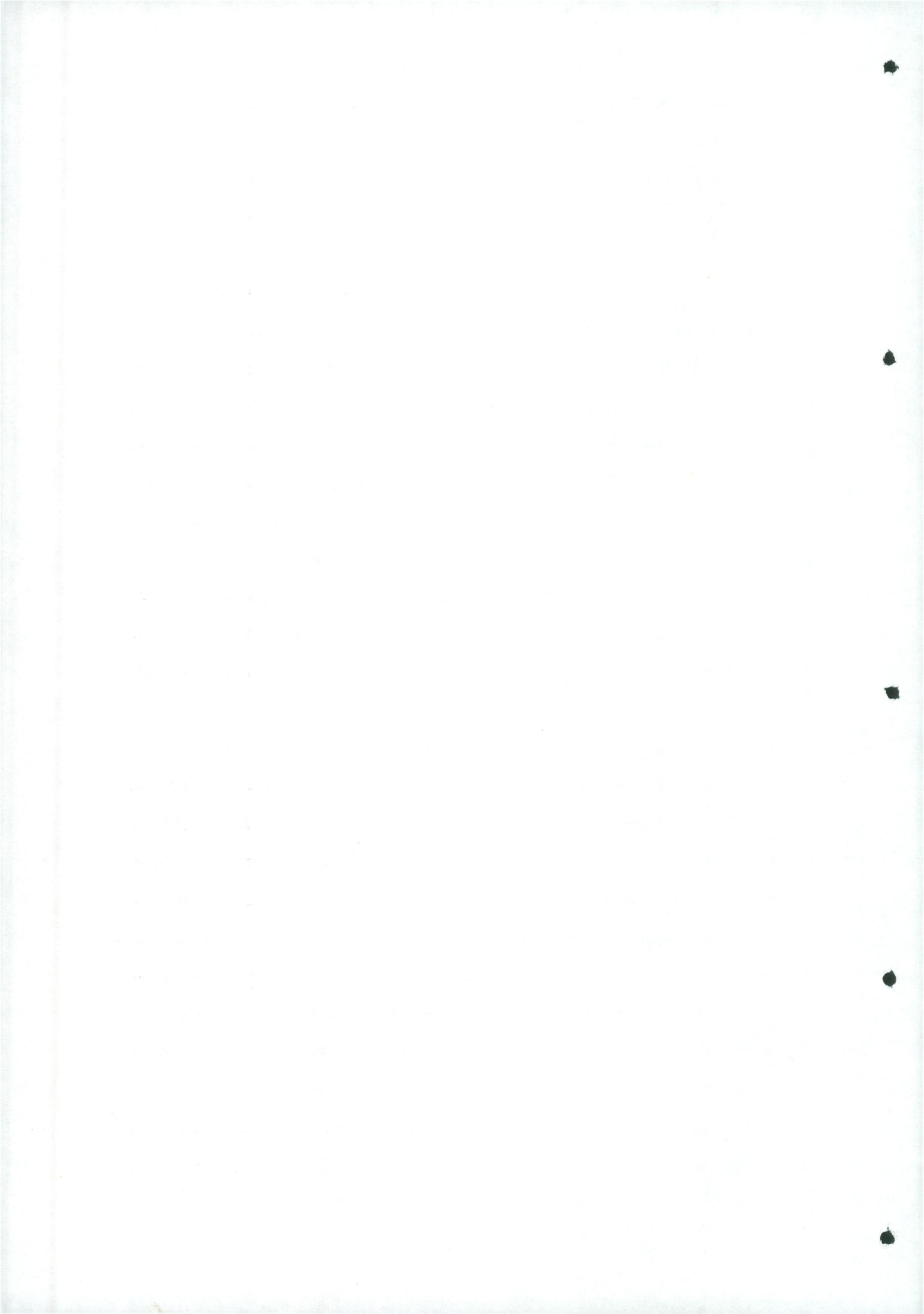
It has been claimed that Doherty's work can be classified as using metaphor as opposed to metonymy. (Hand 1996, p. 25) It is possible to dispute this as the above analysis uncovers the importance of metonymy in the construction of Doherty's



metaphors, in a similar manner to the way de Man exposed the role of metonymy in the metaphors of Proust as discussed in Chapter I. This reinforces one of the themes of this thesis that the separation of metaphor and metonymy is a far from simple operation.

Ironically, both photographs depict features of civil engineering, ostensibly designed to promote freedom of movement, which Doherty suggests are in effect features of social engineering designed to restrict and control the population. This is reinforced by his habitual practice of not representing human activity. Again, these images have a historical resonance in that the strategies of "sever and isolate" were used in internment. The metaphors also work in a formal sense in that the barrier cuts the composition in half in the first photograph while the wire mesh isolates the patch depicting the footbridge in the second. From a semiotic analysis, the depiction of the barrier and wire mesh are indexical signs in that they resemble their referents, and they are also symbolic in that they connote Doherty's metaphor. But, in, addition, they are formally indexical in that they actually "sever and isolate" areas in the photoimage. This type of dual mode sign is rare in language but is relatively common in the visual arts.

An earlier work, *Stone Upon Stone, Derry 1986*, consists of a pair of mixed media images, each a 124 x 185 cms black and white photoimage overlaid with text. Both have the title in large type but in the west bank image [Fig. XX] the title is printed in black and in the east bank image [Fig. XXI] it is printed in white, suggestive of a polarisation between the images. The west image also has the Republican slogan "Tiocfaidh ár Lá" (Our day will come) and "The West Bank of the Foyle" in green lettering, a colour traditionally symbolic of Irish Nationalism, while the east image has "We will maintain" and "The East Bank of the Foyle" in blue, also giving a Loyalist slogan in its symbolic colour. Thus the form of the text, i.e. its colour, is indicative of opposition. Doherty articulates the emblematic and symbolic colour code of the "two traditions". In addition, the linguistic dimension reinforces this separation in that different languages are used. There is also the fact that the





Republican slogan looks to the future whilst the Loyalist slogan seeks to maintain the status quo.

What is the dominant metaphor here? One possible reading might be division as irreconcilable difference, where the vehicle, the river Foyle, divides forever two opposing sides. The viewer must have specialised contextual knowledge to accomplish a successful reading of the work. A knowledge of the associated slogans and colors allows for an entry-level interpretation. But additional typographical knowledge of Derry and its surrounds would remind the viewer that on the west of the river Foyle lie Nationalist housing estates and further on lies Co. Donegal in Eire, i.e. "The South". The east bank of the Foyle is largely Loyalist and is "the province" of Northern Ireland, i.e. "The North". Ironically, for the citizens of Derry "The South" lies west and "The North" lies to the east.

The title of the work is enigmatic and does not readily yield an obvious interpretation. But if one knows that Derry is a walled city and understands the associated historical background when in 1688 the proto-Loyalist apprentice boys closed the city gates on the approaching Catholic army of King James in that seminal action that was to signal the beginning of what became known as The Siege of Derry, then one reading of the title could be that it is a reference to the walls of Derry with their connotations of division between the opposing political factions. The work was designed for a narrow corridor space running parallel to the river Foyle in which the images faced each other, making it impossible to view both simultaneously. Doherty has stated that "it was really asking the viewer to question his or her relationship to these traditions within this quite narrow space" (Coppock 1988, p 20). Thus the act of viewing the work imposes a performance metaphor in that both spatial vistas, standing for the respective political points of view, cannot be comprehended simultaneously. This emphasis of the physicality of the work does not, in general, have a counterpart in the domain of advertising.

Although Doherty has stated that "in general what I attempt to do with the text and image is to narrow down the possibilities of misreading the photographs",



(Coppock 1988, p. 20) his strategy relies heavily on understatement. It could be interpreted that Doherty is engaged in covert communication through the visual content of the two landscapes. The west bank is shown to have less land than the east, which could be read metaphorically as depicting the low percentage of property ownership amongst the Nationalist community. It is barren but the presence of a large rock gives the impression of strong resistance. In the image of the east bank a larger percentage of the depicted area is land, which could be read as metaphorically representing the dominance of Loyalists in property ownership in Northern Ireland. In addition, it is depicted as fertile in that plants grow there, and could have a connotated reference to a 'plantation'. One could also read the suggestion that it is the roots of the plants that keep the land on the bank together and that by implication it is not as rock solid as the west bank. There is no explicit evidence that this is Doherty's intention and there are dangers inherent in this type of speculative analysis. As discussed in the previous chapter, Tanka has pointed out that the responsibility for decoding a weakly communicated or covert message lies with the viewer. But, to a certain degree, the metaphorical analysis of issue-based art can be constrained if one is aware of the stance of the artist.

