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### Tropes in translation

*An analysis of Dutch creative collocations and compounds translated into English*

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# 3

## On Defining Rhetorical Tropes

In this section, I set out to list and define the stylistic labels that I use to categorise the creative bigrams and creative compounds in my corpus. These labels take their names from tropes well-known to classical rhetoric: names like metaphor, metonymy, oxymoron, personification and synaesthesia. Lists and definitions of these terms abound – see Wales (1990/2001), Burton (2007), Leech (2008) and Leith (2011), to name but a few – so at first sight it seemed like my work was going to be easy. Surely all I had to do was select the right terms, choose the best definitions and pigeonhole my data into the appropriate slots... If only things were that simple! The problems I encountered were manifold, but they can be reduced to two basic, but related, issues:

- I. Definitions, however well-crafted, are slippery. For instance, Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 35) propose a clear distinction between metaphor and metonymy whereas Goatly (1997, p. 41, 57) cuts through that distinction, arguing that many metaphors are in fact metonymy-based; and Burton (2007) sees oxymoron and metaphor as belonging to two separate categories whereas Leech (2008, p. 22) argues that oxymoron is a special case of metaphor;<sup>25</sup>
- II. The individual units of data in my corpus – i.e. the creative bigrams and creative compounds – cannot always be unambiguously pegged to individual tropes. For instance, the phrase “tight-arsed lemonade” (from David Colmer’s translation of Dimitri Verhulst’s novel *De helaasheid der dingen/ The Misfortunates*) has, for reasons which will become clear in Chapter 5, been classified as metonymy, but a strong case could also be made for classifying it as personification. As will be suggested later, there are no criteria ‘out there’ that can ultimately resolve this issue.

In order to understand how this limiting state of affairs has come about, and in order to transcend it – or at least live with it – I’d like briefly to explore how definitions work in general. A way to do this is to take a little look at lexicography (a field quintessentially concerned with word definitions) and its development over the past fifty-odd years.

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<sup>25</sup> Leech’s point is that metaphor is characterised by semantic incompatibility; and that oxymoron, because it is characterised by *extreme* semantic incompatibility, is a limiting case of metaphor.

### 3.1 The Limitations of ‘Water Tight’ Definitions

In the second half of the twentieth century, lexicography famously moved away from the idea that definitions can be reduced to necessary-and-sufficient conditions (Michael Rundell, oral presentation, Lexicom 2017, Leiden, Netherlands), and towards the idea that definitions emerge from prototypes. To illustrate this point, let’s look at two contrasting entries for the word DOOR. The first comes from the 1961 edition of the Merriam-Webster dictionary and is a beautiful example of a definition based on necessary-and-sufficient conditions:

**Door** a moveable piece of firm material or a structure supported usu. along one side and swinging on pivots and hinges, sliding along a groove, rolling up and down, revolving as one of four leaves, or folding like an accordion by means of which an opening may be closed or kept open for passage into and out of a building, room or other covered enclosure of a car, airplane, elevator or other vehicle.

(Merriam-Webster’s Third International, 1961, sourced from Rundell, *ibid*)

For most words, this type of definition is doomed (*ibid*). In the case of DOOR, not only does the definition fail to cover all possible instances (e.g. what about doors on computer panels?), it almost certainly fails to create a picture of an ordinary door in most readers’ minds – at least not without them having to have a very long think. As Hanks (2013, p. 99) argues,

No dictionary definition can possibly ‘define’ all possible uses (in the traditional sense of determining all and only the members of a set): each definition must, instead be read as if preceded by the word ‘typically’.

Hanks’s idea of typical word use takes us to a second entry for DOOR (drawn from the online Macmillan dictionary 2017):

**Door** a large flat object that you open when you want to enter or leave a building, room, or vehicle. Example: *a little cottage with a red door*.

