

An anatomy of the multimodal rhetorical landscape of the world's most valuable brands

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Abstract

This paper furnishes an anatomy of the rhetorical configuration of representative advertising narratives from the most valuable brands (based on WPP's BrandZ 2012 Report), while seeking to demonstrate the usefulness of classical rhetoric in understanding narratives that involve other than verbal modes and to contribute to the ongoing research on visual, verbo-visual and multimodal rhetoric on both conceptual and methodological levels. The filmic syntagms are segmented by applying the rhetorical taxonomy of operations (adjunction, suppression, substitution, permutation) that was adapted by Groupe μ (1970) from Quintilian, with the aid of the content analytic tool Atlas.ti 7, and a list of 39 rhetorical figures that partake of these operations. The definitions of the involved figures are expanded with view to providing (partial) answers to the ongoing plea for adapting traditional figures in a highly visio-centric culture, of which advertising filmic narratives constitute a remarkable example. Furthermore, three novel figures are put forward, viz. accolance, pareikonopoeia and reshaption, with view to capturing salient facets of this visio-centric culture. The ensuing discussion draws on the findings of the content analytic study, while highlighting not only which figures recur most frequently in the selected corpus, but, moreover, how they surface in different modes and interactions among modes, thus yielding a 'rhetorical first mover advantage'.

Keywords: multimodal rhetoric, advertising narratives, content analysis, branding.

0. Introduction

In the context of a vastly visio-centric culture and the by now consolidated 'pictorial' or 'iconic turn' (Mitchell, 2005; Moxey, 2008), as the successor of the time-hallowed linguistic turn, argumentation techniques in TV advertising have been progressively shifting focus from the verbal to the visual mode. "Documentary evidence suggests that [...] emphasis on pictures over words has steadily increased throughout the last century" (McQuarrie & Philips, 2004, p.113). "Television commercials to-day show between one and four dozen different moving visual images in a 30-second spot [...] it would be impossible to express 30 different propositions verbally in 30 seconds" (Blair, 2004, p.51).

Scholars from various research streams concerned with analyzing the rhetoric of ad narratives have been making repeated pleas for either coining new rhetorical figures or adapting existing ones (e.g., Forceville, 1996) to this visio-centric predicament, as well as inviting further research into how such adaptations may occur beyond print ads (e.g., McQuarrie and Philips, 2004). Furthermore, the bulk of research in multimodal rhetorical analyses of advertising texts, and particularly ad filmic texts, has focused largely on the four master tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony). By extending the scope of multimodal rhetorical analysis, an attempt is made at demonstrating that traditional rhetorical operations and figures, over and above the four master tropes, may be applied effectively to ad filmic narratives. Moreover, as a response to the suggestion for coining new figures that may encapsulate salient facets of the bespoke configuration modes of ad

filmic narratives, three new figures are put forward, viz. *accolorance*, *pareikonopoeia* and *reshaption*, as defined and illustrated in the Methodology and Discussion Sections. The analytical/interpretive route that is pursued in this paper emphasizes the applicability of traditional figures to verbal, visual and music modes, with a focus on verbo-visual interactions, thus yielding a 'rhetorical perspective' (Foss, 2005, p.145) on the con-figuration modes of the rhetorical landscape of the most valuable brands, as reported in Brandz¹ 2012 (WPP Report 2012).

1. Background literature

Various perspectives, typologies and taxonomies spanning different disciplines have been offered in order to account for the modes of rhetorical configuration of both static and moving images (see Rossolatos 2012b, 2013a), such as Foss's visual rhetoric (2005), Groupe μ 's *Traité du Signe Visuel* (1992; from a rhetorical semiotic point of view), Kostelnick's & Roberts' (2010; from a visual design point of view), Mick's & McQuarrie's and McQuarrie's & Philips's (1996, 2004, 2008; from a consumer research point of view), but also, less concerned with rhetorical analysis, sociosemiotic readings of the grammar of visual design and filmic texts (e.g., Van Leeuwen & Kress, 1996; Almeida 2009; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2011) and the list may be expanded. Groupe μ , in their Visual Rhetoric (1992), provided an updated account of the rhetorical operations (adjunction, suppression, substitution, permutation) that were featured in their first rhetorical treatise (1970), while applying them to visual signs (mainly artistic images) that had been introduced in the first treatise (1970), with further qualifications (see Rossolatos, 2012a, 2012b).²

The rhetorical perspective that is offered in this paper has been edified on the operational taxonomy of Groupe μ 's first rhetoric (see Table 1), while taking into account for analytical (and not taxonomic) purposes how operations function in general in the province of visual signs, as the primary focus rests with adapting figures to multimodal rhetorical discourse and not operations at large (even though operations have also been coded, as hyper-variable groupings of individual figures, as will be shown in the Methodology Section). Furthermore, the definitional and operational scope of the involved operations and figures was expanded in order to address the syntactical and semantic particularities of ad filmic narratives as indispensable aspects of commercial branding discourse, rather than purely artistic texts. This extended application of

¹ BrandZ is an annual report published by the WPP group of companies that lists the top 100 corporate and/or product brands, ranked according to their brand equity standing on a global basis. High equity brands are characterized by particularly strong emotional ties with their target audiences, over and above the recognition of superior functional attributes stemming from product use. Hence, the brands featured in the BrandZ study constitute a pertinent pool for understanding how highly valued brands shape their advertising narratives from a rhetorical point of view.

² These key operations stem from a long tradition, starting with Quintilian (see Sloane, 2006 and Nöth, 1990). A similar strategy of retaining operations, but dropping figures was pursued by McQuarrie & Philips (2004) in their taxonomy of operations in print ads.



rhetorical operations and their respective figures aims to unearth identifiable patterns in configuration modes of representative ad filmic narratives from the most valued brands, as analyzed in the Discussion section.

Groupe μ (1992) recognized that it is difficult to apply directly classical rhetorical figures to moving images, with the exception of the master tropes (see Rossolatos 2012 d; 2013 a,c,d). Efforts have been undertaken at extending the application of traditional figures mostly to static images (e.g., visual metonymy; Willerton 2005) and print advertisements (e.g., Durand, 1970, 1987; McQuarrie and Philips, 2004). The extension of figures to moving images and advertising filmic narratives has been mostly limited to visual metaphors and visual metonymies (e.g., Forceville, 2007, Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2008).³ By adopting a common classification framework for visual and verbal elements, both purely verbal, purely visual, but also verbo-visual figures and operations may be discerned as being operative in ad filmic narratives, while taking into account the evocative powers of the visual mode, viz. "immediacy, verisimilitude, and concreteness that help influence acceptance in ways not available to the verbal" (Foss, 2004, p.314). To this end, the rhetorical figures were redefined in order to encapsulate visual components, but also modes of interaction between visual and verbal modes in ad filmic texts, as laid out in Table 1. By taking on board Forceville's (1996) recommendation for coining new figures in the light of the particularities of the visual mode in the context of the ad filmic text, three new figures are put forward in this paper, viz. accolorance, reshaption and pareikonopoeia (Table 1). These figures aim to encapsulate salient and frequently recurring modes of rhetorical configuration of ad filmic narratives.

2. Methodology

A representative commercial from each of the key brands making up the BrandZ 2012 list was selected, yielding a sample of 87 effective TV commercials⁴, after an initial screening phase of at least five commercials per brand. The majority of the selected commercials are corporate and non product-centric, thus focusing on key messages that reflect a company overall (or a specific umbrella brand, in cases of brands involving more than one variants)⁵. The vast majority of the selected ad filmic narratives were selected from the US/UK markets, with the exception of films from brands that operate solely in their native countries (i.e., Movistar/Spain, MTN/Uganda) and spanned the period between 2010-2012, in order to ensure as greater temporal proximity as possible.

The coding of the selected ad filmic narratives with rhetorical operations/figures took place

³ The boundaries between metaphor and metonymy are not always clear-cut. In any case, as noted and analyzed by various scholars (Eco, 1972, Groupe μ , 1970, Ducrot & Todorov, 1972) metaphors emerge through a process of double metonymy.

⁴ With the exclusion of non-English speaking ads, which were not featured in the analysis due to the author's non-mastery of the language involved.