Doherty has stated that "some of the juxtapositions of image and text that I use, within the sense of advertisements, are quite conventional" (Coppock 1988, p. 19) but, unlike most advertisements, his work does not present the equivalent of the two strongly communicated messages which Forceville claims are almost invariably present: 1) this is an advertisement for brand/message X; and, 2) brand/message X is beneficial to the viewer (Forceville 1996, p. 104). Why does his work, unlike most advertisements, require so much effort and background knowledge on the part of the viewer in order to gain an insightful interpretation? One possible reason for Doherty's strategy is that he is deliberately striving to disrupt the ready-made, carefully prepared packet of signification that the photojournalism of the media dish out. To interpret Doherty's work requires a certain level of sophistication on the part of the viewer that is not required for the quick mass-media take. However, Doherty's use of text to

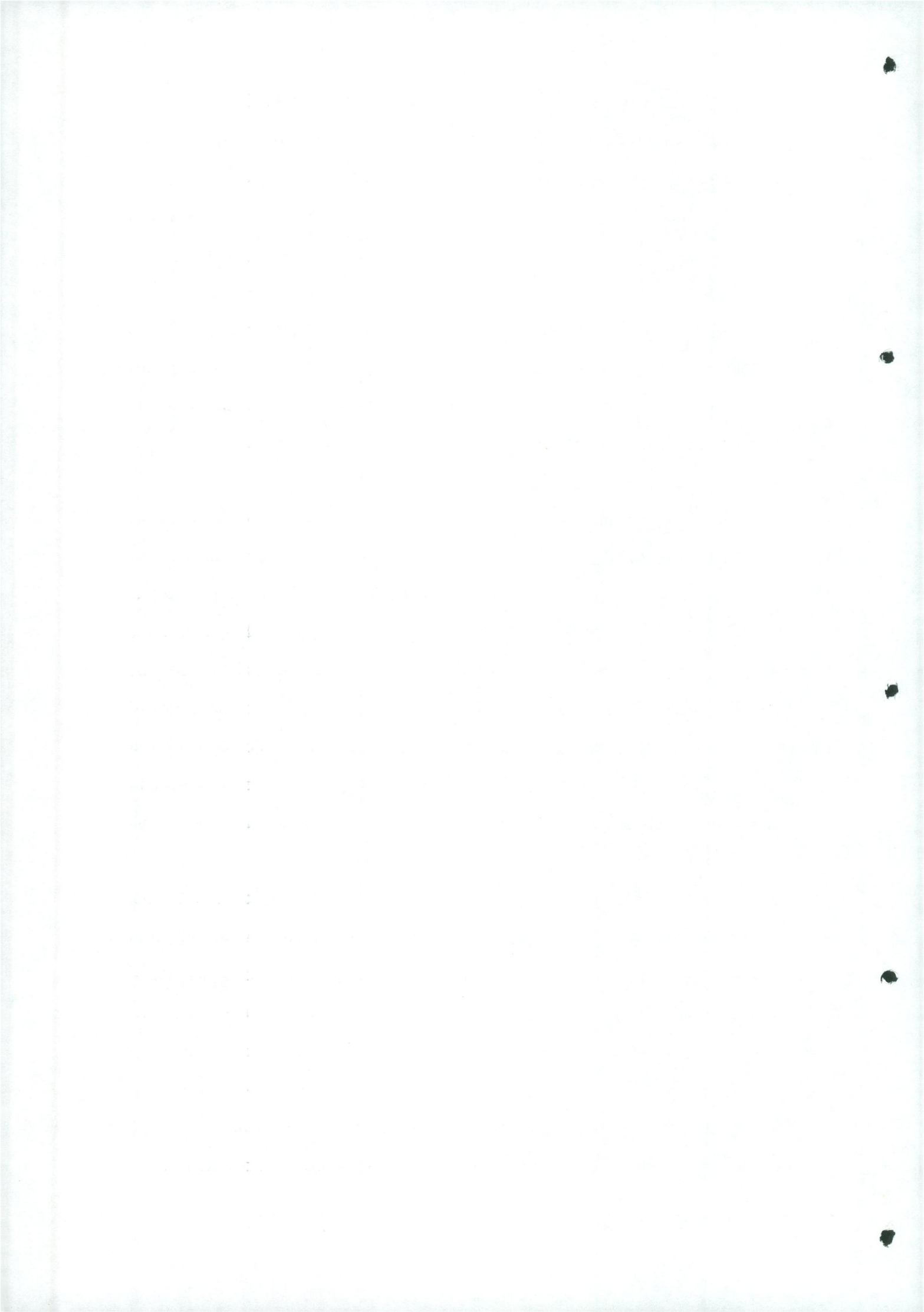




accompany an image conforms to Barthes' analysis of the press photograph where he detected a reversal of the traditional mode of presentation, where the image elucidated the text, to that where "the text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to 'quicken' it with one or more second-order signifieds" (Barthes 1961, p. 25).

It has been noted that Doherty seeks "to deconstruct and question representations and the relationships between image and text" (McCabe 1993, p. 60) and he has claimed in general that "the basis of the work is language" and "the text and image are inseparable" (Coppock 1988, p. 20). This is reinforced by the fact that if one eliminates the text and titles then the metaphorical content disappears and, in addition, with the possible exception of the view of Divis Flats, all the photographs lose their geographical positioning and are thus rendered counterproductive to his stated aim: "to try and reflect the way the terrain creates an understanding of the place" (Coppock 1988, p. 26).

The less the form of an artist's work resembles that of advertisements, the less likely it is to be amenable to Forceville's analysis. A good example is that of the work of Morris, a sculptor, who explores the metaphor of secret communication as intimate contact and where his only use of text is that of the title. For *Comm I* [Fig. XXII 1 & XXII 2] he created an installation in the Cornerhouse, Manchester in 1992, where he covered a wall with large pairs of touching tongues made out of toilet paper and covered in cling-film. Each piece measured 30 x 75 x 20 cms approx. Taking the title as an integral part of the work, one basis for an analysis would be to consider the work in terms of Forceville's fourth category, a verbo-pictorial metaphor, where the tenor is communicated through the title. In prison slang 'comm' is a word used to describe messages which are smuggled to the outside by being held in the mouth or in the rectum (Kingston 1994, p. 24). Often they are passed to a visitor during a kiss. This assumes particular knowledge on the part of the viewer of the work, both of the meaning of the title and of the likely intentions of Morris, whose work to date has largely been concerned with portraying the experiences of the Nationalist community in the city of Derry. However, the smuggling of messages out of prisons is not



exclusively the province of any one section of the community. On a superficial examination it would seem that, unlike most advertisements, in this work it is the vehicle which is portrayed by using touching tongues for intimate contact. But the materials from which the work is constructed give a further clue to identifying and representing the tenor as secret communication in that the messages are usually written on toilet paper and wrapped in cling-film. This tends to blur the strict classification of the work in that it can also be seen as belonging to Forceville's second category, a metaphor with two pictorial terms present. It may be recalled that this difficulty of classification arose also with his example of an advertisement for lubrication oil. Interestingly, this metaphor uses metonymy/synecdoche to construct both tenor and vehicle.

A further difficulty in interpretation arises if one considers Black's principle of the intransigence of irreversibility discussed in Chapter II. Can this work alternatively be read with tenor and vehicle reversed where the metaphor is intimate contact as secret communication? Unfortunately, this would seem to turn out to be the case. The kissing tongues could easily be interpreted as the tenor 'intimate contact' and the title read as the vehicle, 'comm' for secret communication. In the absence of some form of overt communication of a desire to promote a product, which normally occurs in advertisements, there is no obvious way from an examination of the work alone to give a definite answer to Forceville's second key question: which is the tenor and which is the vehicle?

This highlights the fact that art works, unlike advertisements, have a more open system of signification in that they are sometimes amenable to multiple readings not all of which are consciously the intention of the artist. Morris himself has said of the work that "ideally you want people just to go in and look at the thing and make what they want with it" (Morris 1994, p. 16). His work has been interpreted as being related to the AIDS epidemic where the toilet paper and cling-film (items of sanitation and protection in the case where cling-film is used as a condom substitute) are seen as opposed to the exposure to danger as a result of unprotected sex. In theory,





context - in this case the title and Morris's previous work - could provide grounds for disambiguation. But 'comm' has been read as short for "dangerous intercourse, illicit communication" (Kingston 1994, p. 16) and thus could be seen to refer to 'communicable disease'. Once the work was sited out of the context to which it referred and where no knowledge of the artist's likely intentions were known then the strategy of covert communication seemed to break down.

A surplus interpretation of the work, based on the examples of Derrida and de Man, is to view the work as a deconstruction of written communication in favour of the primacy of touch. Levinas has written: "The relation of proximity ... is the original language, language without words or propositions, pure communication" (Critchely 1992, p. 180). The tongue as a symbol of communication appears in the New Testament where the apostles "spoke in tongues" (Acts of the Apostles) after the Spirit entered them in the form of tongues of flame. Tongues are metonymically/synecdochelly related to the act of speaking and simultaneously a metaphor for communication. Using Jakobson's communication model, the kiss is a two-way performance of communication in which both participants act simultaneously as "communicator" and "addressee" in the "context" of intimate contact in which the touching tongues serve as a "channel" (Jakobson 1960). The message is erotic bliss transmitted using an open code system whose signification is continually evolving. The medium and message are as Yeats' dancer and dance at the end of *Among School Children* (Yeats 1928, p. 244). Morris' tongues are touching and arranged in different configuration giving the impression of a choreographed dance whose meaning the translation of which has been withheld, a la Rimbaud's *Alchemy of the Word* (Rimbaud 1977, p. 77). Even though they are a disguise for message-passing their touching is not solely functional. In depicting this covert and illegal activity they expose the eroticism of and "[allude] to the pleasures of political resistance through the metaphor of a French kiss", (Kingston 1994, p. 25) an activity that is hidden even from the participants. Each pair of tongues consists of oblivious partners in the ecstasy of communication. The *lingua* as tongue is a language where



the transmission of meaning is coupled with sensuousness of touch. Through the eroticism of the kiss the circumscription of communication is being circumnavigated. This suppression of the lingua echoes an earlier colonial strategy of ripping out the mother tongue of the indigenous population. The combination of exposure and eroticism, features which are not normally associated with the illegal transmission of secret messages, gives rise to tension in the metaphor.