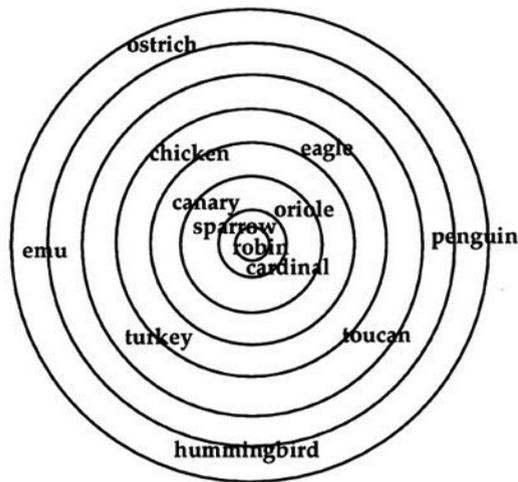
(Macmillandictionary.com, retrieved 21.9.2017)

In contrast to the Merriam-Webster (1961) definition, the Macmillan (2017) entry creates a vivid image of a door; and the example – sourced from a large corpus – reflects typical usage.

### 3.2 Prototypes: Meaning as Typical Use

Within modern linguistics, the idea that meaning arises from typical use is often attributed to the work carried out in the 1970s by the cognitive psychologist Eleanor Rosch (Hilpert 2015). Her experimental work on categories and prototypes strongly suggests that we understand concepts not in terms of necessary-and-sufficient conditions but in terms of exemplars, or prototypes (Rosch 1978). She famously synthesised this position in the following diagram, which illustrates the concept of prototypes in relation to the word BIRD.

Figure 19: Prototypes (Rosch 1978)



What this diagram says is that some birds are more ‘birdy’ than others: a robin falls squarely (or roundly?) within the *category* of bird while an ostrich is situated at the category’s fuzzy boundary; in other words, a robin is a *prototypical* bird; an ostrich is not.

It is important to realise that the idea of prototypes was not only applied to common words like BIRD and DOOR. No sooner had the idea taken sway among cognitive psychologists than it was adopted by cognitive linguists, who applied the principle to their very own discipline (Hilpert, 2015). Thus, in the same way that cognitive psychologists talked about ‘birdiness’, cognitive linguists began to talk about ‘nouniness’ and ‘verbiness’ – the idea that some nouns and verbs are more noun-like, or verb-like, than others.<sup>26</sup> This is an essential point to realise because

<sup>26</sup> THINK(n) is an example of a non-typical noun, as in “Let me have a think about that.” Although the word behaves more or less like a noun (e.g. it is governed by a verb and has an article), it is hardly

it unsettles our intuition that technical terms have to be anchored in hard-and-fast definitions; and it lends credence to the notion that definitions based on necessary-and-sufficient conditions are ‘doomed’ not only for everyday words but often for academic terms too.

### 3.3 Hanks and Wittgenstein on Technical Terms

Still one might object to the word ‘doomed’, arguing that it is far too pessimistic here: ‘Surely there’s a difference between everyday words and technical terms. Can’t we just stipulate the definitions of technical terms?’ This very question has been tackled head-on by Hanks (2010), who showed – via a wealth of corpus evidence and with the astute eye of a world-class lexicographer – that the boundary between ‘terminology’ and ‘phraseology’ is fuzzy. He showed that even the most technical of terms (Hanks’ example is *strobilation*) have meanings which vary according to use, and that stipulating definitions, to the extent that it works at all, works only where there is a straight-forward relationship between the word and the real world – which is NOT the case for words describing the creative language of novels and their translations.

What Hanks is doing, in effect, is to provide compelling corpus evidence for what Wittgenstein (who, of course, did not have the advantage of large corpora and lexical computing tools) took the best part of his career to realise, namely that the meaning of words derives from use. Between writing his first major work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) and his second, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Wittgenstein turned away from the view that words represent objects, or clearly defined concepts, to the opposing view that word-meanings derive only from use. But in saying this, he did not appeal to prototypes. Instead he appealed to the idea of family resemblances (Magee 1987, p. 328).

