

James J. KIMBLE – Trischa GOODNOW

***Metaphor, Narrative, and the Visual:
On the Role of Cognitive Possibility in Propaganda Appeals***

Cognitive researchers across a variety of disciplines have in recent years begun to develop research projects that focus on two growing areas of inquiry: visual metaphors and visual narratives. To date, most such research has largely explored what each of these areas of inquiry has in common with related *textual* phenomena – such as verbal metaphors and narratives – rather than being concerned with the cognitive aspects that each area shares.

This essay develops a new approach to persuasive communication by contending that metaphors and narratives – whether textual or visual – are intimately related, functioning as constituent elements within the rhetoric of cognitive possibility. Drawing on an analysis of two hundred posters from the World War II era, the project shows that visual phenomena can present a complex series of metaphoric roles, each united as part of a larger narrative. The propaganda appeals from the war era, for example, invited citizens to see themselves as playing a metaphoric role as home front soldiers, then encouraged them to behave in ways narratively consistent with that role's function. Because our approach reveals important connections between arenas of cognitive processing, it supports further investigations into the mechanics underlying what has been termed *verbo-visual literacy*.

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