⁵ With exceptions that are reflective of the wider advertising strategy of different product/service categories, e.g., cars, where ad narratives tend to focus on specific models, yet featuring a corporate brand promise as payoff line (first or second credentials card).

with the employment of the CAQDAS content analytic program Atlas.ti 7, by drawing on a new methodology⁶, focusing on rhetorical analysis, not currently on offer by popular multimodal analysis programs (e.g., O'Halloran et al., 2010, Tan et al., 2012) and was enacted in two phases. During the first phase an a priori list of 50 figures was used, while each individual filmic syntagma⁷/sequence out of the total of 561 that resulted from the segmentation of the 87 commercials was inspected in the light of the definitional components of each figure. After completing the first phase, the list was reduced to 39 figures, by rendering redundant and/or merging figures that were minimally differentiating (e.g., omitting synaesthesia, given that the majority of films employ visuals in tandem with verbal/narrated segments).

The 561 filmic segments were coded with one or more figures, based on whether the corresponding figure occurred in the syntagma itself as relatively autonomous thematic unit (e.g., an alliteration that occurs within an individual segment) or by reference to the directly preceding sequence (e.g., an anaphora or an antanaclasis) or retrospectively, by taking into account the global semantic/thematic context of the film (e.g., a visual sequence acting as a visual metonymy for a key product attribute or product benefit in a mid-filmic syntagma, which may be coded as such retrospectively in the light of the pay-off line in the ending sequence of the film). Primarily and predominantly visual and verbal filmic expressive elements were taken into account while coding sequences with rhetorical figures. However, in instances where musical expressive elements were dominant in streamlining the semantic orientation of a film, they were also taken into account, as will be shown in the Discussion Section.

The figures were defined by allusion to various rhetorical treatises, such as Groupe μ 's (1970, 1992), Fontanier's (1977), Aristotle's, Quintilian's, Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca's (1971), but also to entries in collective works, such as Sloane's *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (2006), as well as to taxonomies that were coined by scholars in the advertising rhetoric literature (e.g., McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, McQuarrie & Philips, 2004, Huhmann, 2008, Durand, 1970, 1997). The employed figures, their definitions and the rhetorical operations of which

⁶ The methodology //rhetor.dixit// is offered by the semiotic consulting agency //disruptiVesemiOtics// and features an extensive suite of multimodal rhetorical analytics, customized for distinctive categories of advertising filmic narratives.

⁷Note that the offered rhetorical perspective is embedded in a filmic grammatical framework (see Bordwell & Thompson, 2008, Rossolatos, 2012a), which derives from a rich structuralist semiotic tradition in film analysis (e.g., Metz); it considers methodological principles and methods of analysis that are established in textual linguistics, inasmuch as semantics, syntactics, pragmatics (e.g., conversation analysis), but is not constrained by them. In this framework, the filmic syntagma, rather than sentence, has been posited as the minimal unit/segment of analysis (which engulfs oral sentences, e.g., voice-overs or written sentences, e.g., supers). The filmic syntagma is equivalent to a sequence that may include one or more different shots, in line with filmic analysis (where, certainly, methods tend to vary, such as Bellour's frame-by-frame analysis- see Rossolatos, 2012a). This framework prioritizes relations and interactions among modes and figures that occur in distinctive syntagms and contribute to the structuration of an ad filmic narrative, rather than resting at the level of pinpointing individual figures (an analytical task that is included in the analytical suite, while not being exhaustive of its integral and/or ad hoc applications).

they partake are portrayed in Table 1:

Table 1. Rhetorical figures and operations employed in the analysis of the ad filmic corpus.

	Rhetorical figures (name-definition)	Corresponding rhetorical operation
1	Apheresis: Omission of one or more sounds or syllables from the beginning of a word.	Suppression*
2	Apocope: Omission of one or more sounds or syllables from the end of a word.	Suppression
3	Ellipsis: Suppression of one or two elements that are necessary for a complete verbo-visual syntactic arrangement, without impacting necessarily on the semantic closure of the message	Suppression
4	Zeugma: Grammatical coordination of two words or visuals that possess opposing semes. ⁸	Suppression
5	Asyndeton: Loosely constructed sentences that occur in filmic syntagms, such as the juxtaposition of words separated by commas.	Suppression
6	Litotes: Quantitative diminution of a property of an object, the significance of an event or a state-of-affairs.	Suppression
7	Suspension/Silence (or aposiopesis): Intentional omission of a word/phrase that would complete the meaning of a message (contrary to expectations).	Suppression
8	Rhetorical question: A question that includes its	Suppression
9	Neologism: Formed by the addition of at least two words or visuals.	Adjunction**

⁸ Semes constitute the minimal units of multimodal semantic content (Rossolatos 2012a).

10	Paronomasia: Employment of consonant words with a different sense. In visual terms, a paronomasia may take place through an optical illusion, where similarly sounding words may appear differently as a result of the employment of blurred fonts.	Adjunction
11	Pareikonomopoeia: Employment of similar images with different senses; similarity is conferred by the employment of different actors in different filmic sequences/ syntagms with similar postures, usually enhanced by the employment of the same production techniques (e.g., all syntagms featuring close-ups or medium shots or alternating close-ups/medium shots), who repeat the same underlying theme under different manifest narratives.	Adjunction
12	Epenthesis: The insertion of an extra sound into a word.	Adjunction
13	Alliteration: Repeats the same consonant sound in three or more subsequent words or the majority of words in a filmic syntagm	Adjunction
14	Assonance: Repeats vowel sounds within the majority of words in a phrase or sentence.	Adjunction
15	Accolorance: Repetition of the same color in the majority of visuals in a filmic syntagm or across syntagms. Usually employed with view to highlighting either a color that is part of a brand's visual identity or of an ad film's aesthetic orientation.	Adjunction
16	Rhyme: Repetition of sounds at the end of words and/or phrases.	Adjunction
17	Reshaption: Repetition of the same shape in the majority of visuals in a syntagm or across syntagms.	Adjunction



18	Antanaclasis: Repetition of a single word, but with different meanings each time. Repetition may involve visuals or verbo-visual schemes.	Adjunction
19	Anaphora: Repeats the same first or middle word or phrase or sound (in the case of sonic markers) or visual marker (e.g., balloon) or setting (in the case of background settings) or object (e.g., beer bottle) in the same or in various filmic syntagms.	Adjunction
20	Epiphora: Repeats the last word(s) or visuals in a syntagm.	Adjunction
21	Parenthesis: (VERBAL-voice-over) The insertion in a syntagm of a distinct thought not totally unrelated to the subject at hand (VISUAL) The insertion of an extra shot in a syntagm that relates contextually to the narrative, but is not strictly speaking part of it.	Adjunction
22	Expletion: Enrichment with adjectives that make explicit in axiological terms why an object should be valued.	Adjunction
23	Personification: Attributes human qualities to an inanimate object.	Adjunction
24	Polysyndeton: The opposite of asyndeton, i.e., the use of many particles.	Adjunction
25	Hyperbole: Quantitative augmentation of one of the properties of an object, state-of-affairs; may be encountered purely verbally or visually or as the employment of a visual that augments the importance or the argumentative force of a voice-over.	Adjunction

26	Antithesis: Correspondence of two antonyms, which comprise opposing semes; may be encountered purely verbally or visually or as an antithesis between what is uttered in a voice-over and what is portrayed in a visual in the same or in succeeding filmic syntagms.	Adjunction
27	Metaphor: Substitution of an abstract concept with a concrete word or visual. Employment of a word or visual in a different sense to its habitual one, in order to effect a contrived similarity between them. ⁹	Substitution***
28	Metonymy: Employment / displacement of the semantic nucleus of words and / or visuals to designate/highlight a property that is shared between them.	Substitution
29	Synecdoche: Employment of a word or visual in a sense that designates a relationship of part-to-whole (e.g., sail-for-ship; a special case of metonymy).	Substitution
30	Oxymoron: Co-occurrence in the same syntagm of two antonyms, without implying the incidence of a truism or a <i>topos</i> (may be evinced either purely verbally or visually or verbo-visually) and without the necessary incidence of coordination markers..	Substitution
31	Irony: Intentional employment of a word or visual in an antonymical sense.	Substitution
32	Paradox: The syntactical co-occurrence in the same syntagm of two words or phrases or visuals that appear to be contradictory, but contains a truism or <i>topos</i> .	Substitution

⁹ Note that parables were not included in the list, as they constitute long metaphors, based on traditional rhetorical definitions. A case of a micronarrative that is deployed in an entire long-take sequence functioning as a parable (as in the case of the featured Vodafone filmic narrative) essentially constitutes a long visual metaphor.