### 3.4 Family Resemblances: Technical Terms

According to Wittgenstein (1953), meaning-as-use holds not just for everyday language, but – crucially – also for ‘higher’ areas of discourse such as ethics, aesthetics and poetics, to which stylistics and rhetoric arguably belong. He elaborated on this by means of an extended metaphor: that of ‘family resemblances’. As the metaphor implies, the idea here is that words (be they everyday words such as GAME, or technical terms such as, say, METONYM, PERSONIFICATION and OXYMORON) do not stand for one entity or concept alone. Instead, each word, or term, gets to

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a prototypical case in that it cannot be pluralised even though it can be preceded by the indefinite article. In addition, the fact that lexical items can change word-class over time reinforces the idea of fluid lexical categories.

be used for a whole family of entities or concepts which resemble one another to varying degrees: some share the same forehead, as it were; others the same nose. Crucially there is no one single feature, or one clearly defined set of features, which, on its own, could ever characterise a word: for Wittgenstein there are no essences (Searle 1987, p. 336).<sup>27</sup>

### **3.5 Rhetorical Tropes: Watertight Definitions, Prototypes And Family Resemblances**

We will return to the idea of family resemblances in 3.5.3, but let's first take a look at how watertight definitions and prototypes have been used to define and throw light on certain rhetorical tropes.

#### **3.5.1 Metaphor: A Watertight Definition?**

So far I have argued that watertight definitions – i.e. stipulating necessary and sufficient conditions – for rhetorical tropes will not work because water-tight definitions are problematic in general. Now let's turn to an actual example. In a move reminiscent of the 1961 Merriam Webster's entry for the word DOOR, Goatly (1997, p. 8) attempts to define METAPHOR in terms of necessary-and-sufficient conditions:

**Metaphor** occurs [i] when a unit of discourse is used to refer unconventionally to an object, process or concept, or colligates in an unconventional way; and [ii] when this unconventional act of reference or colligation is understood on the basis of similarity, matching or analogy involving the conventional referent or colligates of the unit and the actual unconventional referent of colligates.

This definition feels no more like a metaphor than:

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27 The idea that meanings have no essences but are simply usage-based was argued earlier by William James (1890), albeit in relation to the objects themselves rather than in relation to the words that denote the objects. However, the similarity between Wittgenstein (1953) and James is striking, as can be seen in this quote from James: "There is no property ABSOLUTELY essential to one thing. The same property which figures as the essence of a thing on one occasion becomes a very inessential feature upon another. Now that I am writing, it is essential that I conceive my paper as a surface for inscription. . . . But if I wished to light a fire, and no other materials were by, the essential way of conceiving the paper would be as a combustible material. . . . The essence of a thing is that one of its properties which is so *important for my interests* that in comparison with it I may neglect the rest. . . . The properties which are important vary from man to man and from hour to hour. . . . many objects of daily use—as paper, ink, butter, overcoat—have properties of such constant unwavering importance, and have such stereotyped names, that we end by believing that to conceive them in those ways is to conceive them in the only true way. Those are no truer ways of conceiving them than any others; there are only more frequently serviceable ways to us." (James 1890, pp. 222–224, quoted in Chalmers et al. 1991, p. 6).

a moveable piece of firm material or a structure supported usu. along one side and swinging on pivots and hinges, sliding along a groove, rolling up and down, revolving as one of four leaves, or folding like an accordion by means of which an opening may be closed or kept open for passage. (Merriam-Webster's Third International, 1961)

feels like a door. Clearly Wittgenstein (1953) had a point. So rather than trying to provide hard-and-fast definitions for the rhetorical tropes in my corpus, should I offer 'typifications' instead? After all, typifications work well for grammatical categories like *verb* and *noun* (see 3.2 above). To explore this, we will turn to one area of figurative language where typifications do seem to work quite well; namely the field of conceptual metaphor.

