

Images and Meaning

Language as a Model for Visual Communication

+ Language as a Model for Visual Communication

- What does language do?
 - Communicates ideas and feelings
 - Principle communication system



+ Language as a Model for Visual Communication

- Graphic Design gains its power through the combination of language and image:
 - Words
 - Pictures
 - Signs
 - Colors



+ What is Rhetoric? (and what does it have to do with design?)

- The study of principles and rules for preparing and delivering speeches.
 - Developed by the ancient Greeks.
- How does this apply to Graphic Design?
 - Visual images and symbols are oftentimes used in the same manner.



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Simile

- Comparison or parallel between two unlike things
- Visual simile

as precise as a surgeon

as regular as a clock

as cunning as a fox

as quiet as a mouse

as slow as a sloth

as proud as a peacock

as clean as a whistle

as wise as an owl

+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Metaphor

- Points out resemblance by substitution
- Visual Metaphor

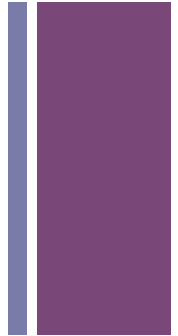
“Between the lower east side tenements
the sky is a snotty handkerchief.”
(Marge Piercy, "The Butt of Winter")

"The streets were a furnace, the sun an
executioner."
(Cynthia Ozick, "Rosa")

"But my heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on a
lonely hill."
(William Sharp, "The Lonely Hunter")

"Men's words are bullets, that their enemies take
up and make use of against them."
(George Savile, *Maxims*)

"The rain came down in long knitting needles."
(Enid Bagnold, *National Velvet*)



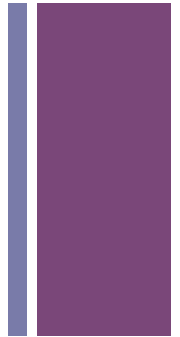
+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Personification
 - Representation of inanimate object by human image



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Anthropomorphism
 - Attributing human traits to animals



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Metonymy
 - Using the name of one thing to stand for another



“A traitor to the crown??”

+ Figures of Speech in Design

■ Synecdoche

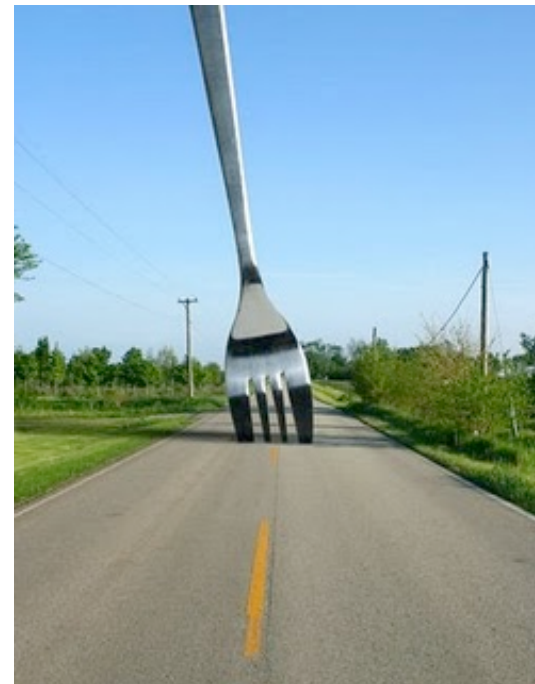
■ Use of a part to represent the whole (and vice versa)

- Referring to people according to a single characteristic: "the gray beard" for an older man or "the long hair" for a hippie
- Describing a complete vehicle as "wheels"
- Calling a worker "a pair of hands"
- "John Hancock" for the signature of any person
- "Bug" for any kind of insect or spider, even if it is not a true bug

+ Figures of Speech in Design

■ Pun

- One symbol can have two or more meanings
- OR, two symbols can have similar images but different meanings
- Visual Pun



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Hyperbole
 - Exaggeration for the sake of emphasis



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Litotes
 - Understatement in negative way to express affirmative



“That food was not undelicious.”

+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Antithesis
 - Sharp contrast between two opposing ideas to intensify difference



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Irony
 - Deliberate contrast – opposite of what would be expected



+ Figures of Speech in Design

- Allegory
 - Symbolic Representation



+ Things to Keep in Mind

- Symbols can be used to bring out physical results, but don't always need to be used for that purpose.
- Symbols can be manipulated to form new statements
- It is up to the designer to use this power wisely and not distort the truth.

