

# “Visual Metaphor” and “Metonymy” as the Reflection of Creative Thought in Art: An Analysis on Graphic Designer Yossi Lemel’s Poster Designs on the Coronavirus (Covid-19) from Charles Forceville’s Perspective

*Sanatta Yarattıcı Düşüncenin Yansıması Olarak Kabul Edilen “Görsel Metafor” ve “Metonimi”: Grafik Tasarımcı Yossi Lemel’in Koronavirüs (Covid-19) İmgelerini Kavramsallaştırdığı Tasarımlarının Charles Forceville’in Perspektifinden Analizi*

Şebnem SOYGÜDER BATURLAR<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Assoc. Prof. Dr., Ege University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Radio, TV and Cinema, Izmir, Turkey

ORCID: Ş.S.B. 0000-0002-9618-171X

**Sorumlu yazar/Corresponding author:**

Şebnem Soygüder Baturlar,  
Ege Üniversitesi, İletişim Fakültesi,  
İzmir, Türkiye

**E-posta/E-mail:** sebnem.soyguder@ege.edu.tr

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## ABSTRACT

Works designed with visual metaphors and metonymies (posters, photographs, paintings, etc.) are considered to be strong in creativity and effective in meaning construction. This study analyzes selected poster designs of one of the most famous graphic designers of the world, Yossi Lemel, on the coronavirus (Covid-19). The scope of the study is limited to visual metaphors and metonymies. Based on the similarities between concepts, metaphors and metonymies are the most important signs in visual semiotics analyses. Symbols, codes, myths, and visual oxymorons are other signs that should be studied; however, limiting the study to metaphors and metonymies that are grounded on similarities, it is aimed to discuss the topic in detail. The purpose of the study is to put forth how the concepts formed in our minds are visualized by using metaphors and metonymies and to reveal the aesthetics these signs bring into visual designs. Finding and using metaphors is an important creativity activity that makes the receiver read the meaning easily from a different point. These are important elements of semiotics that build up works with strong creativity. It is this creative language that makes Lemel’s social and political posters important.

**Keywords:** Yossi Lemel, visual metaphor, metonymy, image, target and source

## ÖZ

Görsel metaforlar ve metanomilerle tasarlanan işlerin (afiş, fotoğraf, resim vs.) yaratıcılığı güçlü ve anlam oluşturmada oldukça etkili araçlar olduğunu düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada dünyanın ünlü tasarımcılarından biri olan grafik sanatçısı Yossi Lemel’in 2020 yılında dünyayı etkisi altına alan koronavirüs (Covid-19) pandemisi sırasında yapmış olduğu koronavirüs (Covid-19) konulu afiş tasarımlarından seçilen örnekler incelenecektir. Çalışma görsel metaforlar ve metanomilerle sınırlandırılmıştır. Kavramlar arasındaki benzerlikleri kullanarak yapılan bu yaratıcı çalışmalar, görsel göstergebilim çözümlerinde aranması gereken en önemli göstergelerdir. Kuşkusuz semboller, kodlar, mitler, görsel oxymoronlar (zıtlıklar) metinde aranması gereken diğer göstergelerdir. Ancak çalışmamızı sadece benzerlikler üzerinden yaratılan metafor ve metanomilerle sınırlandırarak

konuyu derinlemesine tartışmayı hedeflemekteyiz. Genellikle sözlü ve yazılı metinlerde açıklanan “metafor” kavramının görsel metinler üzerinden açıklanmasına ise “görsel metafor” denmektedir. Amacımız zihnimizde oluşan/ oluşturulan kavramların görsel metaforlar ve metanomileri kullanarak nasıl görselleştirildiğini ve bu göstergelerin görsel tasarımlara kattığı estetik lezzeti gözler önüne sermektir. Metaforları bulup kullanmak, anlamı farklı bir noktadan ele alıp alıcının daha kolay okumasını sağlayan, önemli bir yaratıcılık etkinliğidir. Bunlar yan anlamı güçlü, dolayısıyla yaratıcılığı güçlü eserlerin ortaya çıkmasını sağlayan çok önemli göstergebilim elemanlarıdır. Keza Lemel’in sosyal ve siyasal içerikli afişlerini önemli yapan da kullandığı bu yaratıcı dildir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yossi Lemel, görsel metafor, metanomi, imge, hedef ve kaynak