### 3.5.2 Conceptual Metaphor: Prototypes

As outlined in Section 3.2 above, the idea of prototypes, typical use or 'typifications' emerged from within cognitive psychology (most notably Rosch 1978) and spread rapidly to cognitive linguistics. It is not surprising, therefore, that prototypes – as applied to metaphor, metonymy, as well as more specific tropes like personification – also developed within the field of cognitive linguistics. Starting with Lakoff and Johnson's grounding-breaking book *The Metaphors We Live By* (1980), a wealth of work has been written (e.g. Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2013, and Lederer, 2016) with the aim of identifying prototypical metaphors and metonyms, which are said to structure discourse and reflect (or influence) the way we think. True, these prototypes are conceptual (i.e. they are based on a small class of basic concepts), but they result in common and familiar phrases. For instance, the conceptual metaphor LOVE IS A JOURNEY often turns up in familiar phrases like *their marriage is on the rocks*, or *this relationship is going nowhere* (ibid, p. 45 & 141); and the conceptual metonymy PART FOR WHOLE (classified as synecdoche in many other taxonomies) is often realised as common phrases like *get your butt over here* (ibid, p. 38), where "butt", a part of the person, is used to refer to the whole person. The point is that these metaphors and metonyms are the ones "we live by"; and it is by virtue of the fact that we live by them that they are typical.

But the creative tropes from my corpus of novels are not the ones we live by; they are not typifications. The tropes from my corpus are deviations from the norm, scattered at the outermost concentric circle used by Rosch, and they seem to belong to a different model of language - one which takes us back to Wittgenstein.

### 3.5.3 Where Prototypes Fail, Family Resemblances Take Over

In Sections 3.1 and 3.5.1, I pointed out the pitfalls of definitions based on necessary and sufficient conditions (e.g. the definition of METAPHOR which resembled the 1961 Merriam Webster entry for the word DOOR). Then in 3.5.2, I went on to argue that definitions – or categorisations – based on prototypical examples, while helpful for frequently used figures of speech, are of less help for original figures of speech. This is because original and creative tropes are scattered at the periphery of the Roschian circle. The conclusion that neither necessary-and-sufficient conditions nor prototypes are useful for defining original tropes takes us back to Wittgenstein (1953),<sup>28</sup> who was even more radical than Rosch in his conception of language-as-use. Whereas Rosch’s model of words and objects revolves around clear-cut cases (remember the ROBIN in the middle of the circle serving as a prototypical example of BIRD), Wittgenstein’s does not. Wittgenstein’s model – if you can call it a model – visualises word-meanings as a set of family resemblances which “criss-cross and overlap” in multiple ways (Searle 1987, p. 328). And it is this ‘model’ of criss-crosses and overlaps that seems best suited to highly creative language – best suited to what can only be sketchy characterisations of rhetorical tropes and rough-and-ready categorisations of creative compounds and collocations into those tropes.

### 3.6 Tropes or Schemes?

Before characterising the tropes that will be used to categorise my data (see section 3.7), first a brief word about the place of tropes within figurative language as a whole.

Traditionally, figures have been divided into tropes and schemes. Tropes have more to do with deviations of meaning, and schemes have more to do with deviations of form, including repetition. (Leech, 1969, Burton, 2007) However, to the extent that form and meaning interact, tropes and schemes overlap. For instance, the alliterative bigram “boozed-up barmaid” (*The Misfortunates*) involves repeating the phonemes /b/, making it a scheme because repetition has to do with form; but the repetition, in turn, intensifies the meaning, turning it into a trope. And hypallage too (as in “sozzled return” instead of “returning home sozzled”, to take another example from *The Misfortunates*) involves moving an epithet to an unusual grammatical position, making it a scheme because movement has to do with form; but the movement, in turn, affects the meaning, turning it into a trope.

For these reason, I have decided to ignore the distinction between tropes and schemes, and have included hypallage and alliteration in my list of ‘tropes’, even though some commentators might classify both as schemes. In doing so, I agree with Leith (2011, p. 131), who argues that “these distinctions are pretty hard to sustain”.

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28 This is a term used by the generative lexical grammarian James Pustejovsky (1995).