33	Pun: (VERBAL PUN) The transference of semic attributes through wordplay (e.g., Why weight for success? ¹⁰) (VISUAL PUN) A setting and/or the actors involved in a setting and/or other filmic elements (e.g., colors, movements) that emit one or more intended semes through visual play.	Substitution
34	Onomatopoeia: Substitution of naturally occurring sounds with descriptive words (e.g., Mazda's 'Zoom- Zoom').	Substitution
35	Anacolouthon: A component that does not cohere syntactically with a sentential structure (e.g., introducing a sentence with an adjective instead of the subject for added emphasis) in a filmic syntagm.	Permutation**** ¹¹
36	Anagram: Transposition of the letters of a meaningful word resulting in another meaningful word (e.g., Mary/Army)	Permutation
37	Tmesis: Splitting thematically correlated (verbal/visual) elements.	Permutation
38	Inversion: Permutation of the elements of a syntactic construction contrary to expectations; the inversion may also concern visuals (i.e. the inversion of a sequence of events leading to an expected state of affairs) or the inversion of the role performed by a syntactic element in a multimodal syntax involving music and visuals.	Permutation

¹⁰ Cited in McQuarrie & Philips,2004.

¹¹ Note that whereas Groupe μ (1970) classified anacolouthon under the operation of substitution, I am classifying it under permutation, as its function essentially consists in changing the grammatically correct expected order of a sentence (with provisos made for expected non-grammatically correct incidences of such stratagems in ordinary discourse, which implies that a syntagm will be coded with the figure anacolouthon if and only if it is intentionally and repetitively employed in a film for adding emphasis to adjectives at the beginning of sentences)- see further comments in the Discussion section about the general linguistic economy of advertising discourse.

39	Antimetabole: Reversal of the word and/or visual structure of one syntagm in another.	Permutation
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*Suppression: Two expressive units (verbal/visual) are completely substitutable at the same place of the sequence/syntagm.

**Adjunction: Two expressive units (verbal/visual) occupy the same place in a filmic sequence/syntagm, but are either not substitutable or are partially substitutable.

***Substitution: An expressive unit completely substitutes another in a filmic sequence/syntagm, either morphologically or syntactically or at a semantic level.

****Permutation: Two expressive units are included in a different order than expected in a filmic sequence/syntagm,

The final stage of the content analytic part featured the production of descriptive statistics pertaining to (i) the relative incidence of rhetorical operations in the selected corpus (ii) the relative incidence of individual figures (iii) the relative co-occurrence of figures, as displayed in the ensuing Section.



3. Main findings

In total 545 incidences of rhetorical figures were found to be operative in the 561 segments that make up the selected corpus of 87 advertising films from the most valuable brands. As per Table 2, the majority of figures partake of the operation of adjunction (67%), followed by substitution (17%), permutation (11%) and suppression (6%).

Table 2. Incidence of rhetorical operations in the selected corpus.

	Count	%
adjunction	364	67%
permutation	60	11%
substitution	91	17%
suppression	30	6%
ttl	545	100%

An above average incidence of adjunction operations was noted in the financial services/insurance, oil/gas, soft drinks/beer and technology sectors (Table 3), while permutation figures prominently in the cars, fashion/apparel, personal care and telecoms sectors. An above average incidence of substitution figures was noted in the cars, fashion/apparel and retail/fast food sectors, while suppression was encountered most frequently in the financial/insurance, soft drinks/beer and telecoms sectors.

Table 3. Indexed incidence of rhetorical operations by sector (above average incidence highlighted in green).

	Cars	Fashion Apparel	Financial Insurance	Oil_Gas	Other
adjunction					
permutation					
substitution					
suppression					

	Personal Care	Retail Fast Food	Soft drinks Beer	Technology	Telecomms
adjunction					
permutation					
substitution					
suppression					

In greater detail, the most often recurring figures in the entire sample were anaphora, pareikopoeia, accolorance, metaphor, inversion, antanaclasis, epiphora, rhyme, metonymy, alliteration and reshaption.



Table 4. Contribution of each figure to each operation and to the total sample.

	% of each operation	% of total sample
Anaphora	30%	20%
Pereikonopoeia	13%	9%
Accolorance	11%	7%
Antanaclasis	7%	5%
Epiphora	7%	5%
Alliteration	5%	4%
Rhyme	6%	4%
Reshaption	5%	4%
Antithesis	5%	3%
Personification	3%	2%
Expletion	2%	1%
Hyperbole	2%	1%
Parenthesis	1%	1%
Assonance	1%	0%
Epenthesis	0%	0%
Neologism	0%	0%
Paronomasia	0%	0%
Polysyndeton	0%	0%
adjunction total	100%	67%
Inversion	50%	6%
Antimetabole	25%	3%
Anacolouthon	8%	1%
Tmesis	13%	1%
Anagram	3%	0%
permutation total	100%	11%
Metaphor	36%	6%
Metonymy	23%	4%
Irony	11%	2%
Oxymoron	12%	2%
Pun	12%	2%

Synecdoche	4%	1%
Onomatopoeia	0%	0%
Paradox	1%	0%
substitution total	100%	17%
Ellipsis	40%	2%
Asyndeton	13%	1%
Litotes	13%	1%
Rhetorical question	17%	1%
Apheresis	0%	0%
Apocope	3%	0%
Suspension/silence	7%	0%
Zeugma	7%	0%
suppression total	100%	6%
Grand total:	100%	100%

Note: 0 percentages denote either the non-incidence of the concerned figures in the selected corpus or are attributed to rounding.

Contrary to expectations about the incidence of the four master tropes (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony), it was found that they accounted en masse for 13% of the entire figurative landscape of the selected corpus.

A different, yet equally insightful picture to the relative incidence of figures and operations was yielded by examining the co-occurrence of different codes. In this case it was found that particular figures that may not be occurring as frequently as others, yet when they occur, they tend to co-occur largely with others within the same segments. For example, as suggested by Table 5, which ranks figures according to their strength of co- occurrence, figures which do not occur as frequently in the total sample, such as epenthesis, apocope, rhyme, antithesis, rhetorical question, when they occur they tend to co-occur highly with other figures. This comparative analysis is particularly useful, as it points to directions for gauging which figures occur as master tropes and which ones as supplementary figures that aid in adding further directionality to the intended brand signification.



Table 5. Ranking of figures by co-occurrence strength index.

	% of total sample	Co-occurrence strength Index
epenthesis	0%	265
apocope	0%	265
rhyme	4%	239
metonymy	4%	226
epiphora	5%	198
pun	2%	198
irony	2%	181
antithesis	3%	165
accolorance	7%	137
rhetorical question	1%	132
reshaption	4%	114

Note: 0 percentages are attributed to rounding.

4. Discussion

In this section, the research findings are further elaborated with view to addressing the mode of verbo-visual (and occasionally musical) rhetorical configuration of the most valuable brands. A detailed account of how the ad filmic narratives that make up the selected corpus are configured is furnished alongside the incidence of either verbal or visual rhetorical figures. Moreover, emphasis is laid on how the interactions among verbo-visual figures take place, by drawing on indicative patterns of examples.

While addressing the mode of verbo-visual rhetorical configuration of each filmic narrative, three levels were selected for gauging the incidence of each figure, viz. (i) within individual filmic segments (ii) through interaction between succeeding segments and (iii) by recourse to the wider (or 'global') semantic context (Van Dijk, 1980) of the ad filmic text.

4.1 *Incidence of rhetorical figures within individual filmic segments*

Anaphoras within the same filmic syntagms occurred largely in verbal mode, such as the immediate repetition of the possessive verb 'have' (Wells Fargo), the repetition of adjectives/adverbs such as 'faraway' (General Electric), the repetition of entire phrases, such as 'I came to IBM...' (IBM). Mixed verbo-visual modes were noted in cross- segment anaphoras (see ensuing sub-

section).