## INTRODUCTION

Visual metaphors are the visual representations of metaphorical thoughts and concepts. As an important aspect of creativity, thinking with metaphors and metonymies is a cognitive, that is conceptual, function. The explanations concerning these concepts are generally involved in linguistics. However, the signs in linguistics have already become a part of visual semiotics today. Therefore, all concepts of semiotics borrowed from linguistics can easily be applied to visual texts. Being the creator of many visual texts, Yossi Lemel has held many personal exhibitions and joined many group exhibitions around the world. His works are part of the permanent collections of some institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe (Hamburg), and Musée de la Publicité (Paris). Lemel has won many awards at international competitions, especially with his remarkable social and political posters and works. With his striking posters, he has drawn the attention to events that have deeply influenced the world. Besides working individually, the artist has been continuously participating in the activities of Amnesty International and Greenpeace as well. Attracting the attention of the people involved in the problems and of those who are not involved and doing whatever he can to keep them aware, Lemel has also held exhibitions in Turkey. Upholding the principle of “less is more” in his works, he produces his works in a plain but striking way that comes as a bombshell to many (Sümer, 2009). Posters are

generally seen on advertising boards, walls, bus stops, lampposts, in magazines, and in newspapers. They try to tell something to us. Today, digital new media is widespread and has even taken the place of traditional media. Instagram, one of the most popular social media applications, has become a new platform especially for artists to share their works with their followers. Keeping up with today's trend, Yossi Lemel has also been sharing his designs with his followers on the Instagram. The Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 has also been considered by Lemel as a universal problem to be worked on and has been the major theme of his 2020 designs. As the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 broke out worldwide, Lemel first shared his coronavirus poster designs on Instagram (first post on February 2, 2020), and five months later (July 2, 2020), he exhibited 50 of them in public in Athens, the capital of Greece. He has also presented his designs on the coronavirus in his virtual 3D exhibition titled "Corona Case – A Journey to Pandemia" as part of different art events since October 1, 2020 (Lemel, "Corona Case"). Lemel's Instagram account has been followed all through the study with curiosity and excitement, and the selected works have been analyzed and interpreted through metaphors and metonymies. This study provides the reader with a theoretical framework for the analyses of visual metaphors and metonymies in a poster.

### **The Image of Covid-19**

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced Covid-19 as a pandemic (global epidemic). It is caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, discovered in Wuhan, the capital of the Hubei region in China. In a short time, it spread all over the world. A pandemic is the name given to an infectious disease that spreads across the world and threatens human life critically. Human history faced various pandemics in different periods. Many pandemics such as cholera, influenza, typhus, smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, leprosy, malaria, yellow fever, HIV, Ebola, and zika killed masses throughout history. Today, the Covid-19 pandemic which was first identified in China, spread to Iran and Italy and to the rest of the world in a short time is a type of coronavirus, and is a global epidemic (Taşdemir, 2020, p. 16). Being widespread and causing the deaths of many people is merely not enough for a disease or a medical condition to be characterized as a pandemic; it also has to be infectious at the same time. For instance, even though cancer causes a lot of deaths, it is not a pandemic because it is not infectious (Apaydın, 2020, p. 13).

The first coronavirus case in Turkey was detected on March 11, 2020. As in other countries where the pandemic spread, in a week, people in Turkey retreated into their

houses. Everybody stayed at home for almost two and a half months, and nobody got out unless they had to. The government tried to highlight the severity of the situation by publicizing slogans in the media such as "stay at home." During the pandemic, the media has conveyed information about the pandemic through the opinions of doctors, public health specialists, nurses, and pharmacists. The numbers of tests, cases, and deaths has been given every day. The coronavirus has become a part of our lives. As ordinary people, we have learned from the pandemic that this virus is transmitted during close contact through respiratory droplets or by touching surfaces contaminated with the virus followed by touching the mouth or the eyes. Masks, soaps, sanitizers, cologne, social distance, lockdowns, and hygiene have been noted as the most important prevention ways.