None of the above metaphorical interpretations is unusual in the context of critical art practice, especially given the freedom allowed by Morris himself. But they would fall outside the explanatory power of Forceville's procedures. This implies a requirement for further research into the use of more appropriate analytic tools. A brief discussion of this will be given in the final chapter.

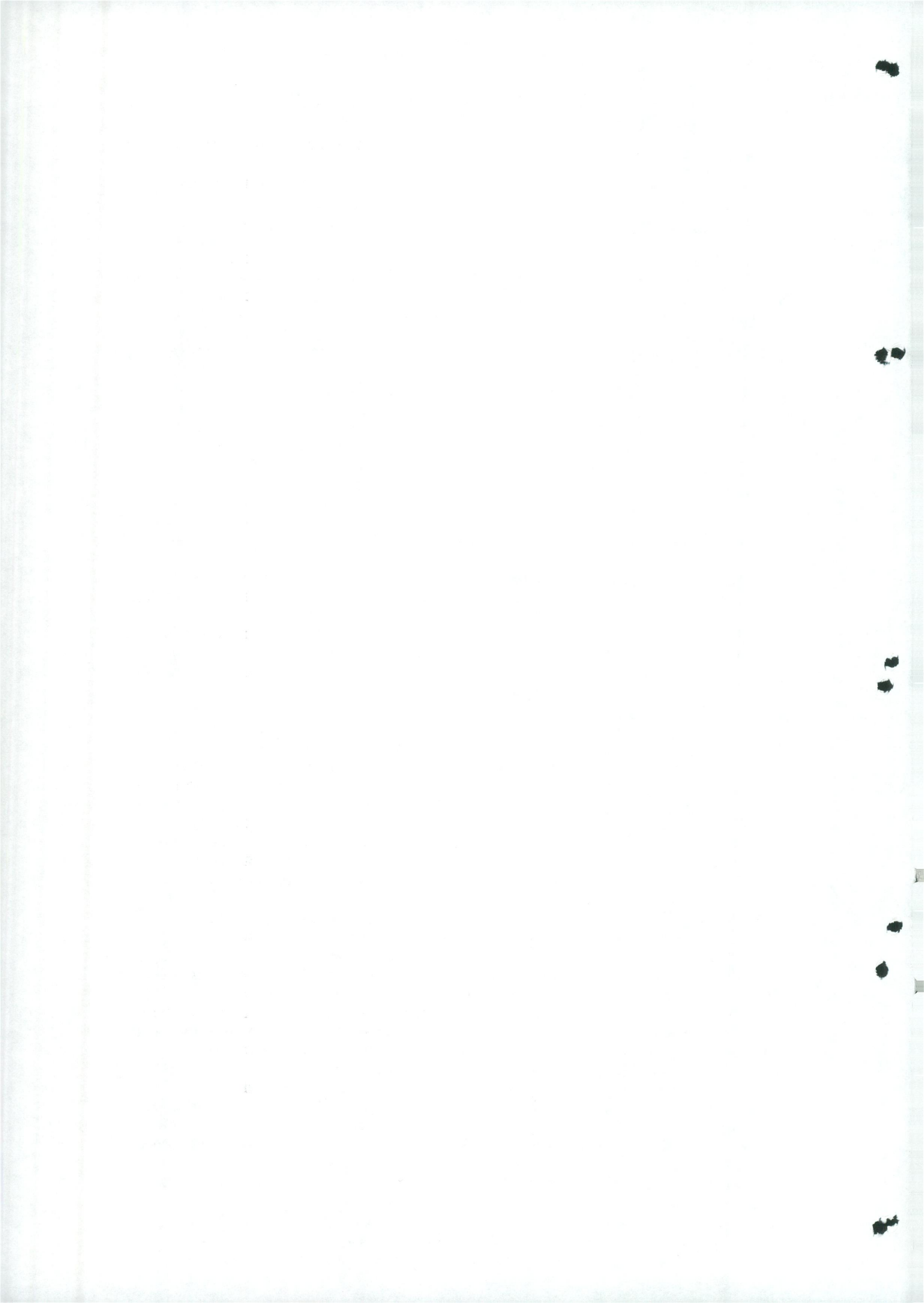




# Conclusion

This thesis began with a consideration of the current rehabilitation of rhetoric and dialectical reasoning as a valid mode of discourse in all spheres of human activity. From the sixteenth century onwards, rhetoric began to be separated from dialectical logic and grammar and relegated to the status of eloquent utterance. But since Nietzsche, rhetoric has undergone an astounding reappraisal, especially at the hands of the poststructuralists, and has emerged as a mode of reasoning at least equal, if not superior, to that of logic in this postmodernist age of uncertainties. Metaphor was isolated as a major trope and of all the figures in rhetoric's arsenal, the "diamond tipped trope", metaphor, has received the most critical attention, particularly in the last decade. Although the pedigree of literary research on metaphor reaches back to Aristotle, the quantity of research on visual metaphor is scarce, being largely confined to categorising and classification. This is especially true of metaphor analysis in art criticism.

It has been argued here that the application of literary theory to the visual arts is not straight forward in that, unlike language where almost all signifiers are conventionally linked to their signifieds, a visual sign may be iconic through resemblance as well as being symbolic. This duality has no literary equivalent except, perhaps, in onomatopoeic poetry. Another aspect of the visual arts that has no literary equivalent is the physical act of perceiving three-dimensional work which can enforce the viewer to engage in a performance metaphor as in a flat-bed work such as Doherty's *Stone on Stone* where originally both parts could not be seen simultaneously as a metaphor for the division between both side of the argument. However, Forceville's methods of analysing advertising metaphors seemed the most promising approach to a rule-based understanding of metaphor in the visual arts, especially that of political or issue-based work. But even when his method is reduced to answering three crucial questions: 1) what are the two terms of the metaphor? 2)



which is the tenor and which the vehicle? and 3) what features are projected from vehicle to tenor? difficulties arose the more the format of the work differed from the image-plus-text format of static advertising. In general, the problem lies in the fact that artistic communication is not as overt and unequivocal as commercial advertising, where usually every attempt is made to convey a direct message. Tanka has highlighted the parallel use of covert communication within contemporary advertising. The difficulty with analysing this type of communication is that the responsibility for its derivation lies with the addressee and not the communicator.

Metaphor is used extensively in advertising because it invites the audience to process the message and realise the resemblance between the vehicle of the metaphor and the tenor which is usually the product or service which is being promoted. For the same reason, issue-based art employs a similar strategy but tends to employ the methods of covert communication to a greater extent, probably to avoid being classified as blatant propaganda rather than to escape responsibility for the origination of the associated implications. In addition, a weakly communicated message invites discourse. Because covert communication relies so much on inferences made by the audience it is difficult to highlight explicit intentionality on the part of the communicator. This makes the use of analytic tools like those of Forceville, developed to deconstruct the mechanisms of overt communication problematic, when applied in domains where explicit intentionality cannot be easily established. This became apparent in the analysis of Doherty's work and was even more obvious in the example of Morris where the format of the work, while still remaining within the classification of issue-based art, differed significantly from that of overt advertisements. In these cases the contextual backgrounds of both artist and viewer become relevant to a fuller understanding of the work, and this additional non-explicit content makes rule-based interpretation problematic. In general, within critical practice the interpretation of work in the face of uncertainty becomes more poetic and less grounded in prosaic fact.





Future research into the analysis of how metaphor functions in visual communication should include a greater degree of investigation into how covert communication operates. Research into the area of subliminal advertising may offer some leads. A more advanced application of linguistic theory might start from the research already conducted in the fields of pragmatics and conversational implicature. Whatever the approach, it would seem urgent that with increasing use of visual media in contemporary culture and communication that we, as consumers, should have a greater awareness of the rhetorical mechanisms being employed to persuade us.







Fig. 1







Fig. II

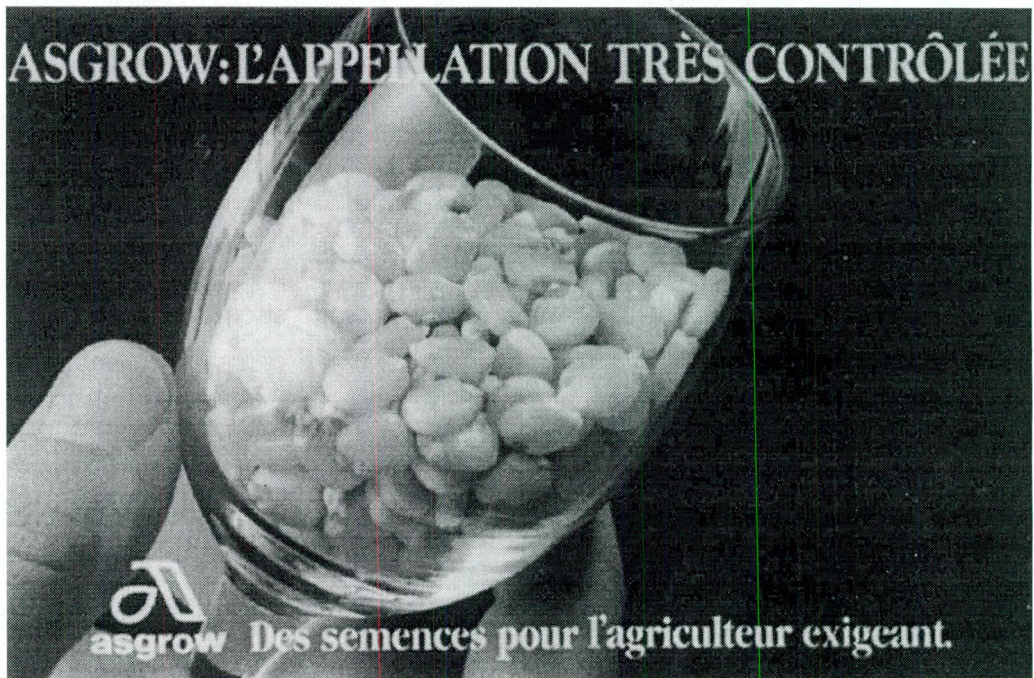


Fig. III







Fig. IV



Fig. V







Fig. VI

PLANANTS,  
LES PRIX  
VACANCES!

