"Structure and Rhetoric of Multimodal Discourse:
An Introduction"
(UvA, 5/10/'10)

ASCA programme MAgic"

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Multimodal Discourse

Communication increasingly often combines more than one mode/modality. Modes include:

Multimodality is hot, but …

- Despite a fast growing number of publications (e.g., Kress & Van Leeuwen 1996/2006, 2001; Baldry and Thibault 2007, Royce and Bowcher 2008, Jewitt 2009), theorizing multimodal discourse is still weak:
    - Much research takes verbal language as the model and overextends the analogy with other modes;
    - The concept of "mode" is insufficiently clearly defined or circumscribed;
    - Very little research discusses the *interaction* between modes;
    - Knowledge from studying artistic discourse (including narratology) is often neglected.

Characteristics & restrictions of our research projects (i)

- The visual mode (static and moving images) is the central mode, and is studied in its interaction with other modes (language, music, sound);

- Objects of research are primarily those drawn from forms of communication (information graphics, maps, logos, websites, cartoons …) and "low" art (feature film, photography, comics, games, jokes …).

Characteristics, aims & restrictions of our research projects (ii)

- At the centre of each project is a problem that needs to be solved (rather than a paradigm/method);
- The solution(s) to the problem can be shown to be truly relevant to one or more expert community/ies and, preferably, also to one or more lay community/ies;
- Each project has a clearly explained and justified corpus and methodology; both need to arise naturally from the problems identified;
- "What, how, when, where?" precede "why?"

# Characteristics, aims & restrictions of our research projects (iii)

- Detailed textual analysis is a central element of each project;

- "Genre" is an indispensable "interface" between text and context.

- Pattern-finding, however defined, is a central goal;

- Results are formulated in such a way that they can be (dis)confirmed, refined, improved on, and (where appropriate) experimentally tested;

- Co-authoring of papers/chapters is welcomed.

Current members

- Liselotte Doeswijk
- Valentina di Fabio (guest)
- Charles Forceville
- Laurike in 't Veld

Current projects and recent publications: Forceville (i)

- F. & Urios-Aparisi, eds (2009),

Multimodal Metaphor (Mouton).
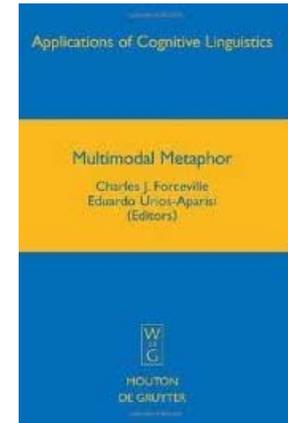
In advertising, cartoons, comics,

films, music, gestures;

- F. (2005a, forthc.a), Abbott & F. (subm.) on non-literal representation of motions & emotions in comics (Asterix, Tintin, manga);

Current projects and recent publications: Forceville (ii)

- F., Veale, & Feyaerts (2010) on the ways in which comics' text balloons can convey narrative meaning;

- F. (2009a), on multimodal metonymy in film and advertising;

Current projects and recent publications: Forceville (iii)

- F. (2005b, 2009b), applying S&W's *Relevance Theory* to non-verbal communication.

- Van Mulken, Le Pair, & F (2010). Experiment on interpretation pictorial/visual metaphor in advertising.

- F. (2006, forthc. b), F. & Jeulink (submitted). On how non-verbal modalities (visuals, music, sound) create meaning in "road-movie" documentaries and animations based on the "life is a journey" metaphor.

Current projects and recent publications: Forceville (iv)

- Bounegru & F. (forthc.), on the structural metaphors underlying political cartoons (Oct. '08) about the financial crisis.

- F. (forthc. c), Veale, Feyaerts & F., eds, (in prep.). *The Agile Mind*: on trying to find regularities in creativity.

Doeswijk, PhD project "TV Design & the Dutch Public TV System"

Goal: "Study the history of the audiovisual design elements that represent the identity of broadcasting organisations and channels on public television." These elements include:

(i) Station calls, idents for PB organisations;

(ii) *House style* of stations & channels;

(iii) Programme design;

(iv) Non-televised aspects of *house style*.
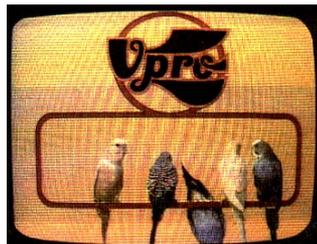
# In 't Veld, PhD project "Genocide in Comics"

She'll tell you more about it in a minute!

International cooperation

- Grant application 1 in Germany. With Klaus Sachs-Hombach (U. of Chemnitz), Frauke Berndt (U. of Tubingen). Theme: "Ambiguity."
- Grant application 2 in Germany. With Alan Cienki (Vrije U. Amsterdam), Cornelia Mueller (U. of Viadrina), and partners at U. of Potzdam. Theme: "Multimodal discourse."
- Experimental testing of "pictorial runes" in comics. With Bipin Indurkhya and Amitash Ojha, Int. Instititute of Information Technology, Gachibowli, Hyderabad (India). Theme: "Expression of emotion in Tintin."

Now …
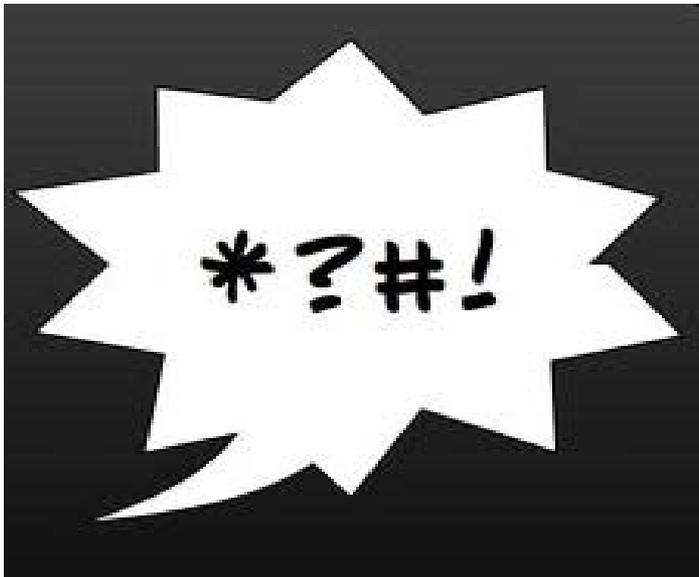
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