### 3.7 Rhetorical Tropes: Characterisations

Each characterisation starts with a working definition of the trope in question, taken from an array of sources including the OED, Burton (2007) and Wales (1990/2001). In choosing these working definitions, my guiding principle has been ‘to get a grip’; and I have represented the importance of getting a grip graphically by typing the working definitions in **bold** typeface. However, each working definition is followed by a partial disclaimer (in light typeface) which takes the form of a short passage suggesting some of the many ways in which the trope in question criss-crosses, overlaps with, and morphs into other tropes and their definitions

#### *Alliteration*

**Beginning adjacent or closely connected words with the same sound or letter.**

This fairly common definition needs to be modified for Dutch because its lexical boundaries do not coincide with those of English. For instance, *bedronken cafébazinnen* contains /b/ word medially but the word in which it occurs is a compound made up of two lexical items; the definition will therefore be taken to include lexical items embedded within compounds.

#### *Antipersonification*

**Representing people as inanimate objects** (Burton, 2007).

Leech (1969) sees antipersonification as an unusual form of metaphor, namely a dehumanising metaphor – or perhaps a paradoxical metaphor – arguing that whereas metaphor normally breathes life into a phrase, antipersonification sucks the life out of it. A common example would be “collateral damage”, which utterly dehumanises the victims. As should be obvious, the antipersonification here also functions as a euphemism. But it is not only euphemism that crosses paths with antipersonification. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 38) see antipersonification as a close associate of metonymy and as a prime example of it in phrases like “the buses are on strike”, where the object stands – by association – for the person.

#### *Catachresis*

**Using a word in a context that differs from its proper application** (Burton, 2007). Burton (ibid) points out that catachresis was considered a vice in antiquity because it involved the *improper* use of a word. In modern linguistics, using words ‘improperly’ is no longer considered a vice and catachresis sometimes goes by the name of “semantic-type coercion” (Pustejovsky, 1995) because it violates selection restrictions.<sup>29</sup> As an illustration of how semantic-type coercion works, take the

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<sup>29</sup> Whether you see metaphor as akin to or radically different from metonymy would seem to pivot

creative bigram *ongebonden stront* ('thin shit') from Dimitri Verhulst's novel *De helaasheid der dingen*. The adjective *ongebonden*, meaning something like 'thin', collocates strongly with SOEP ('soup'). So by combining *ongebonden* with *stront* ('shit'), the two words are 'coerced' into an unusual semantic relationship whereby the reader might be coerced into thinking about SHIT in terms SOUP. As should be clear by now semantic-type coercion rubs shoulders with metaphor (Hanks, 2013, pp. 218ff), but the conceptual exchange involved in catachresis can be of such a subtle and subjective kind that it often remains an open question as to whether and when it actually counts as metaphor.

### *Euphemism*

**Substituting a harsh or offensive term with a less distasteful word or phrase.** (OED, paraphrase)

Euphemism can be realised by various linguistic means (*LiteraryDevices Editors 2017*): these include abbreviations (e.g. B.O. for body odour), French borrowings (e.g. *faux pas* for foolish mistake), Latinate technical terms (e.g. "gluteus maximus" for big bum) and other tropes like metaphors and metonyms (e.g. "kick the bucket" for die), to name but a few. That euphemism can be realised in a plethora of ways is not disputed. More open to debate is which particular examples actually count as euphemism. Whilst the editors of *literarydevices.net* (2017) consider "kick the bucket" a typical example, Leech (1969), in a book written several decades earlier, considers the very same example "a jokingly indelicate periphrasis" used in an "anti-euphemistic vein" (perhaps because he was aware of the etymology of the phrase). This just goes to show what a changeable category euphemism is. But it is not just changing times that account for changing perceptions of what "less distasteful", "harsher" and "more offensive" is. Age, social class, gender and individual differences can play a role too.