GENEVE  
650<sup>F</sup>

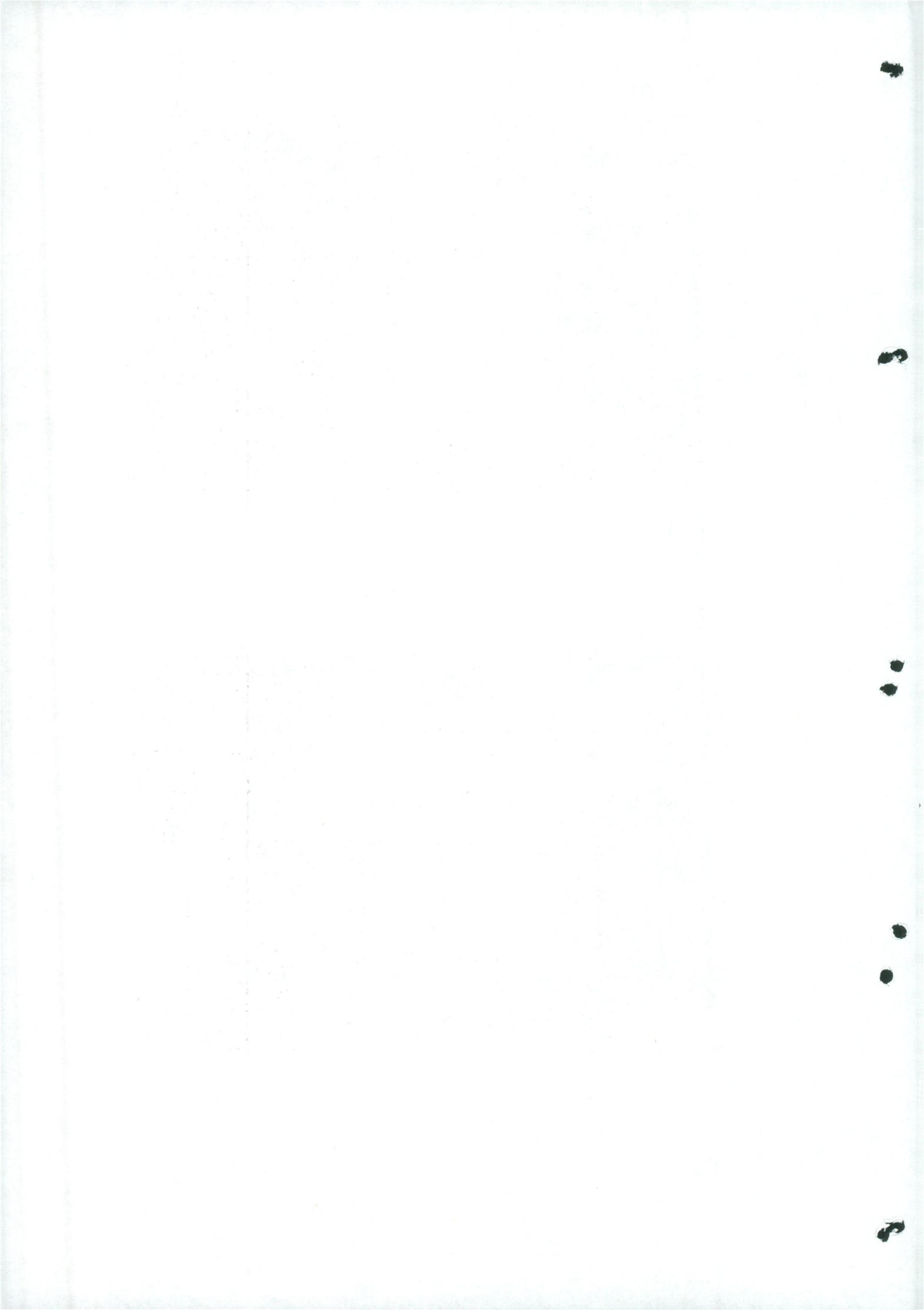
*Profitez des prix vacances et partez  
en hiver avec Air France.  
Autres exemples de prix proposés  
par Air France Vacances.*

LONDRES  
810<sup>F</sup>

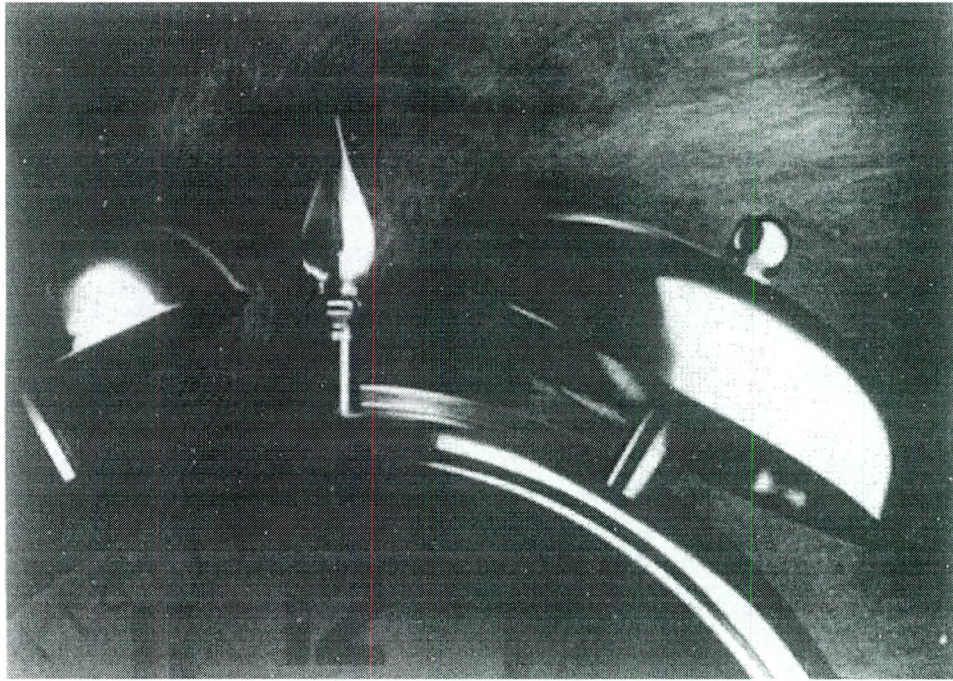
NICE  
876<sup>F</sup>

AIR FRANCE  
*Vacances*

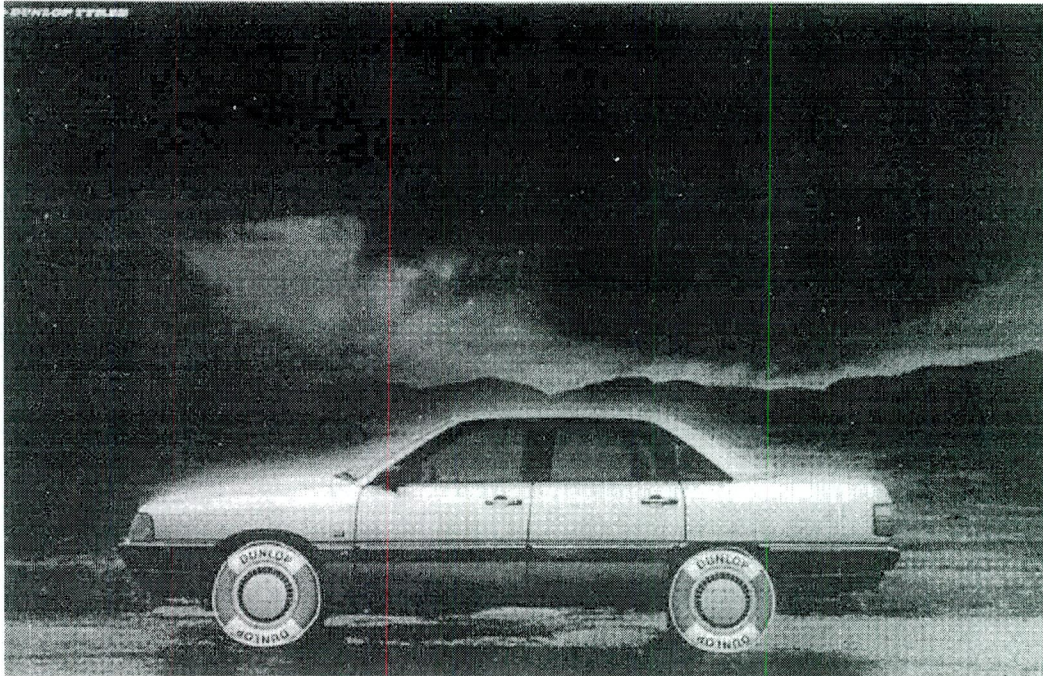
Fig. VII







**Fig. VIII**



**Fig. IX**





## We halen energie uit de aarde alsof het nooit op kan...

Er zijn weinig dingen die als ze op zijn ook echt voor altijd op zijn. Neem een appel. Je eet 'm en het gerd gaat in in een mevrouw aan de boom.