Alliterations abound within the same syntagms, as in the repetition of the morpheme 'ma-' in the payoff line of the HP ad filmic narrative ('make it matter'), of the consonant 'p' in the Pampers payoff line ('Peaceful nights, playful days'), which also alliterates with the visual of the brand's logo, with exactly the same pattern repeated in the Toyota Prius commercial ('More Prius, more possibilities'). Likewise, alliterations occurred in the corpus through the repetition of consonants 'b' and 'd' in the Starbucks double espresso payoff line ('Starbucks double espresso premium drink- Bring on the day'), of the consonant 'h' in the Disneyland commercial ('happiest homecoming'), of the consonant 'b' in the mid-filmic syntagm of the State Farm narrative ('bungling, bustling, bundle benders') and the alliteration list can continue.

Interesting cases of **reshaption** occurred as a triangular vector formed by two succeeding visuals (giant wave and eye) in the opening sequence of the Red Bull commercial, while in the case of the O2 commercial the brand name's vowel 'O' is immediately redoubled in the form of a bubble in the closing sequence of the narrative.

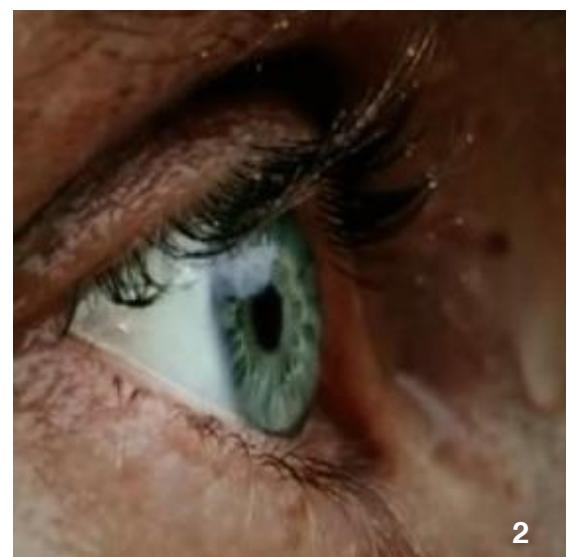


Figure 1. Pampers alliteration.

Figure 2- Red Bull reshaption.

Figure 3- O2 reshaption.

Expletion is regularly employed with view to embellishing the claims raised in the course of the narratives with nouns and adjectives (often in the superlative) of grandeur and gravitas, such as 'incredible', 'other-worldly' (General Electric), 'the best a man can get' (Gillette), the world's 'toughest' energy challenges (Exxon), 'amazing' (Cisco, Pepsi, Disney), 'the best or nothing' (Mercedes).



Figure 4- Exxon expletion.



Figure 5- Orange hyperbole.

Hyperbolically accentuated verbal statements are noted in incidences such as the Orange narrative, where the key semic component of proximity in the modal proposition 'you can stay close to those that matter to you' is hyperbolically enhanced with the employment of visuals portraying significant others literally emerging from within oneself.

Personification is evinced verbally by referring to nouns such as energy by 'her' rather than 'it' (Shell), as well as by inviting consumers to make their walls talk (Home Depot). Traditional figures, such as **inversion**, are also evinced visually on an intra-filmic segment level, as in the case of the Visa narrative, where an actor's attempt to pay by cash, rather than by Visa, inverts the harmoniously structured syntactical order of production schedules/consumption patterns in a café.





Figure 6- Paying by Visa caters for perfect synch/harmony.

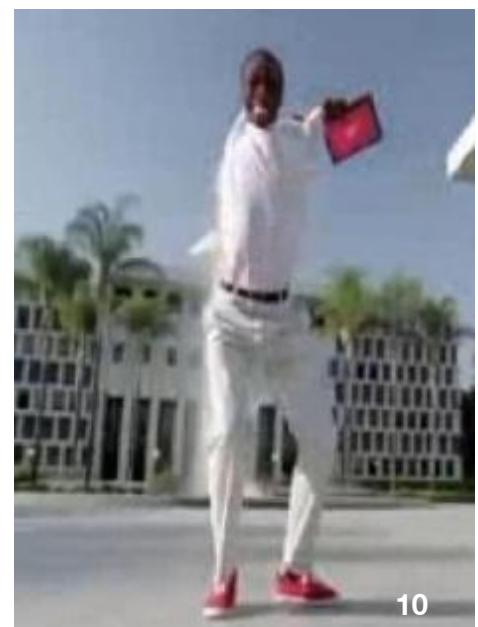
Figure 7- Paying by cash instead of Visa.

Figure 8- Clients bumping onto each other in the café cue as a result of the actor's not paying by Visa.

Furthermore, the syntactical structure of ordinary activities, such as preparing a coffee, are inverted in favor of a dancing scene, with view to emphasizing brand benefits (i.e., buying from Walmart) or where bodily movements are totally inverted (as in the Microsoft commercial) or in the case of the opening sequence of the Nissan narrative, where the closed curtain of what appears to be a theatrical stage is succeeded by an actor's drawing a window curtain sideward.



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10



11

Figure 9- Walmart inversion.

Figure 10- Microsoft inversion.

Figure 11- Nissan inversion.

Visual metaphors are employed within specific segments, as in the incidence of a woman punching a boxing-sack in the L'Oreal narrative (in tandem with the voice-over 'hair won't feel wrecked or ravaged') or in the incidence of a DNA structure's gigantic visual that enhances the illocutionary force of the accompanying utterance concerning 'solving challenging problems' in the IBM narrative or in the incidence of candies as visual metaphor for savings (ICICI).



Figure 11- L'Oreal Visual Metaphor.



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Figure 12- IBM visual metaphor



Figure 13- ICICI Visual Metaphor.

Visual paradoxes occur in individual syntagms, such as the appearance of rain in the middle of the desert (Hermes); in the case of Goofy's being intentionally featured in a syntagm that portrays a gift-box with the inscription 'do not open' (as everyone knows that Goofy is intent on doing exactly the opposite things; Disney); in the case of the JP Morgan Chase narrative, where the voice-over 'Isn't life supposed to make life easier' is coupled with a technological dysfunction visual.



Figure 14. Hermes visual paradox.



Figure 15. Disney visual paradox.

Litotic schemes are encountered in individual syntagms either as enhancers of the value of one of two propositions that are raised in the same syntagm (e.g., 'simply by doing good, can a bank in fact be great?' - Standard Chartered- where 'doing good' is underplayed in order to enhance the argumentative force of being great) or with view to underplaying the universal validity of a maxim, as in the second filmic syntagm of the featured Red Bull narrative, which stresses 'I think it's human nature to want to explore', thus appropriating a maxim by diminution of its universal appeal within the axiological framework propounded by the brand (as against stressing impersonally 'It is human nature to want to explore').

Most notably, **antanaclasis** occurs in instances of immediate repetition of a preceding verbal proposition in the same syntagm in a different mode and different sense, as in the case of the syntagm from the featured McDonald's narrative, where the imperative proposition 'do the twins' refers both to double cheese-burgers, but also, as suggested by the visual anchoring of the proposition in the concerned syntagm, to human look-alikes. A similar verbo-visual antanaclasis is encountered in the Intel commercial, where the adverb 'well' in the verbal super featured in the opening filmic syntagm is immediately succeeded by the visual of a natural well, thus intensifying the argumentative impact of a moral maxim ('travel your life well') by associating explicitly wellness with a 'well-of-life'.



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Figure 16- McDonald's Visual antanaclasis.



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Figure 17- Intel visual antanaclasis.

An exceptional, infrequently occurring case, yet interesting by virtue of its scarcity in the selected corpus, is the incidence of **visual puns**, which create a sort of optical illusion, as in the case of the featured Pepsi commercial where a flashing banner with the word 'gas' reads 'can' from a distance, thus also giving rise to a paronomasia (in the context of intra- diegetic dialogues featuring recurrent allusion to 'can').



Figure 18- Pepsi visual pun (optimally seen at normal distance from TV screen).

It should be noted that it is precisely the less often recurring figures that should be attended to in a more detailed fashion, as they confer to an ad filmic narrative what may be called a **rhetorical first mover advantage**. Let us recall Rifatterre's dictum that a hyperbole in a hyperbolic context is not a hyperbole (see Rossolatos 2012a), which clearly indicates the truism that the more often a figure is employed (either by the same brand or across brands), the less effective it is likely to be, as it violates the very *raison d'être* of a rhetorical figure, which rests with imbuing recipients with an element of surprise, thus giving rise to a deviation from expectations¹².