The visuals we have seen and the words and concepts we have heard and read on the media since March 2020 can be listed as: patient (lying face-down or connected to a ventilator), hospital, doctor, nurse, coronavirus (Covid-19) test kit, swab (for nasal swab collection), vaccine, medicine, ventilator, mask, gloves, social distance, "stay at home," soap, sanitizer, cologne, pharmacy, quarantine, WHO (World Health Organization). These have undoubtedly been the most seen, written, read, and spoken concepts of 2020. The reason for listing down these concepts is that the present study focuses on how these concepts have become visual metaphors and metonymies in graphic designs.

Covid-19 is thought to have originated in Wuhan, in China on December 1, 2019; and for a long time, a bowl of bat soup sold in a live-animal market in Wuhan was reported as the cause of the pandemic. Several scientists published articles discussing that the coronavirus will change the world order. It all resembled a dystopian science-fiction movie. Thus, all pandemic-related Hollywood movies were watched again and again. Topics such as one global authoritarian system, the end of capitalism, the reduction of consumption, and environmental problems were discussed. Remarkable changes have been observed as humans retreated into their homes. The air is cleaner and the sky is clearer; trees and grass look greener; the sea, rivers, and lakes look cleaner and bluer; fishes started to come to the shores; the animals that we only see in documentaries have come to the cities; some birds we do not know are in the trees. As the manufacturing industry has come to a standstill during the pandemic, the wastes released into the environment reduced to a great extent.

In light of this information, more global (macro) concepts concerning Covid-19 can be listed as: environmental pollution, environmental awareness, clean nature, China, bat, chip, economic problems and a new economic order, political problems and political changes, online education, online work, and artificial intelligence. While these topics

were not considered or experienced before the pandemic, Turkey and the world, as if in a global laboratory, have experienced many phenomena ranging from education to health, from economic and social order to political order, and from life styles to environmentalism. What happened was not a trailer of a movie but reality. In fact, it felt like we were in a dream. All the world retreated into their homes and followed what was going on in the media (traditional and new media); they made phone calls and saw each other on video calls.

How can Covid-19 be metaphorized as an image? It is very important to deal with this subject because all the other metaphors we know are related to concepts we have learnt before and are familiar with. For example, the heart shape connotes love; the olive branch symbolizes peace; vultures are associated with death; these are all metaphors that are universally agreed upon. We were introduced to this virus which caused the pandemic in 2020 at the same time as other countries. Scientists have released microscope images of Covid-19. We now know what it looks like. This virus has already become a familiar image in media texts.

When the shapes of viruses that caused pandemics in history are considered, it is observed that each has a different shape. Some of them look like a little stick; some are spherical or a spiral. For instance, the tuberculosis bacteria under the microscope looks like a seahorse without a mane; the plague microbe looks like a jelly-like bean; pox resembles a thin zinc plate (Nikiforuk, 2018, p. 21).

If we try to describe in words, like Andrew Nikiforuk, how Covid-19 looks like, we can say it is a sphere and looks as if there are tiny worms moving on it. Figures 1-2 are real photographs of the virus under a transmission electron microscope.

Figure 1 is the transmission electron microscope image showing SARS-CoV-2, which is also known as 2019-nCoV, that causes Covid-19. It is taken from a patient in the USA and shown on the surface of cells cultured in a laboratory. The image of the virus has been colored in at NIAID's Rocky Mountain Laboratory (RML) in Hamilton, Montana. Similarly, Figure 2 is another colored photograph of the virus.

The real look of Covid-19 that caused the pandemic in 2020 has been illustrated in a short time and has appeared in the media and in some visual designs in the shape shown below (Figure 3-4), being more concretized; that is, it has become an image.

The coronavirus image has now been learnt universally by everybody so that an ordinary person who has no idea of microorganisms would be able to identify the image of Covid-19 upon being shown the images of the organisms that cause many infectious diseases such as pox, smallpox, plague, leprosy, AIDS, and Covid-19.

Hence, John Berger points out that images, in the beginning, were made to visualize what was not there, yet, in time, it became clear that they became more permanent than what they represented. Therefore, an image tells how an object or a person had once looked. An image is the record of how X had seen Y (Berger, 1995, p. 10).