Maar... als natuurlijk gaat dat niet met olie en aardgas. Ook die 'groeien' in de aarde. Maar daar hebben ze wel miljoenen jaren voor nodig.

En wat doen we nu met 't halve? We halen de olie en gas van die miljoenen jaren in enkele tientallen jaren uit onze bodem.

### We branden onze bodemschatten steeds sneller op.

Ga maar na. Hoeveel meer energie wij gebruiken dan onze voorvaders. Zij hadden vroeger geen auto's, geen tv, geen koelkast, geen wasmachine...

Gelukkig hebben wij die nu wel. En we zouden ze niet graag opgeven. Heeft ook niet. Maar dan moeten we er wel verstandig mee omgaan.

En u ruit ziet, als we in de koude winter dingen alleen gebruiken als het echt leuk of nodig is, kosten ze ons minder. En genieten we er bewuster van.

### Bewust energiegebruik kwestie van mentaliteit.

Galaksig beseffen steeds meer mensen dat, wie prettig wil blijven leven, daar ook iets voor moet doen.

Dat, wie van de natuur wil genieten die natuur niet moet vernietigen. Dat, wie goed drink water wil, moet helpen het water schoon te houden. Want, dat is verstandig, is het omgaan met dingen die voor ons van levensbelang zijn.

Maar, leeft dat beseft wel voldoende voor energie? Zou we bijvoorbeeld dat mensen zonder reden goed voedsel weggeven dan vinden we dat zonde. Maar de verwarming hoog zetten na de ramen open, vinden we vrij normaal. Terwijl we op die manier toch erg veel kostbare energie zomaar weggeven.

### Het ene is net zo belangrijk als het andere.

Tech is het belangrijk. Dat we ons nooit zo druk maken over energie. Daar was vroeger ook minder reden voor. Maar nu we weten hoe belangrijk energie vandaag de dag voor ons is, moeten we er mee leren

omgaan als met andere dingen die voor ons van levensbelang zijn.

Zijn we zinnig in onze manier van leven, dan moeten we ook zinnig zijn op de manier die we last maken. Zijn we zinnig zo erin te denken dat, dan moeten we ook zinnig zijn op de elektriciteit waarbinnen die kan draaien. Zijn we zinnig op ons fornuis, dan moeten we ook zinnig zijn op het gas waardoor we erop kunnen koken.

### Energie besparen is energie bewaren.

De energie die we normaal uit de aarde halen, zit er de eerste miljoenen jaren dat niet meer in. En want meer het energiegebruik blijft toenemen zoals de laatste 25 jaar, hebben we over 11 jaar twee keer zoveel nodig. Terwijl de wereldvoorraad slechts afneemt.

Gelukkig kunnen de mensen wel met verstandig voor de brandstoffen die opmaken. Maar laten we er nu wel de tijd voor geven. De tijd die ze nodig hebben. Laten we dan met verstandig omgaan met wat we hebben.

**Verstandig met energie.**



Fig. X





# DE MEESTE HOOFDTELEFOONS HEBBEN ÉÉN GROOT MANKEMENT.



Heeft u wel eens over n hoofdtelefoon naar een LP' geluisterd?

Het eerste lijfje is er niets aan de hand. Bij nummer twee gaat u merken dat u een hoofdtelefoon op heeft.

Habituë die de plaat (spoor) in de hand al knip verscheid te vinden.

Tu aan teind van de plaat vindt u vrede groet even te veel. Want tegen die tijd heeft u het gevoel of uw hoofdtelefoon van een goudkroon is.

Intuïtie. En volkomen onnosse.

Kijk naar naar de Sony HLR3. Die weet niet als de meeste andere hoofdtelefoons n paar honderd gram. Maar n gram. Inklaret het aarwansoneer.

Vraag daarbij de zachte, veevossellare

godtussenrijes en u begrijpt dat we geen waken te veel zeggen, als we beweren dat deze Sony antest komfortabel is.

Zin comfortabel dat u voegst dat u een hoofdtelefoon op heeft.

Maar desoclaids met een kwaliteet die niet onderkent voor de zwangewicht hoofdtelefoon. Het treksweembestek laagst van 20 tot 20.000 Hz. Die HLR kwaliteet als u die van een gewone hoofdtelefoon.

Blijft over de prijs. Die is evenals het resultaat van 7 apparaten zelf meest beschieden. Want wat is het niet 75,- om al de laatste LP's en cassettes in een veevossellare te gebruiken? **SONY**



**UW PLATEN EN CASSETTES ZIJN EEN SONY HOOFDTELEFOON WAARD.**


Fig. XI







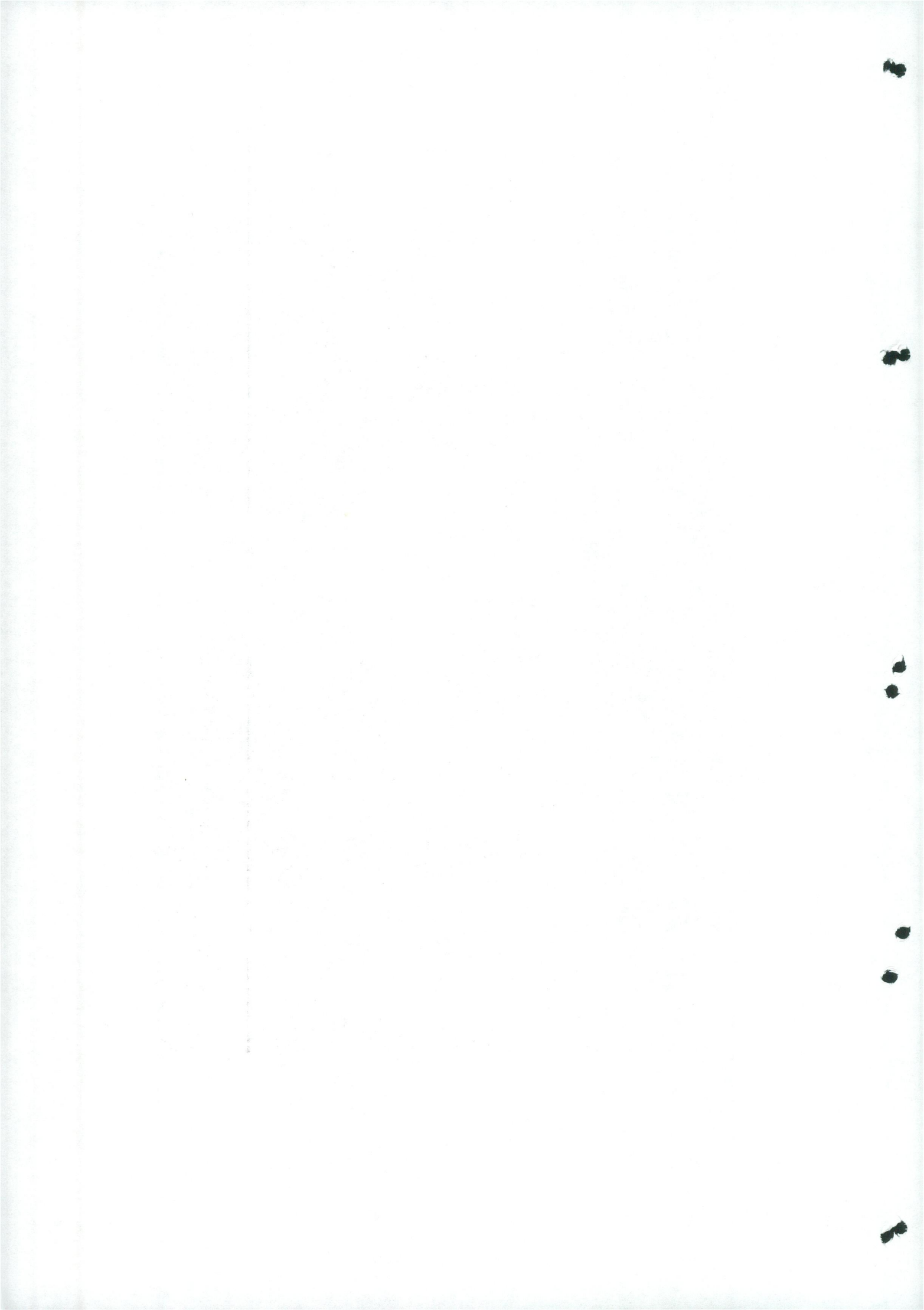
**3990<sup>F</sup> ALLER RETOUR NEW YORK. HUGH!**



**AIR FRANCE** *Vacances*

Tarif valable du 1<sup>er</sup> Avril au 3 Juillet. Conditions particulières de vente et de transport.