¹² See Rossolatos, 2012c,d for a discussion on variable contextualizations of the notion of rhetorical deviation.



4.2 Incidence of rhetorical figures through interaction between filmic segments

The newly coined figures of **accolorance** and **reshaption** are particularly useful for capturing salient aspects of how nuanced anaphorical relationships are structured in the visual rhetoric of ad filmic narratives. Accolorance (which occurred in 7% of cases in the entire corpus) surfaces either as repetition of the same colors across filmic syntagms (e.g., recurrence of light blue and pink in the Apple commercial), or as corporate colors inscribed in actors' clothing, but also in background setting, peripheral filmic elements (e.g., cars), as in the cases of the Target and the McDonald's commercials; by superimposing a geometrical shape with corporate colors (e.g., line) on top of the featured visuals (Citibank), but also by color filtering the natural settings of visual sequences with corporate colors (MTN).



Figure 19- Target accolorance.

Figure 20-McDonalds accolorance



Figure 21- Citi accolorance.

Figure 22- MTN accolorance.

In terms of reshaption (that is repetition of the same shape functioning as figurative connector among succeeding syntagms), a knee-shaping pyramid in the opening sequence of the featured China Construction Bank is repeated uniformly in all subsequent filmic syntagms, while spherical shapes are repeated across the Sberbank narrative



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Figure 23- China Construction Bank reshaption.

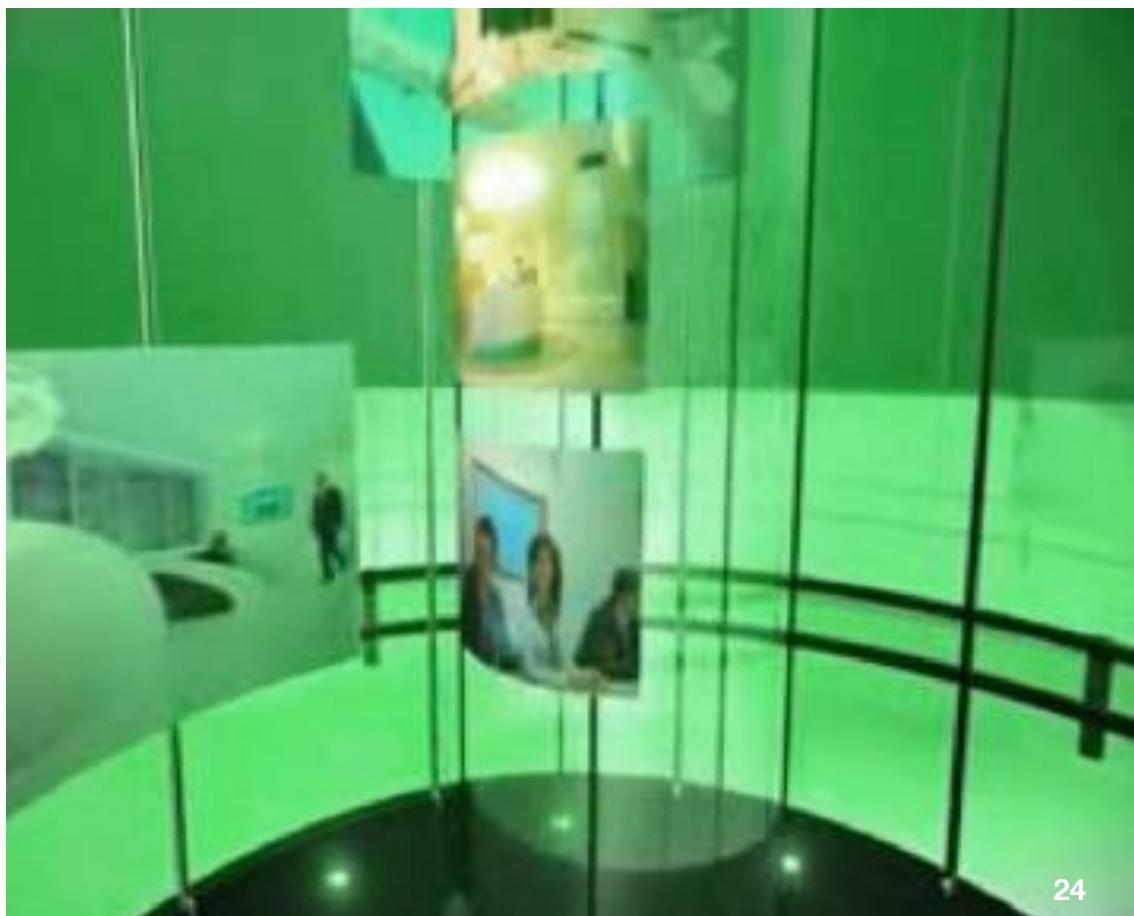


Figure 24- Sberbank reshaption.

Antanaclases are no longer merely the province of verbal statements. As attested by a significant portion of ad narratives from the selected corpus, the alternating verbo-visual repetition of the same visuals/words with different meaning, affords to invest brand discourses with ever ramifying



semantic twists and turns. For example, the SAP narrative repeats the word 'run' in two predominant senses both within and between filmic segments, in the sense of speeding up, as well as in the sense of executing or operating a program. A most remarkable example of how an entire ad filmic narrative is configured around antanaclases that are operative both within individual segments and across segments, but also in constant interaction between verbal and visual modes, is the ad film of U.S. bank. The narrative oscillates constantly between the logo, the brand name and the very meaning of the personal pronoun 'us', thus creating a verbo-visual osmosis that attests to how a first mover figurative rhetorical advantage may be yielded not only by the employment of less frequently recurring figures, but, moreover, by different combinations of highly recurring figures in dynamic verbo-visual interactions.

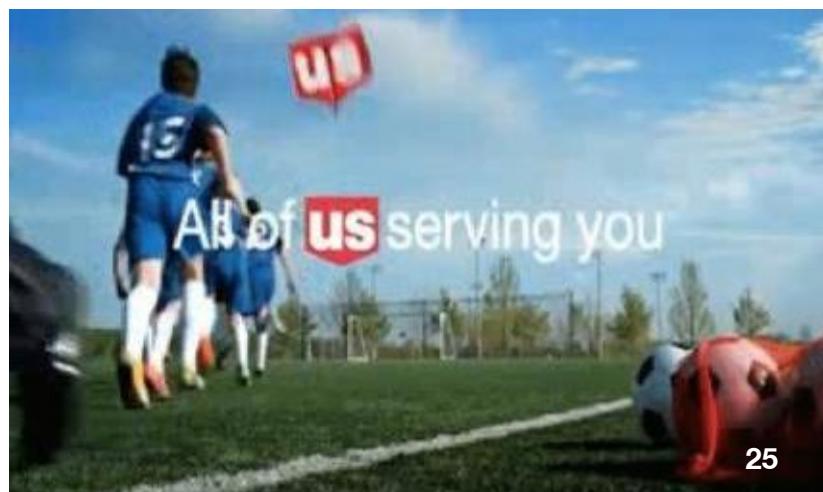


Figure 25- U.S. Bank antanaclases.

A similar figurative strategy that revolves around antanaclases across filmic segments is pursued by Verizon Fios, that repeats the bifurcated meaning of the verb 'to get' throughout its narrative, in the sense of 'obtaining the service' and 'becoming enlightened by the benefits that stem from

its usage', facilitated by a change in voice-over tonality¹³ in each of the two incidences. Especially the latter use of the verb rises above a simple exemplification with slice-of-life visuals in a contextually forceful manner (and hence not amenable to explicit argumentation) that is suggestive of an underlying proposition (macro-proposition, in Van Dijk's terms) that unless the product is obtained, then one does not have access to a *topos* that is over and above the simple possession of the service. In this sense, 'getting it' is about sharing with others and being recognized for having got it, rather than simply having obtained the service. This is a remarkable example of how the standout employment of a common figure attains to institute a silent/salient *topos*.



Figure 26- Verizon frame from narrative featuring antanaclases.