### *Hypallage* or 'transferred epithet'

**A figure of speech in which an epithet (or adjective) grammatically qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing.** (Nordquist, 2017)

Hypallage is usually classified as a scheme rather than a trope because it is a formal figure: that is, it involves word-order changes (Burton 2007). However, these formal changes have a substantial effect on content. As Nordquist (2017) observes, hypallage "often involves shifting a modifier from the animate to the inanimate, as in the

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on the question of whether there is a true distinction between indexical and analogous or symbolic referencing – a fiendishly complex question within the field of semiotics and iconicity, which I will not tackle here.

phrases ‘cheerful money’, ‘sleepless night’, and ‘suicidal sky’”. As such it merges into, or brings about, personification. But hypallage also morphs into metonymy. Indeed, some classifications present hypallage as a synonym of metonymy, others as a subclass. In the case of ‘cheerful money’, money could be seen as cheerful because it makes people cheerful: this would be an instance of cause-effect metonymy.

### *Hyperbole*

**A figure of speech consisting in exaggerated or extravagant statement, used to express strong feeling or produce a strong impression, and not intended to be understood literally. (OED)**

The online educational resource *literarydevices.net* warns “it is important not to confuse hyperbole with simile and metaphor.” However, in practice – even when it comes to good professional practice – metaphor and hyperbole intertwine. For instance, Katie Wales, in her classic *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (1990/2001), cites “it made my blood boil” as a clear example of *hyperbole*, whereas the aforementioned *literarydevices.net* (perhaps following Lakoff (2014)) cites “my brother was boiling mad” as a clear example of a *metaphor*.

### *Irony*

**Speaking [or writing] in such a way as to imply the contrary of what one says, often for the purpose of derision, mockery, or jest. (Burton, 2007)**

If irony typically implies the opposite of what is said (as in “that’s a good idea” when you mean “that’s a bad idea”), it can also manifest itself as understatement (as in “we’re in a bit of a pickle” to mean “we’re in a huge amount of trouble”) and as overstatement (as in “this train is going at the speed of light” to mean “this train is going pretty slowly”). When this happens irony overlaps with, or is realised as, the rhetorical tropes of meiosis and hyperbole (both of which are also realised as metaphor in the above); put another way, here hyperbole and meiosis function as irony.

### *Meiosis*

**A figure of speech by which something is intentionally presented as smaller, less important, etc., than it really is. (OED)**

As we have already seen, meiosis crosses paths with irony and metaphor (e.g. “we’re in a bit of a pickle”). But meiosis overlaps with euphemism too, which may also present things as less harmful and less important than they really are. Whether or not the two tropes are actually one depends on how you view their truth-conditional status: do they – or do they not – flout Grice’s maxim of quality? For Leech (1969) meiosis does not since it is an honest deception never intended to be taken at face value. Euphemism on

the other hand, and especially politically charged euphemism, can be used to deceive, as well as to fulfil its more common function of avoiding taboo.

### *Metaphor*

**A figure of speech in which a name or descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object or action different from, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable (OED)**

As we have already seen, metaphor can be put to work to realise other rhetorical tropes such as hyperbole and euphemism. In addition, metaphor overlaps with catachresis and oxymoron, and encompasses personification (the so-called humanising metaphors), antipersonification (the so-called dehumanising metaphors) and synaesthesia (the so-called synaesthetic metaphors). However, one trope that it is often seen as being radically distinct from metaphor is metonymy: whereas metaphor is based on analogy (as in “love is a double-edged sword”), metonymy is based on contiguity or association (as in “the pen is mightier than the sword”). However metaphor and metonymy are sometimes seen as interrelated: Goatly (1997) and Wales (1990/2001) argue that within the framework of cognitive linguistics metaphor is in fact metonymy-based (as in MORE = UP); and Geeraerts (2002) argues that metonymy and metaphor often work in unison in composite expressions (as in “lend me your ear” below).

### *Metonymy*

**The action of substituting for a word or phrase denoting an object, action, institution, etc., a word or phrase denoting a property or something associated [or contiguous] with it. (OED)**

Although there are many clear metonyms, such as the frequently cited “she owns a Picasso” (where the producer clearly stands by association for the product) or “Whitehall isn’t saying anything” (where the place stands by association for either the institution or the people who work for the institution), there are plenty of composite examples which seem to work as a metonym and metaphor at the same time e.g. “lend me your ear”<sup>30</sup>. Also slippery is the relationship between metonymy and *synecdoche* (see below).