Fig. XII





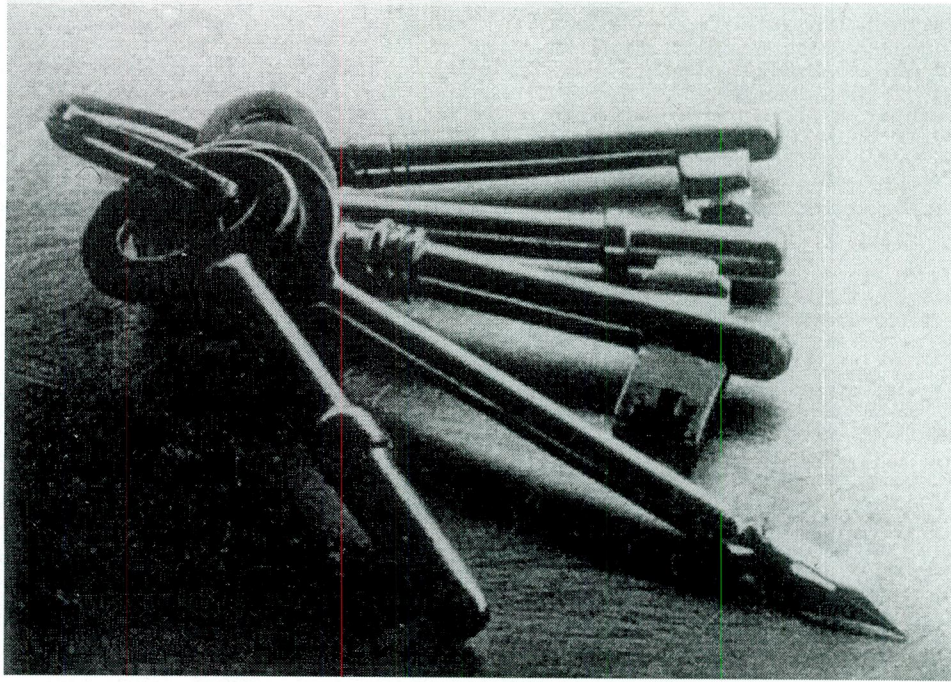


Fig. XIII

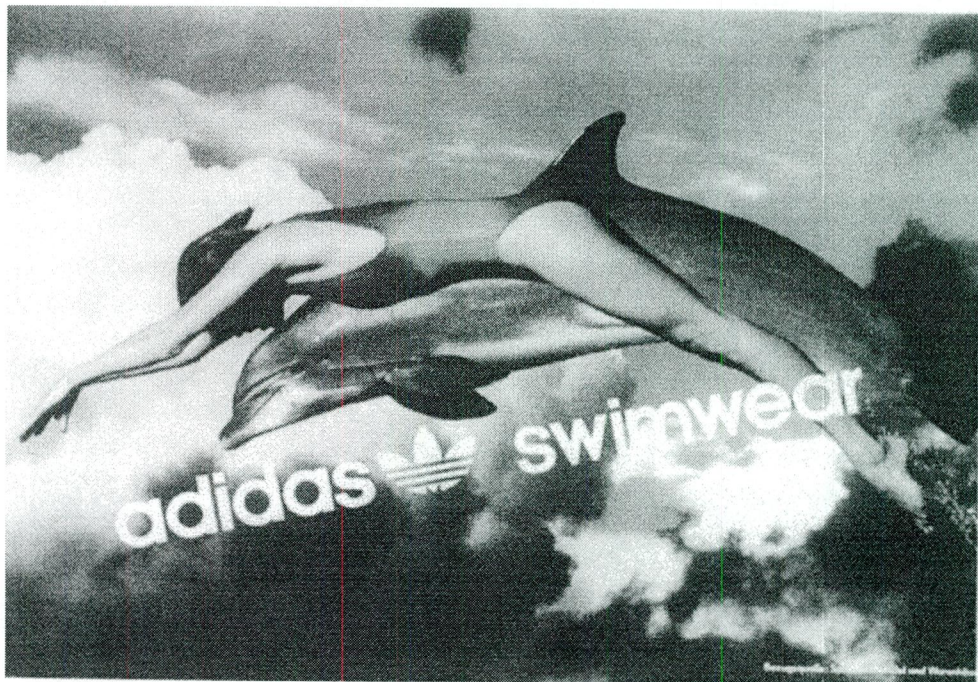
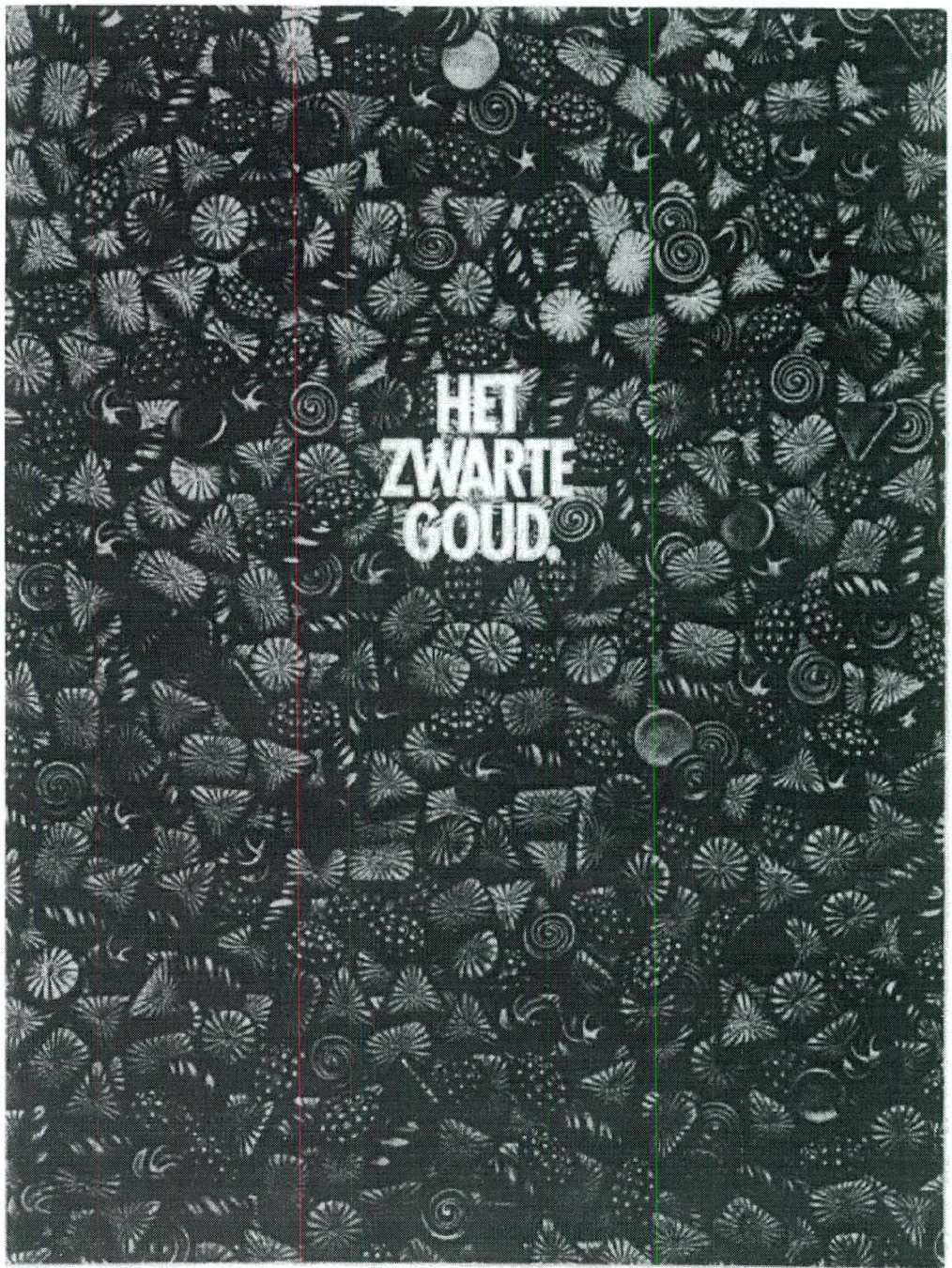


Fig. XIV









# HET ZWARTE GOUD.

Als je de volle smaak van echte drop als volwaardig merkartikel op de markt brengt, als je dat binnen een jaar tot marktleider in z'n segment laat uitgroeien, als anderen dat dropje vervolgens bekronen als één van de beste introducties in het levensmiddelenkanaal, dan mag je als fabrikant op z'n minst een beetje trots zijn op die zakjes ouderwets lekkere Voldrop **Venco**