A constant photographic image does not reflect the reality, objects, or entities with all their characteristics. It can only provide some of their relative visual characteristics. It is impossible for us to have information about the color, size, weight, smell, sound, volume, etc. of places, living things, or objects in the image by only looking at their images. This can only be possible by using our imagination on the condition that we have prior knowledge about those entities; that is, it is almost impossible to talk about perception without mental processing (Adanır, 2017, p. 125). Adanır indicates in the same paragraph that "... an image can never substitute reality; it can only be the image of a very small part of reality as much as it can reflect."

This study tries to reveal how Yossi Lemel sees Covid-19, how he uses it with visual metaphors and metonymies, and how he conceptualizes it in his graphic designs.

### **A Theoretical Framework on the Definition and Interpretation of Metaphor**

Before considering the theory of "visual metaphor" in detail, the theory of cognitive, in other words, conceptual metaphor, should be explained briefly because "visual metaphor" studies have started following the studies of Lakoff and Johnson, who are considered the pioneers of conceptual metaphor theory. The theory of "visual metaphor" has been developed by Max Black and Charles Forceville.

It is surely beyond doubt that the most cited source in the studies on metaphor both in Turkey and in the world has been *Metaphors We Live By* written by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in 1980. These scholars explain what metaphor means as "Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005, p. 61). According to them, metaphor is not only a matter of language but a matter of thought as well. It is also a fundamental feature of our mind.

Likewise, in her book named *AIDS and Its Metaphors*, Susan Sontag writes "'Metaphor,' Aristotle wrote, 'consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else.' Saying a thing is or is like something-it-is-not is a mental operation as old as philosophy and poetry, and the spawning ground of most kinds of understanding, including scientific understanding, and expressiveness. Of course, one cannot think without metaphors" (Sontag, 2005, pp. 99-100).

Derived from the Greek word “metapherein,” “metaphor” consists of the affixes “meta,” meaning “beyond,” and “pherein,” meaning “to carry”. It means “to carry over or transfer” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005, p. 13). In short, it is carrying the meaning from one domain to another and the construction of a new, different meaning. For instance, a red rose connotes love. It is not “a red rose” anymore but “love.” The meaning is transferred to another meaning; it has turned into something else. In other words, as indicated by Lakoff and Johnson, it is understanding and experiencing one thing from another thing.

In one of Lakoff and Johnson’s examples, orientational metaphors are explained with “up” and “down” concepts. “More is up” and “Happy is up” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005, p. 179). Thus, the opposite is: Less is down; sad is down. This leads to the metaphorical expressions such as “I’m feeling up” and “I’m feeling down.” When we try to visualize these states, for the first one, we think of a happy person jumping up with his or her hands up, and for the second one, we think of a sad person with his or her head and shoulders down. In caricatures or animation films, happy lips are drawn with corners pulled upwards; however, sad lips are drawn with downward corners. This means “happiness” or “sadness” are associated with “up” and “down” orientation.

### **The Interaction Theory: Target and Source, Target Domain, and Source Domain**

The frame of this study is based on Max Black’s interaction theory. Firstly, the four fundamental terms (target, source, target domain, and source domain) that are used in discussing “metaphor” should be explained. Following this explanation, the formula given by Charles Forceville concerning how to identify a metaphor will be presented. Then, how the theory of interaction proposed by Max Black can be made productive for visual (non-verbal) metaphors will be discussed through the analysis of Yossi Lemel’s Covid-19 designs.

A metaphor consists of two elements. These are: “target” as the subject of the metaphor, and “source” as “something else” that is used to convey something about that target (Forceville, 2013).

Forceville (2013) indicates that both target and source “are part of an entire network of related meanings, meanings that can usually be conveyed by words. Black labeled this network the ‘system of associated commonplaces’ and the ‘implicative complex’; Kittay called it a ‘semantic field’” (as cited in Forceville, 2013).