As regards traditional verbal figures, **antimetaboles** occur predominantly in payoff lines (e.g., Wells Fargo: 'Together we'll go far'; Visa: 'more people go with Visa, Visa pay wave'; Standard Chartered: 'what profit a bank makes, but how it makes that profit'). However, such traditional figures also apply in a visual rhetorical context, as in the case of the KFC commercial, where the beginning of the second filmic segment that portrays an opening door constitutes an inversely structured visual sequence of the end of the preceding syntagm that featured a closing door.

¹³ Note that voice-over tonality, as employed in rhetorical analysis, should not be confused with the advertising planning term 'tone-of-voice' that constitutes industry jargon.



Figure 27- Wells Fargo antimetabole.

Figure 28- Visa antimetabole.

Figure 29- KFC antimetabole.

FedEx employs **verbo-visual irony** throughout its entire narrative, where visuals subvert ironically the statements that are put forward 'bona fide' by two actors (opponents in a political rally), a direct competition strategy that is also employed in the Mastercard narrative, where direct allusion in the voice-over to American Express's (key competitor) commitment to the 'craft' is ironically subverted in the same syntagma by portraying a restaurant concierge who politely ('gladly') fends off prospective clients from making reservations.

Verbal metonymies are encountered throughout the Santander narrative, where each syntagma features a variety of actions (e.g., playing, sowing, inviting), which are all displaced metonymically to a saving action, even if no saving seme inheres customarily in these actions.

On the level of inter-segment figurative relationships that are instituted in the narrative through a figure of **visual-sonic inversion**, we notice in the Telcel ad narrative that whereas in the initial three segments the selected musical theme functions on the background of a deploying visual narrative, it suddenly shifts to the foreground, as a band is portrayed to be performing the same theme live (first on the street and then in a gig venue). Such a verbo-visual stratagem still abides by the definitional tenets of the inversion figure, that is an alteration of the expected syntactical construction of a syntagma, yet (i) it displaces the notion of syntax from its

traditional grammatical contours to the expected grammar of ad filmic narratives within a larger semiotic economy of advertising (ii) in the context of ad filmic grammar it inverts the function of music from conditioning background mechanism that enhances rhetorical appeals to foreground actor.



Figure 30- Telcel visual-sonic inversion
(background music shifting to live band performance).

Epiphoras also furnish the semantic glue between succeeding filmic segments, as in the repetition of the attitudinal descriptor 'positive' at the end of the two closing sequences of the Carrefour narrative. Interesting examples of **anaphorical** figures occurring as a result of multimodal sonic/visual interactions in two succeeding filmic syntagms were noted in narratives that featured a medium-shot of a store's front with a giant sticker featuring the message 'Click and collect', which was succeeded in the ensuing filmic syntagm by the clicking sound of a passing-by bicycle (Tesco). The repetition of the same verbal statement (e.g., product claim '60% less sugar') also attains to create anaphorical coherence between two succeeding filmic segments.



Figure 31- Tesco visual/sonic epiphora.

Ellipsis is particularly demanding, given that advertising discourse is elliptical throughout. Ellipsis, inasmuch as other traditional figures, such as anacolouthon, asyndeton, polysyndeton, silence/suspension are part and parcel of the general advertising semiotic economy (where standard grammar rules do not furnish the requisite benchmark for gauging the incidence of a rhetorical deviation), hence one must be particularly selective when coding filmic syntagms with this figure. In the selected corpus syntagms were coded with ellipsis only in the incidence where this figure was intentionally employed as enhancer of the manifest plot and not as part of expected deviations that are notable in advertising language (such as the omission of pronouns, connectors, etc.). Examples of such intentional uses of ellipsis, and particularly of visual ellipsis, may be encountered in the case of the featured ICICI narrative. In this example, the emphasis on the visual of an empty pocket (close-up by camera movement) in a filmic segment that features a little girl (key actress) who is unable to complete a candies purchase act, yet who is handed the intended purchase item free-of-charge by the merchant, is rendered comprehensible once we are exposed to the payoff line of the narrative, which promises unexpected rewards by following a savings plan. Hence, what is required in order to close off semantically this segment and at the same time what is omitted in this syntagm,

functions as an ellipsis. In order to account for this ellipsis a viewer must wait until the semantic gap has been filled in by the brand promise. A similar elliptical configuration is encountered in the case of Scotia Bank, where a mid filmic syntagma omits mentioning how much one would have to pay for a particular type of home in 2020, while inviting viewers to fill in the missing information by taking into account the exponentially increasing home purchase prices that were exposed in the previous syntagms. In a similar vein, the Airtel narrative features a syntagma where W.Churchill is portrayed to be raising his right hand and forming the peace symbol while addressing a crowd. The super 'Two can win a war' runs in parallel. In this case, the subject to which the count noun is ascribed is intentionally omitted, not only for textual economic reasons, as it may be inferred from the previous syntagma (which explicitly posits 'finger' as the subject of the sentence), but due to the fact that the intentionally elliptical sentence constitutes at the same time a pun that plays on the polysemy of the subject of the ellipsis (given that, literally, two figures cannot win a war, hence another subject must be evoked for closing off the sentence's semantic structure, such as two persons, two armies or, generally speaking, a structural coupling).



Figure 32- Airtel verbo-visual/ellipsis.

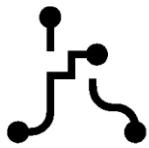


Figure 33- ScotiaBank verbo-visual/ellipsis.

Silence/suspension demands equally prudent coding as ellipsis, given that it is part and parcel of the general advertising semiotic economy. However, there are cases where it is intentionally used and where it is more proper to code the respective segments with this figure rather than ellipsis (of which it stands in an analogically hypotactic relationship, in the same fashion that accolorance, for example, is a special case of anaphora, both being part of repetition figures; see Groppe 1984). An indicative example of a powerful use of silence/suspension in our corpus is the closing syntagm of the Facebook narrative, which intentionally ends in silence, while omitting the repetition of the predicate 'alone' from the previous sentence (' The universe is fast and dark and makes us wonder if we are alone. So maybe the reason why we make up all of these things is to remind ourselves that we are not...'). In this case, the predicate is suspended verbally, while the sentence is completed by the appearance of the brand name 'Facebook'. Hence, it is not a case where the predicate is omitted, as the sentence is filled in with 'Facebook', but of substituting 'not alone' with Facebook, to which end the employment of the suspension/silence figure is conducive.

The newly coined figure of **pareikonopoeia**, which recurs in 9% of all filmic segments and features different actors and/or settings that converge semantically on the univocally implied message behind manifest variations, uniformly facilitated by the employment of recurrent production techniques (e.g., alternation between medium-shots and close-ups, same on-screen placement), was found to be particularly prevalent in slice- of-life ad narratives, but also in cases where the same message was repeated with thematic variations (e.g., IBM's plea for building a smarter planet, featuring rotating employee narratives of why IBM solutions are smart, Subway's 'Eat Fresh' single minded proposition underlying - see Johnson and Mandler, 1980 - various menu choices, in-home slice-of-life visuals revolving around consumers' interaction with Sony Bravia, people making ironically promises they can't keep in the Commonwealth Bank commercial, aspects of not being treated as expected in the KFC commercial, oxymoronic

incidents of technology malfunction in the Chase commercial).