Fig. XV





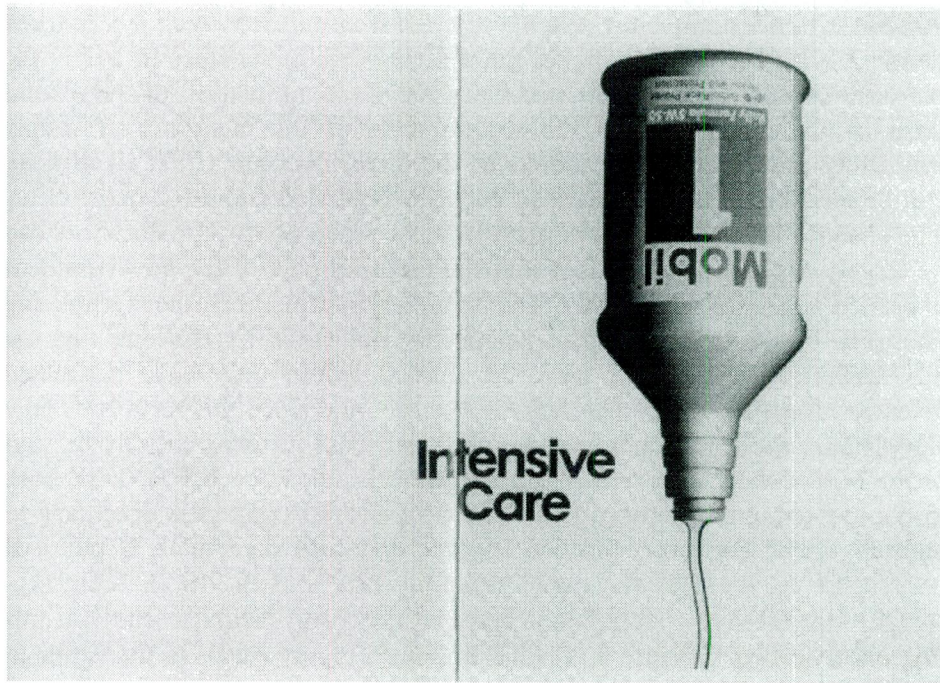


Fig. XVI



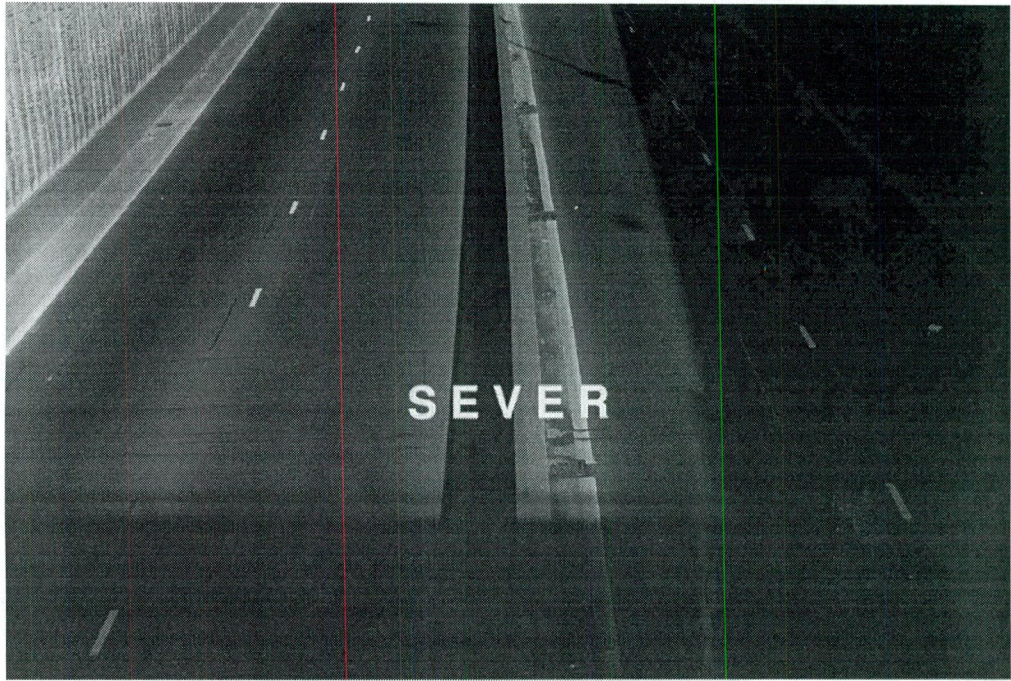
Fig. XVII 1



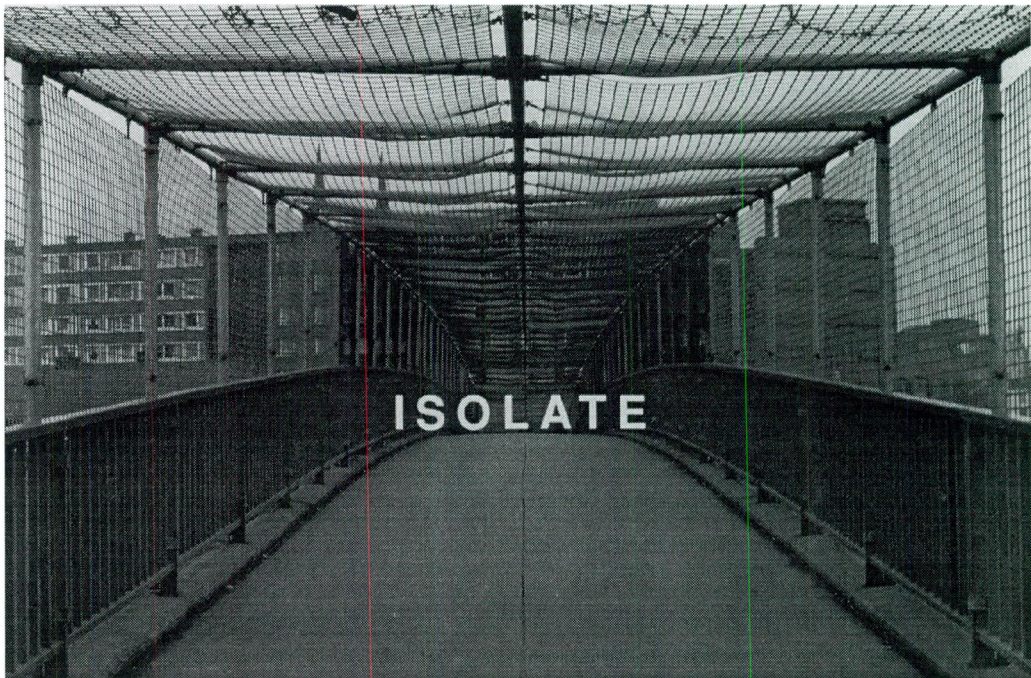
Fig. XVII 2







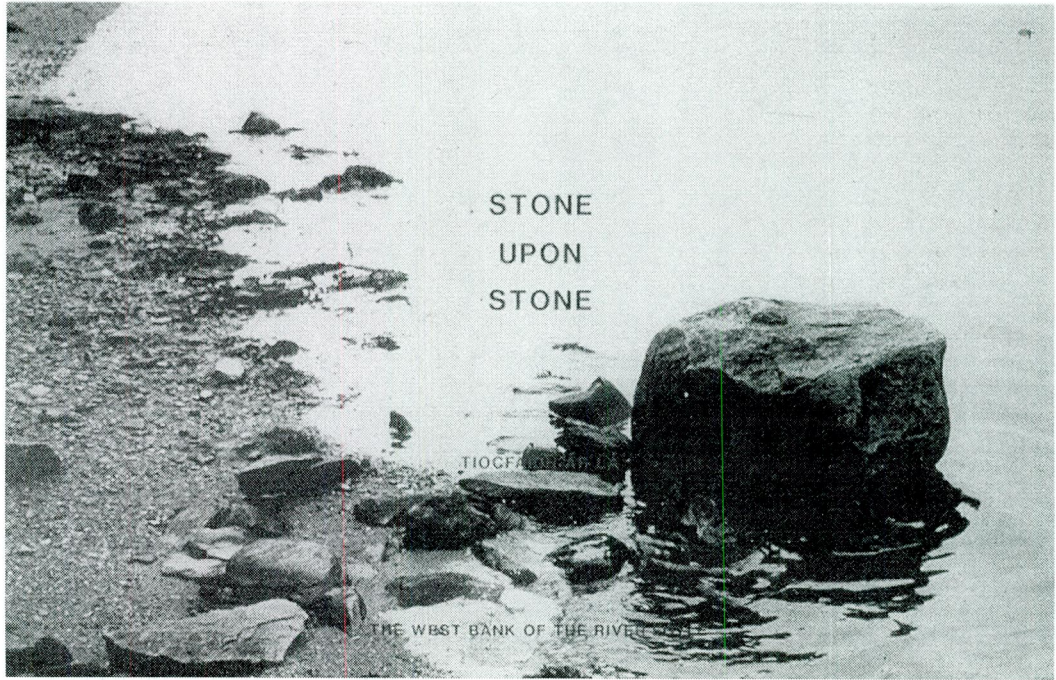
**Fig. XVIII**



**Fig. XIX**







**Fig. XX**



**Fig. XXI**







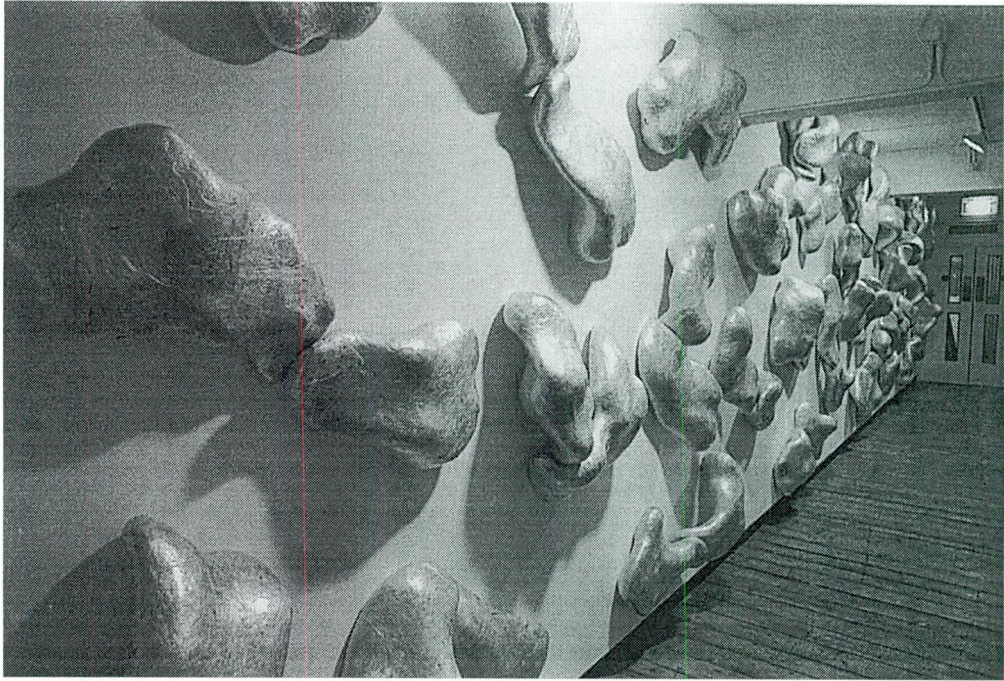


Fig. XXII 1

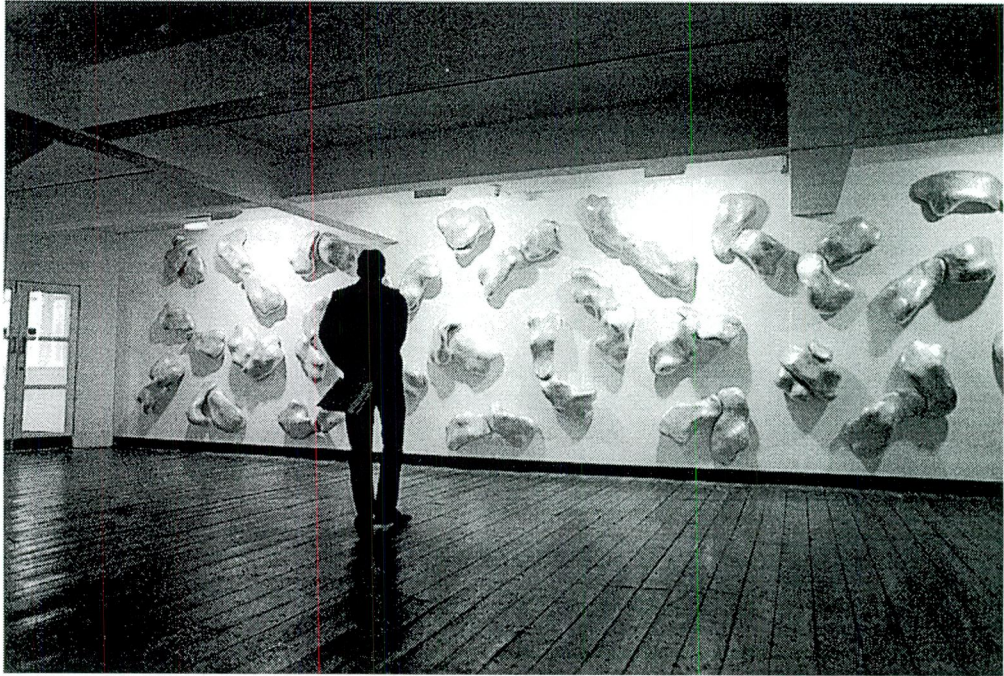


Fig. XXII 2





## Glossary

### Denotation/Connotation

The denoted signified of a sign is what is literally meant while the connotated signified is the figurative meaning associated with the sign. The interpretation of a connoted sign is recursive in that it must eventually lead to a denoted sign. A painting of an apple denotes the concept 'apple', but it may also connote an instrument of temptation as in the garden of Eden.

### Conversational implicature

A branch of pragmatics which seeks to identify and account for the derivation of meaning which is not solely contained in the content of an utterance. The analysis of metaphor falls into this area.

### Gestalt experience

A state of mind in which a structural completeness is perceived.

### Irony

The use of a word or phrase in such a way as to convey a meaning opposite to the literal meaning of the utterance.

### Langue/Parole

Langue is the system of linguistic possibilities available in a given language while Parole refers to the individual language utterance. See Paradigm/Syntagm.

### Metonymy

The substitution of some attribute or suggestive word for what is actually meant when the objects or ideas each refers to are habitually associated.

### Paradigm/Syntagm

Binary opposites from structural linguistics and semiology that distinguish between code (paradigm) and message (syntagm). Barthes in his *Elements of Semiology* gives an example derived from fashion where the paradigm is the system of skirt-blouse-jacket where one cannot wear a skirt in the position of a blouse, etc. The syntagm is the actual set of garments worn on a given occasion.