Regarding the topic of this study, it is possible to say that the connotations in the minds of the people who have been struggling with the Covid-19 pandemic consist of the things they have seen on printed and visual media, their experiences concerning

the pandemic, the traces of previous pandemics, and cultural values. The concepts concerning Covid-19 which have been listed previously can be mentioned again as target and source domains: patients lying face-down in intensive care units, patients lying on stretchers in the hallways, the elderly, nursing homes, hospital, doctor, nurse, coronavirus (Covid-19) test kit, swab (for nasal swab collection), vaccine, medicine, ventilator, mask, gloves, social distance, stay at home, soap, sanitizer, cologne, pharmacy, quarantine, WHO (World Health Organization), environmental pollution, environmental awareness, clean nature, China, bat, chip, economic problems and a new economic order, political problems and political changes, online education, online work, numbers of cases and deaths, countries and cities with the highest case and death rates, and maps and tables showing numbers of cases and deaths. Most of these were concepts which we could not imagine before the pandemic as they were not known or experienced. However, these concepts have now become part of common target and source domains for everyone. Therefore, when Covid-19 is included in a field of art, these common concepts will occur in the creators' minds so that those art texts can be understood.

Susan Sontag discusses the metaphors concerning diseases. Starting with the 20<sup>th</sup> century, diseases have been described as enemies that invade the body (the fortress). Disease is an invader. Rudolf Virchow, the founder of cellular pathology, made the microorganisms causing diseases visible by using a microscope. As medicine developed, it became evident that the invader is not the disease but the microorganisms causing diseases. Hence, disease has started to be considered "as an invasion of alien organisms, to which the body responds by its own military operations, such as the mobilizing of immunological 'defenses'" (Sontag, 2005, pp. 103-104). In her book, Sontag talks about the metaphors related to cancer, tuberculosis, and AIDS.

"Fighting Covid-19" is a metaphorical phrase. While the concepts noted above are part of the "target domain" network, concepts such as "death," "defeat," "victim," "infection," "pain," "sorrow," along with the ones related to the other result of the fight such as "victory," "recovering," "survival," "life," and "happiness" are part of the "source domain."

According to Forceville (2013):

What happens in a metaphor is that at least one feature typically associated with the source (and therefore coming from the source domain) is projected (Black) or mapped (Lakoff and Johnson) onto the target. It is important to note that in order to make a metaphor possible in the first place, there must be some sort of resemblance between the target and the source; it is this similarity that is the basis on which the difference between the two can be productive.

In the phrase “Fighting Covid-19,” there is a relationship between virus, the common feature, and war, which leads to “recovery” or the opposite, “death.” In this mental mapping, the virus has connotations such as “killing the enemy” and “being expensive in terms of materials for survival” because the fight reminds us of concepts such as expensive weapons and equipment, deaths, injuries, victims, and misery. The weapons and the equipment used in the fight with the virus are materials such as “masks,” “gloves,” “soaps,” “medicine,” “vaccines,” and “ventilators.” Victory or recovery depends on these concepts. The effort to decrease the death rate is metaphorized with the word “fight.”

Forceville indicates that “There is thus usually a structural relationship between a number of elements in the source domain and corresponding elements in the target domain, which enable the mapping of features from source to target. It is often the structural character of the mapping which makes metaphors interesting.” However, the context in which a metaphor appears should provide us with details about the features that are to be mapped (Forceville, 2013). In his articles, Forceville focuses on “context.” He especially emphasizes that the meaning of “things” change depending on the context.

Forceville (2002) suggests that the following three questions must be answered to define something as a metaphor:

1. Which are the two terms of the metaphor?
2. Which of the two terms is the “source domain,” and which is the “target domain”?
3. Which feature(s) is/are mapped from source domain to target domain?

The first two questions are related to the identification of the metaphor; the third question is completely related to interpretation. Regarding the two terms of the metaphor in “A is B,” A-term is “literal,” and B-term is “figurative” (Forceville, 1994). The situation is also true for plastic arts. While looking for the visual metaphor in a poster, photograph, painting, etc., we must be capable of answering the above three questions. After the artist reveals the target domain and the source domain, the target and the source need to be mapped comprehensively. It is observed that sequential and compositional mappings are created here. Artists are free in these choices, and it is these choices that make their works valuable.