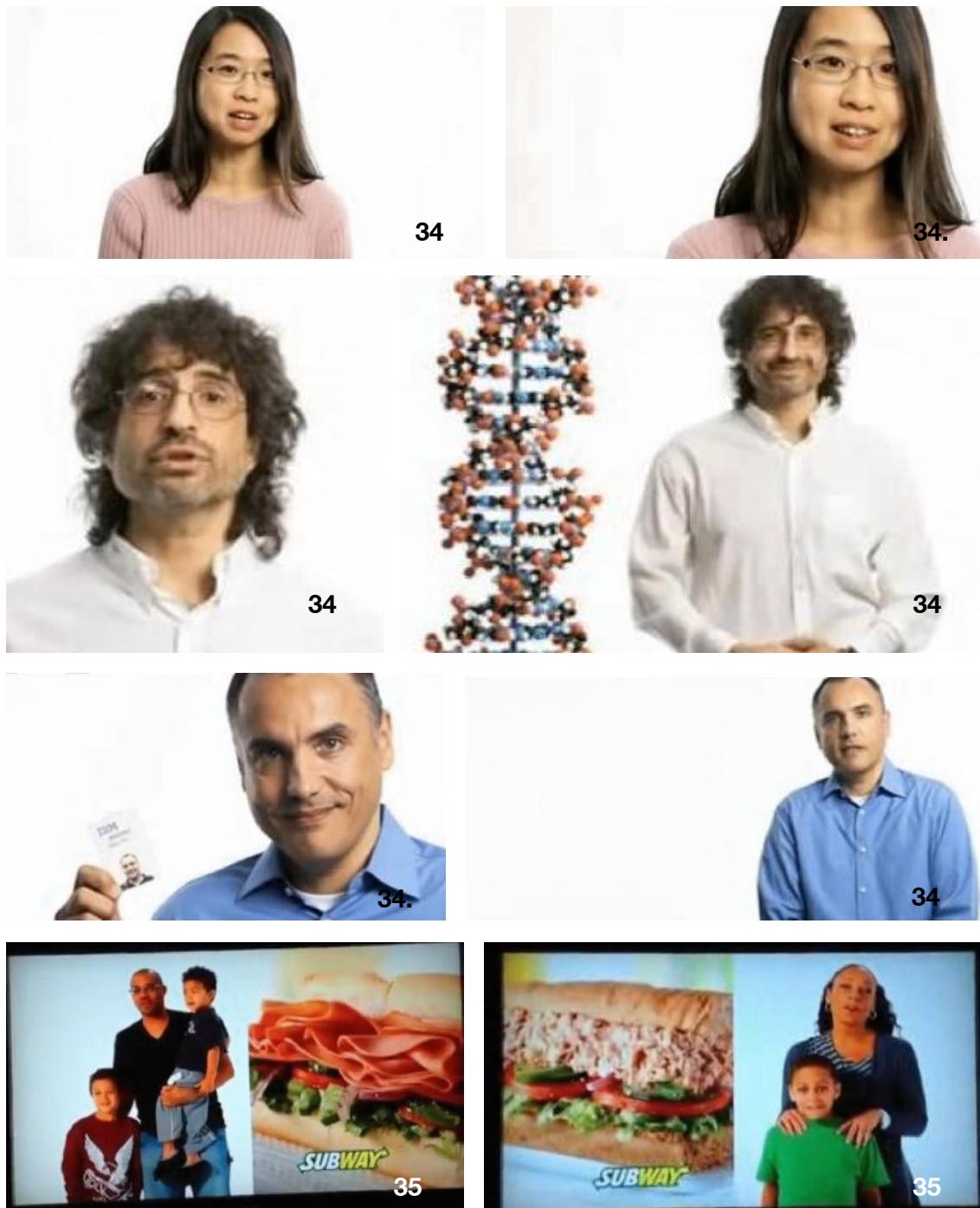


Figure 34- IBM pareikonomopeia

Figure 35- Subway pareikonomopeia.



4.3 Incidence of rhetorical figures by recourse to the 'global' semantic and syntactic context of the ad filmic text

Verbo-visual anaphoras, which constitute the most often recurring rhetorical figure (of the adjunction operation) function as syntactic markers of the multimodal rhetoric pursued by the majority of the most valued brands. Indicative examples of visual anaphora as syntactic markers that confer a unique semantic structure to the ad filmic narrative, by analogy to the syntactic markers as customarily employed in textual linguistics (e.g., Swanson 2003, Gonzalez 2012), consist of (i) recurrent product shots, embedded in slice-of-life, experiential moments (see Rossolatos 2013 a, b) featuring the advertised brand, in a considerable portion of the filmic segments (e.g., Budweiser bottle and/or logo) (ii) recurrent same visuals (under different camera angles) with a color coding that is indicative of the featured brand's color codes (e.g., Telcel giant balloon).



Figure 36- Budweiser anaphora.



37



37

Figure 37- Telcel anaphora.

A **visual metonymy** is formed hyperbolically in the DHL commercial between the corporate yellow color and the yellow flash that is indicative of the speed at which DHL delivers its orders. Making sense of why the yellow flash functions as a visual metonymy presupposes that the audience has been exposed to the wider semantic context, featuring the brand's corporate colors and its brand promise as engraved in the narrative's payoff line ('Excellence simply delivered'). By the same token, the prior incidence of the 'flash' is a necessary condition for understanding why the qualification of the delivery mode with the addition of 'simply' in the payoff line functions as a litotic scheme that adds a tone of modesty to the hyperbolic visual statements that precede it. An analogon of verbo-visual figurative interaction, but on a same segment level, is encountered in the American Express narrative, where the hyperbolic incidence of the main actor's appearing on the scene like deus-ex-machina in a fly-in mode, equipped with all the paraphernalia he bought with American Express (featuring a canoe) is coupled oxymoronically with the co-actresse's statement 'It's too much'.

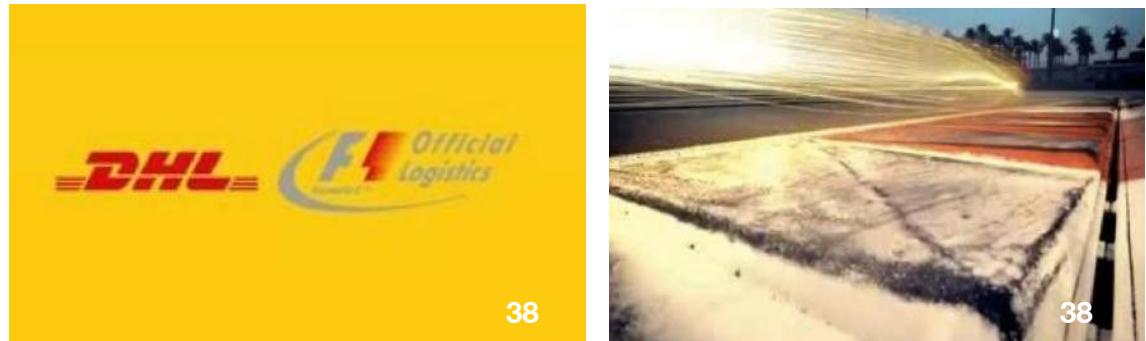


Figure 38- DHL visual metonymy.

Figure 39- American Express visual hyperbole.

An example of **verbo-visual antithesis** as the outcome of interaction between visual and verbal modes by recourse to a wider semantic context occurs in a mid-filmic segment from the T-Mobile narrative. In this instance, whereas the super that appears on-screen states 'Time to set the record straight', the appeal to straighten one's record is in marked contrast to the portrayal of a business-woman turned into night-time vigilante. Hence, not only a verbo-visual antithesis attains to accentuate a cultural value about 'straightness', but a new semic dimension is added to 'straightness' in the brand's discourse, which liquidates oppositions and refreezes them in a novel manner.



Figure 40- T-Mobile verbo-visual antithesis

A striking example of verbo-visual antithesis also emerges in the context of the Starbucks narrative, where a rock-band is employed as the voice of the featured actor's conscience (or superego), Glen, a low-to-mid manager in a corporate environment. The antithesis that emerges by the juxtaposition of two divergent lifestyles is further reduced to an oxymoron, as the two lifestyles that are coupled with antonymical semes ('abundantly expressive' for rock band versus 'reserved' for employee, among other potentially antonymical semes) converge in the manifest plot under a novel hybrid semantic synthesis. This hybrid verbo-visual oxymoron is tropically enhanced by the co-occurrence of figures of rhyme, irony, epiphora.



Figure 41- Starbucks verbo-visual antithesis.

The Aldi narrative also plays repeatedly throughout the various filmic segments with antithesis, in the light of the payoff line 'ready when you're not', which makes sense retrospectively, once the antithetical images of babies who are ready to fulfill a 'basic corporeal need', when parents are not, have been referred back to the payoff line.



Figure 42- Aldi visual antithesis.