### Pragmatics

A branch of linguistics that seeks to explain the meaning of utterances, which cannot be accounted for by a purely semantic analysis, by taking context into consideration.

### Rhetorical Figure

A generic term for any artful deviation from the normal mode of speaking or writing. Normally divided into two types, schemes and tropes.

### Scheme

A deviation from the ordinary pattern or arrangement of words.

### Semiotics/Semiology

The study of sign systems.

### Sign/Signifier/Signified

System of signification developed by Saussure in which a sign is composed of two parts: a Signifier which is a code that is used to refer to a concept known as the Signified. Peirce further refined a sign into three types: iconic, where the signifier resembles the signified as in where a representation of a cigarette is used in a No Smoking sign; indexical, where the signifier is associated with the signified as where smoke signifies fire; and symbolic, where there is an arbitrary conventional





association between the signifier and signified. Most linguistic signs are of the third type as where the sound 'apple' refers to the concept of an apple.

**Simile**

An explicit comparison between two things or ideas that are somewhat unlike but have something in common.

**Synecdoche**

A figure of speech in which a part stands for the whole.

**Tenor/Vehicle**

Terms invented by I. A. Richards to explain how metaphors present one idea, the tenor, in terms of another, the vehicle. In the metaphor 'man is a wolf' the animal nature of man, the tenor, is conveyed through the wolf as vehicle.

**Trope**

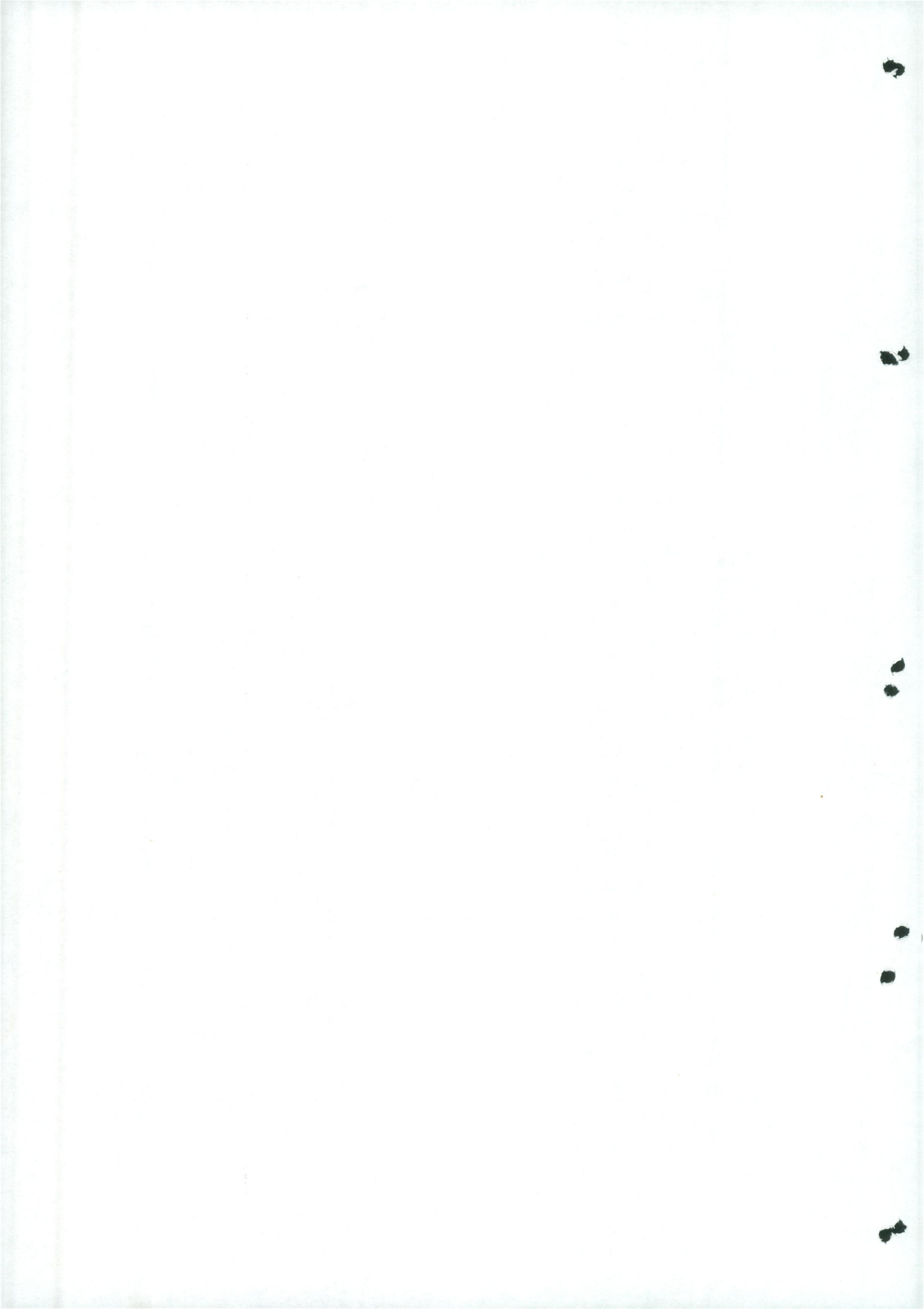
A deviation from the literal signification of a word or phrase.





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