

Antonomasia: metonymical and metaphorical non-bare proper names

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In antonomasia, proper names do not refer to their bearers, e.g., (1) refers to Astor Piazzolla. Based on a corpus study using the New York Times antonomasia database of Schwab et al. (2022), it is argued that antonomasia involves exactly two steps, an initial metonymic mapping from an individual onto a property, which is subsequently interpreted metaphorically.

(1) *the Michelangelo of tango*

First, the metonymy maps the name bearer onto the property of being an exemplary representative for a specific domain, in (1), the domain of visual arts. Other properties of the name bearer are ignored, e.g., Michelangelo's height or hair colour. The mapping instantiates Lakoff's (1987) paragon concept: A domain can be represented by an exemplary individual member. Thus, in a first version, the paragon relation relates an individual and a domain. Identifying the relevant domain often requires culture-specific knowledge about the individual. Formally, we map a person x onto the property of representing exemplarily the domain which x represents (relation **ER**; 2a). Given Michelangelo's paragon role of for visual arts – **ER(m, visual-arts)** –, where 'm' is the semantic representation of *Michelangelo*, (2b) can be interpreted as (2c):

(2a) $\lambda y \lambda x. \mathbf{ER}(x, \iota z. \mathbf{ER}(y, z))$ b $\lambda x. \mathbf{ER}(x, \iota z. \mathbf{ER}(m, z))$ c $\lambda x. \mathbf{ER}(x, \mathbf{visual-arts})$

The property of being an exemplary representative can be formalised in terms of salience (von Heusinger 2006) in that the paragon concept introduces a salience ranking within the domain, selecting the maximally salient entities with respect to this ranking. Cases of antonomasia with indefinite articles like (3) and (4) show that this ranking may introduce several maximally salient entities. The information that there is only one such entity must be contributed by the definite article like in (1) or a possessive DP like in (5), see (6b) for details.

(3) *a literary Michael Jordan/Babe Ruth/Mozart/Einstein; a musical Einstein/Babe Ruth*

(4) *a hockey Shakespeare, science-fiction Bach, basketball Shakespeare/Mozart/Einstein*

(5) *fashion's Johnny Appleseed*

Second, the resulting property is interpreted in terms of a metaphor. The denotation of a metaphorical expression is in some way similar to the denotation of the literal interpretation of the expression. E.g., *fly by* in a temporal sense is metaphorical and shares with the literal, spatial interpretation the notion of swiftness. Following Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff 1993), we base the similarity between literal and metaphorical denotations of an expression on an underlying mapping that projects the structure of a 'source domain', of which the literal denotation is a part, onto a 'target domain', which comprises the denotation of the metaphorical interpretation. The mapping transfers properties of the literal denotation to the denotation of the metaphorical interpretation, which introduces the similarity between the denotations. The mapping in *fly by* goes from the domain of motion to the one of time, in short, 'TIME IS MOTION'.

In antonomasia, the metaphorical mapping goes from the domain introduced by the name bearer to the domain specified by the modifying phrase – in (1), *tango* –, which transfers the role of paragon to the second domain. Thus, *Michelangelo of tango* is interpreted as 'being an exemplary representative for the domain of tango'. The second domain is typically introduced by a modifying *of*-PP, but it can also be expressed by modifying adjective phrases, non-head parts of compounds whose head is the proper name, or possessive DP specifiers, as in (3)-(5).

There is no established formalisation for metaphors in terms of an operator, because metaphor is a destructive semantic operation, which replaces information, e.g., for *fly by*, the spatial domain is replaced by a temporal one. In the case of (1), we go from (2c) to (6a), replacing the relevant domain, and then the semantics of (1) can be derived compositionally like in (6b):

(6)a. $\lambda x. \mathbf{ER}(x, \mathbf{tango}')$ (3b) $\lambda P \iota x. P(x) [\lambda y. \mathbf{ER}(y, \mathbf{tango}')] = \iota x. \mathbf{ER}(x, \mathbf{tango}')$

This analysis of antonomasia in terms of properties predicts that antonomasia can occur with all kinds of determiners. In the corpus, the overwhelming majority (93.7%) of cases exhibits a definite determiner, but other determiners are attested, apart from indefinite articles and possessive DPs like in (3)-(5) there are also examples with the determiners *no* and *some*:

(7) *He is no Tony Manero of the tango/some Mozart of engineering.*

As a specific kind of metaphor, antonomasia should allow for extensions (i.e., chains sharing the same mapping between domains) like the stage-world mappings in the Shakespeare quote (8). Such antonomasia chains do exist; (9) involves three mappings from aviation to basketball:

(8) *And all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players...*

(9) *But if Jordan is the Chuck Yeager of basketball, Julius Erving was Charles Lindbergh and Connie Hawkins was its Wright Brothers.*

At the same time, example (9) indicates that the notion of paragon must be refined: A domain might have several paragons, each one with its specific nature of exemplariness (here, roughly, in the roles of record breaker, populariser, and pioneer of aviation). Consequently, an individual is an exemplary representative of a domain only with respect to a specific role.

Thus, a refined formalisation of the paragon concept introduces an additional parameter for the role of the individual in the domain. The concept emerges as a three-place relation between an individual, a role, and a domain. The role is formalised as a relation between the individual and the domain, and introduces a salience ranking of its own, which allows singling out the maximally salient individuals of each ranking as the respective relevant exemplary representatives.

This analysis integrates previous work analysing antonomasia exclusively as metaphor (Kleiber 1991) or metonymy (Barcelona 2003). While Brdar and Brdar-Szabó (2007) bring together metonymy and metaphor in their analysis of antonomasia, their analysis is overly complex and cannot delimit antonomasia against related phenomena like in (10)-(12):

(10) *a second Zidane*

(11) *the Paris of my youth*

(12) *l'optimisme étourdi d'un La Fontaine* 'the giddy optimism of a La Fontaine'

The proposed analysis distinguishes antonomasia like (1)-(5) from cases like (10), which only involve the first, metonymical step but no domain mapping, thus, (10) introduces another exemplary representative for the same domain (football). Also, (11) is no antonomasia but a mapping from an individual to one of its spatiotemporal stages (Kratzer 1995), and (12), a metonymic mapping to the property of being like the proper noun referent (Gary-Prieur 1991).

References

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