### **Visual Metaphor and Its Types**

Forceville (2016), in his article named “Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphor,” divides visual texts into two as “static discourses,” such as paintings, photographs, and graphics,

and "dynamic discourses," such as films which involve movement. Another distinction that should be taken into consideration in the interpretation of visual metaphors is related to the metaphors being monomodal or multimodal. These terms are explained briefly as follows:

Monomodal metaphors are "metaphors whose target and source are exclusively or predominantly rendered in one mode" whereas multimodal metaphors are "metaphors whose target and source are each represented exclusively or predominantly in different modes" (Forceville, 2006, pp. 383-384). Spoken language, written language, visuals, music, sound, gestures, smell, taste, and touch are all modes. For example, if just the drawings in a visual text are interpreted, this is called a monomodal metaphor. If there is also writing in the visual text besides the drawings, the second mode is encountered, and in this case, the writing should be analyzed as well. It can be stated that there are multimodal metaphors in such a design. There are many modes in films such as sound, image, music, writing, and motion. Therefore, films are dynamic discourses. The researcher should reveal all the modes in the film one by one, and then interpret these metaphors. Yossi Lemel's designs, which constitute the topic of this study, are static discourses. Mostly, they are monomodal, that is, they only consist of drawings. However, some of them include writing or numbers (e.g., dates, number of deaths). The designs in which there are drawings and writing and/or numbers will be interpreted as multimodal metaphors.

Forceville (2016), distinguishes three categories of visual metaphors. These are explained as follows:

### **MP1 or Contextual Metaphor**

The basic principle is that the artist makes something understood as something else by using visual metaphors. In doing this, the context is very important because the same meaning cannot be reached in different contexts.

The meaning of something is constituted depending on the context it is in. Metaphor reaches the target from the source with this context. Forceville, in his article named "Pictorial and Multimodal Metaphor," gives the example of a bag advertisement: The bag is situated on a pedestal in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Figure 5). Normally, there should be a sculpture on that pedestal. This visual metaphor is interpreted as: The visual context of the pedestal is in fact the spatial context of the museum. The ones who have seen and know the museum understand from the background that the place where the bag is the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The prestige, aesthetics, and quality

attached to the sculptures in the museum will be attached to the bag as well. The bag will be seen “as a work of art” that is worth exhibiting in the museum. However, the ones who do not know the museum or who cannot create the context of the museum in their minds cannot make this interpretation (Forceville, 2016).

When the bag is removed from that pedestal and put on the ground of another building or on a bench at the bus stop, the above metaphor cannot be expected to be the source for the same bag. It is now an ordinary, simple, cheap bag, not an expensive and prestigious bag that is worth exhibiting as a work of art in a museum. This remarkable example shows that the same bag can produce different meanings in two different environments.

The appearance of each metaphor changes depending on the environment it is in. Each environment activates certain modes; some environments do not. In short, the context is very important.

In the example above, if the label “Rijksmuseum” was included in the photograph or a plaque was placed under the pedestal on which is written “In memory of the restoration of the Rijksmuseum,” undoubtedly, it would lead to multimodal variety (Forceville, 2016). The word “museum” would help the ones who do not know the museum and cannot realize the context.

### **MP2 or Hybrid Metaphor**

“Two objects that are normally distinct entities are physically merged into a single ‘gestalt’” (Forceville, 2008). In other words, target and source are physically integrated. Forceville, in “Metaphor in Pictures and Multimodal Representations,” gives the example of the advertisement for the Dutch supermarket chain Albert Heijn. In this advertisement, clogs are merged with running shoes. What is seen in the visual is neither clogs nor running shoes. The clogs metonymically refer to the farmer who harvests the spinach. The running shoes refer to “speed” in the connotation. We understand that the spinach is harvested fast and keeps its vitamin (Forceville, 2008, pp. 465-466).

Another example is the advertisement for a relaxing herbal tea (Figure 6) (Douwe Egberts Hornimans Herbal Tea). The tea bag is resembled to be a pillow. The designer metaphorically tells that this tea helps with getting a comfortable sleep. The thing seen in the visual is not truly a tea bag, nor is it truly a pillow. The designer merges these two phenomena physically. This is a very creative application because two separate phenomena occupy the same place physically, which is impossible; and a new visual metaphor comes up: Hybrid metaphor. In fact, there is no such visual; the artist creates it.