### *Personification*

**A figure of speech or trope in which an inanimate object, animate non-human, or abstract quality is given human attributes. (Wales, 1990/2001)**

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<sup>30</sup> See Geeraerts (2002) for other examples of expressions which are simultaneously metonymic and metaphorical.

Within cognitive linguistics, personification is often considered a sub-class of metaphor, the so-called humanising metaphors. However, personification also rubs shoulders with catachresis or ‘the improper use of language’ (see above) in that it involves a violation of so-called selectional restriction. For example, in the bigram *toegeknepen vensters* (SQUEEZED-SHUT WINDOWS).<sup>31</sup> the two words are coerced into an unusual semantic relationship whereby the windows take on human characteristics implied by the adjective that modifies them. (See also *catachresis* above)

### *Pleonasm*

**Semantic redundancy consisting in the combination of synonymous items.** (Leech 2008, p. 22)

The apparently clear example *omnipotente alvermogen* (OMNIPOTENT ALMIGHTINESS), again taken from *Rupert, een bekentenis*, would seem to suggest that pleonasm is a straightforward category. And yet even this trope criss-crosses others. Enos (1996, p. 528) suggests that pleonasm overlaps with hyperbole in that “[t]he verbal excess that occurs in a pleonasm can strengthen what is expressed”. And Hanks (2006, p. 9) categorises the phrase *a sea of water* as a “nearly literal metaphor”, showing how in certain contexts pleonastic expressions can be exploited metaphorically.

### *Oxymoron*

**The deliberate coupling of words that are strictly contradictory.** (Matthews 2014)

For Leech (2008, p. 22) oxymoron can also be seen as an extreme form of metaphor. This is because metaphor is characterised by semantic incompatibility and oxymora express semantic incompatibility in the extreme (see footnote 24) as exemplified by *hemelse zwelppijn* (HEAVENLY PAIN OF SWELLING). This idea of semantic incompatibility takes us back, in turn, to catachresis (see above and Hanks 2013, p. 218ff).

### *Synecdoche*

**A whole is represented by naming one of its parts (genus named for species), or vice versa (species named for genus).** (Burton, 2007)

Whether synecdoche be regarded as an autonomous trope or as a special case of metonymy is a point of contention. For Lakoff and Johnson the answer is clear: synecdoche is a special case of metonymy; it is PART FOR WHOLE metonymy. And yet there is a tradition spanning the seventeenth to twentieth century which sees synecdoche as one of the four Master Tropes along with metaphor, metonymy and irony (Burke 1969, pp. 503–17 in Chandler, 2002/2007, p. 136). But even if we can

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<sup>31</sup> Taken from the novel *Rupert, een bekentenis* (introduced in Chapter 2).

agree on the theoretical status of synecdoche versus metonymy, practical problems remain: as Wales (1990/2001, p. 382) argues, when it comes to specific examples it is often difficult to distinguish the two. For instance, is “willow” when used to refer to a cricket bat a case of metonymy (because cricket bats are made of willow); or is it more narrowly a case of synecdoche (because willow wood actually forms part of the bat)?

*Synaesthesia*

**The use of metaphors in which terms relating to one kind of sense-impression are used to describe sense-impressions of other kinds. (OED)**

An obvious example of synaesthesia is *stem van zwavel* (SULPHUROUS VOICE), again taken from *Rupert*, because it combines the senses of hearing and smell. However, like all the other rhetorical categories discussed so far, synaesthesia (as a metaphor) stands on unfirm ground. Winter (2016) points out that describing one kind of sense-impression in terms of another rests on the fiction of there being five distinct senses, when recent research points to the “underlying continuity of the senses” (ibid, p. 3). Winter goes on to argue that synaesthesia therefore has more to do with metonymy than metaphor because there is a strong association between the senses.