Certain figures, such as verbal **hyperbole**, also function as the holistic figurative backdrop of ad narratives. This is the case with the Louis Vuitton commercial, where the hyperbolic verses



(brought about by oxymorons, such as 'I make medicine sick', personifications, such as 'hospitalized a brick') of poet/boxer Mohammed Ali are leveraged with view to augmenting the dreamy atmosphere that is fleshed out through the employment of the visual metaphor of the boxing ring as oneiric scaffold. This co- occurrence of personification-cum-hyperbole is reminiscent of the by definition excessive content of a repressed wish fulfillment in a dream's unconscious that 'fights' to make itself manifest in the hyperbolic content of conscious speech (yet only attaining to surface as oxymoronic excess that invokes the impossibility of this surfacing; see Rossolatos 2012c).



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Figure 43- Louis Vuitton oneiric scaffold.

Visual personifications bring brands to life, as in the case of dancing Apple ipods, humanized bears (Coca-Cola), anthropomorphized colors (who express their personality through kinesics) or with stadiums that 'get it' (Verizon) (see Rossolatos 2012c for further analysis of anthropomorphism strategies). **Visual inversions** are also noted as syntactic markers that confer cohesion to separately placed segments within a filmic narrative's temporal structure, as in case of

ebay, where sequential inversions of movement in physical space are employed in order to enhance the impact of the argument about convenience and flexibility of navigation in the online commercial environment of ebay.



Figure 44- ebay visual inversions.

Figures that function as syntactic markers that solidify textual cohesion are encountered in cases of **epiphora**, such as in the case of UPS, where each verse of the sung narrative ends with the phrase 'That's logistics', but also in the case of epiphoras in the narrative of Santander, where the majority of the featured verses end with the phrase 'you save', thus enhancing mnemotechnically the key brand promise about savings.

Regarding the visual incidence of tmesis in the context of the rhetorical strategy employed in the narrative for Toyota Prius, an interpolated filmic syntagma disrupts correlated syntagms that are edified on the transition amongst the four seasons, by portraying an a-seasonal visual, against the background of the drawing of an ancient edifice with classical architectural rhythm. In this manner, the diachronic value of the brand is highlighted in the course of the transition amongst synchronically salient stages (such as seasons), while adding a twist of modern/classic by portraying an ancient building (symbolic of heritage) in drawn free-form. Again, the operational value of the employed figure, in this incidence, makes sense against the background of the wider semantic contours of the entire narrative.



Figure 45- Toyota visual tmesis.

In the case of Nike, the entire film plays around **tmeses** that interrupt correlated sequences of action. Shots related to different product categories on offer by the brand freeze action in distinctive 'nows' (thus replicating the payoff line 'Now') across the entire narrative (1st freeze on shoes on a display, 2nd on a ball, 3rd on a t-shirt), thus urging consumers to purchase now in order to continue being part of the ongoing game.



Figure 46- Nike visual timeses.

Occasionally, figures function by recourse to the wider semantic context of an ad filmic narrative as entire sequences. This is particularly the case with visual metaphors, as in the incidence of an entire sequence featuring a young boy and a girl who form an instant connection via the gaze and then by the former handing over to the latter a scarf that had been removed from her neck by a strong wind. This 'long metaphor' (of parabolic nature, where a micro-narrative states how instant connections may be formed in mundane circumstances) and at the same time visual synecdoche, stands metaphorically for the core brand promise of instant connections that is made in the narrative's payoff line.



Figure 47- Vodafone visual metaphor.

In the Facebook narrative, the explicit **verbo-visual metaphor** of chairs is employed by transferring the attribute of the recipient of a chair's functionality (e.g., 'chairs are for people') to Facebook in a rarely explicit manner (i.e., by not suppressing similes). The entire narrative deploys against the background of equally binding least common denominators, which, yet, function as verbo-visual synecdoches that display aspects of means whereby people are connected (e.g., bridges) for the whole, that is Facebook. In this instance, the brand is posited in the narrative's rhetorical topography as the universal least common denominator by analogy to its synecdochic parts.

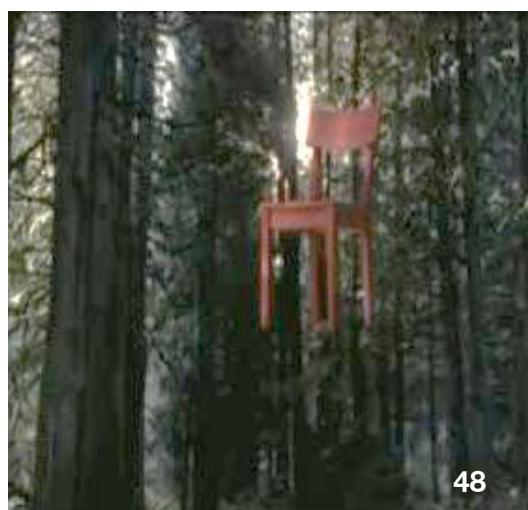


Figure 48- Facebook visual metaphor.



Figure 49- Facebook visual synecdoches.

In a similar manner, that is where visual metaphors make sense as such ex post facto, that is once semantic closure has been effected in a narrative's payoff line, the Accenture narrative effects a metaphorical transfer of the attributes convention and invention qua 'rules of the game' from a golf-course game to business practice.



Figure 50- Accenture visual metaphor.

By the same token, the individual filmic syntagms in the Volkswagen narrative that range from a beetle's helping pull a school-bus to a beetle's chasing a villain function retrospectively, that is once the statement 'They say if you are good in one life, you are rewarded in the next' has been established, as visual metaphors for 'goodness' or doing 'good deeds'.



**They say if you are good in one life,
you are rewarded in the next.**

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Figure 51- Volkswagen visual metaphor.

Even though in the majority of cases in this analysis segments were coded, for methodological consistency, with figures in a manner that resonates primarily the local context of the ad narratives, opening up interpretation to a wider cultural milieu essentially affords to widen the interpretive horizon, while allowing the connotative aspects of ad narratives' configuration to

seethe even more forcefully into the interpretive canvass. For example, the shadow projected from the McDonald's logo banner that stands on top of the store's roof in the featured narrative also functions as a visual metaphor insofar as it sanctions the brand within the filmic discourse to act as the social space wherein all aspects of summer-related activities (given that all featured visual sequences are related to the 'Do Summer' payoff line) may be enacted, while natural protection from the sun opens up to a cultural milieu qua security, safety and protection.



Figure 52- McDonalds visual metaphor.

Such an interpretive opening up to a wider cultural context also attains to elucidate why the most valued brands afford to invest their narratives with a cultural capital that catapults them to arché-signifiers or gate-keepers of a cultural order, while pointing to how a value system or plenum of rhetorical topoi is constituted in ad filmic narratives.



5. Conclusions and areas for further research

It is hoped that the interpretive and operational applicability of the majority of traditional rhetorical operations and figures to a visio-centric predicament, wherein ad texts are embedded, has been substantiated through the arguments put forward in the preceding analyses. The world's most valuable brands were found to be making ample and intensive use of a wide roster of verbo-visual rhetorical techniques that are instrumental in shaping their ad filmic narratives. The propounded rhetorical perspective provided partial answers to the call for coining new figures that may encapsulate how distinctive modes of visual rhetorical configuration are brought about, while paving the way for a bespoke and expanded taxonomy, in the context of a still vibrant and thriving rhetorical tradition that posited *inventio* as an indispensable complement of *elocutio*.

On a methodological level, the adopted coding and analytical route that favors individual filmic segments' analysis, rather than treating ad films as standalone analytical units, turned out to be a viable option for capturing the multiplicity of and the interaction among the rhetorical figures that are operative in various parts of individual ad filmic narratives. The output of this analysis points to a clear need for attending closely to how the configuration of an advertising narrative may be molded with reference to the relative incidence of figures, operations and moreover co-occurring figures in a multimodal rhetorical landscape, with view to obtaining a first mover rhetorical advantage.

The benefits to be reaped by using rhetordixit may be hardly underplayed. An account planning team may keep track in a minutely detailed fashion of how competitive brand communication strategies were fleshed out throughout time by producing aggregate reports about the relative incidence of distinctive profilmic elements and/or rhetorical figures. In this manner, a planning team is in a position to make informed decisions about which elements to avoid repeating, as well as about which profilmic elements may be used for truly standout communications (see Rossolatos 2013 e,f). Last, but not least, a brand management team may monitor through statistical analyses the relative impact of the employment of different creative elements and rhetorical strategies on market share and soft metrics, such as brand image, brand familiarity and brand involvement.

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