## **Pictorial Simile**

As Forceville explains, "In this subtype, the target is saliently compared to a source, which it resembles in one way or the other. This can be done visually by various means: for instance, by juxtaposing target and source, by presenting them in the same form or posture, by depicting them with the same attention-drawing color or in the same style, by lighting them identically-or by any combination of these" (Forceville, 2016). Forceville gives the example of the advertisement for a Nespresso coffee machine. The machine is juxtaposed to a New York-like skyline. A coffee machine that looks like a skyscraper between skyscrapers. The intended mapping in this advertisement is to invoke the idea that the design of the coffee machine is "high technology just like the skyscrapers." The buildings and the machine are placed together as resembling each other (Forceville, 2016).

Another example is the advertisement for an Italian brand espresso coffee (Figure 7) (Real Italian Coffee). Dirty coffee cups are put on one another like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, waiting to be washed. This form is associated with the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and therefore with Italy, and not with Americano or Turkish coffee but with espresso which is an Italian coffee.

Apart from the types mentioned above, there are two more types of metaphor that Forceville defines. However, since they are used in the analysis of dynamic discourses, including multimodal metaphors (films, animations, games, 3D objects, etc.), they are not included in the present study.

### **"Like" and "As"**

Both metaphors and similes make comparisons and point out the similarity between two distinct entities. While metaphors make direct comparisons and say something is something else, similes say something is like something else. For instance, "Love is a battlefield" is a metaphor whereas "Love is like a battlefield" is a simile.

Similes draw resemblance with the help of the words "like" or "as." These words are not used in metaphors; however, when the resemblance between two things is expressed in a verbal or visual metaphor, thinking with "like" or "as" will help us to understand the similarity between those two things. This can be applied to the above-mentioned metaphors: "the bag is as valuable as a sculpture at the museum," "the coffee cups are like the Leaning Tower of Pisa," "the coffee machine is like the spectacular skyscrapers in New York," "clogs (referring the farmer who harvests the spinach) are fast like running shoes," and "the tea bag is like a pillow."

For a conceptual relationship to be qualified as a metaphor, the formula “A is B” should be taken into account by both the artist and the researcher that analyzes the text or the reader.

In short, the words “like” and “as” help us to understand and interpret the resemblance both in verbal and visual metaphors.

## **Metonymy**

Derived from the Greek “metonymia,” “metonymy” consists of the affixes “meta” (beyond, among) and “onyma” (name) and refers to the replacement of the name of something with something else. It is saying a concept with another concept to which it is related or linked. For example, “He drank the whole bottle” (bottle refers to the liquid it contains). In metonymy, the whole is replaced by part. “Metaphor is principally a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another, and its primary function is understanding. Metonymy ... allows us to use one entity to stand for another. But metonymy is not merely a referential device. It also serves the function of providing understanding” (Lakoff & Johnson, 2005, p. 61). As similarly defined by Gibbs, Kövecses, Taylor, and Wales, “like metaphor, metonymy thus pertains to a relation between two phenomena, but whereas in metaphor the relation straddles what in the given context are to be understood as two different domains, a metonymy involves only one conceptual domain, in that the mapping or connection between two things is within the same domain” (as cited in Forceville, 2009, p. 59). The formula used for metaphors as “Target is the source” (A is B) turns into “Source is for target” (B for A) in metonymies.

The picture of the Eiffel Tower makes us think of Paris, or the picture of Anıtkabir (Atatürk’s Monumental Tomb) reminds us of Ankara. These well-known tourist attractions are metonymies for those cities. While metaphor conveys meanings from one domain to another, metonymy uses only one part of the domain to define a larger whole. Both metaphors and metonymies are associations. Metaphors make this association through resemblance, whereas metonymies express association through contiguity and possession. In metonymies, the context must be provided correctly, and the things that are trying to be told must be clearly definable. Otherwise, the reader cannot understand that text. You cannot place the Leaning Tower of Pisa in a picture by which you try to imply Paris.

Like metaphors, metonymies are also based on our experiences. The grounding of metonymic concepts is clearer and evident compared to metaphors. It is possible to say that metonymies correspond to more concrete and physical concepts in comparison

with metaphors. An object can be interpreted both as a metaphor and a metonymy. For example, a white coat can be interpreted as a doctor in a metonymy; but the same white coat can also be a metaphor meaning hygiene or life saver.

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

It can be affirmed that the visual texts woven with metaphors and metonymies have strong connotations and require high creativity. How do the artists think metaphorically and metonymically? How do they reflect it in the visual texts? How do the researchers or ordinary readers notice the visual metaphors and metonymies in these texts full with connotations? This analysis attempts to present the answers to these questions.

In semiotic analyses, the interpretation of signs involves distinguishing the signifier and the signified, and the signs should also be defined in metalanguage. What is the thing to be interpreted called terminologically? Is it a metaphor? Is a metonymy? Is it a visual oxymoron? Is it a symbol? Is it a code? Considering that these terms have sub-types as well, it can be concluded that semiotic analysis is not an easy method. Visual texts should be analyzed precisely.

The scope of the study is limited to visual metaphors and metonymies. Three types of visual metaphors have been explained. These are contextual metaphors, hybrid metaphors, and pictorial similes. Whether the visual text to be analyzed is a static discourse or a dynamic discourse should be determined. Visual texts such as photographs, paintings, posters, and caricatures are static discourses whereas the visual texts involving movement, such as films and animations, are dynamic discourses. The next thing to be revealed is whether the metaphors in the visual text are monomodal or multimodal. If the text consists only of drawings, it is monomodal; the drawings are interpreted. However, if writing is also included in the text besides drawings, it is multimodal; the connotations of the writing have to be interpreted as well. Yossi Lemel's posters in which he used the image of Covid-19 have been analyzed in this study. How can an image that nobody knew until 2020 gain recognition in a short time and be a theme for art? How can it be woven with metaphors and metonymies and conceptualized? The aim of this study is to explain the concepts of metaphor and metonymy and to show how they can be revealed in visual texts with the theme of the coronavirus.

## FINDINGS

The famous Spanish writer Cervantes created an unforgettable character with the book he wrote in 1605: *Don Quixote*. Since then, the images of the hero on his horse with a spear in his hand going to fight windmills which he sees as monsters have been used in the visual culture so much that it has become iconographic in the collective memory<sup>1</sup>.

This design (Figure 8) is a static discourse (graphic design) and a monomodal metaphor. The artist evidently refers to *Don Quixote* and the windmill with his drawing, and this is understood by many people who know the story. In the metaphor “Fighting Covid-19,” the mental mapping is created with the story of *Don Quixote*. Today, people fight Covid-19, *Don Quixote* fights the windmills. The ones who have read the story can know what constitutes the source domain. A thin, middle-aged man; a suit of armor, a shield, and a lance; a weak skinny horse (*Rocinante*); *Sancho Panza*; windmills; knights; castles; etc. In this design, pictorial simile has been used. *Don Quixote* represents today’s people; the windmill represents the coronavirus. The windmill can also be interpreted alone as a hybrid metaphor. Two objects, the windmill and the coronavirus, are merged into the same physical environment, which is impossible. “Coronavirus is *like* the windmill.”

For a deeper reading, the reason why *Don Quixote* fights the windmills should be considered. He fights to defeat the evil, to save the oppressed, and to help people because he imagines himself as a knight and the windmills as monsters. The fight includes many things: victory, death, injury, weapons and equipment, armor, lances, shields. The fight with the coronavirus also includes deaths, recovery, warriors (doctors and nurses), their shields (special coveralls), masks, vaccine, medicine, etc. These are the mappings between the target domain and the source domain. While *Don Quixote* represents dreams, the windmills represent the reality. Today’s people’s fight with the coronavirus is like *Don Quixote*’s fight with the windmills. Covid-19 is real. Is it a natural virus or an artificial virus created in a laboratory? Even though it is not known, it is a real threat that should be diminished. The windmill, *Don Quixote*, Cervantes composition reminds the audience of Spain. These concepts mentally correspond to Spain. The target is directly Spain, not another country. It can be suggested that the artist has particularly chosen Spain as it is one of the countries with the highest death rates during the coronavirus pandemic. The novel *Don Quixote* is the metaphor of the happening of things that cannot happen, in other words, experiencing things that can only happen in our dreams. This is what has been happening since the beginning of

2020: living the things that can only be seen in dreams or films (social order, life style, fashion, etc.). It really requires creativity to link experiencing the things that can never be thought to happen to Don Quixote by pictorial simile.

This design (Figure 9) is a static discourse and a monomodal metaphor consisting of only drawing. The artist has used "pictorial simile" and "contextual metaphor." This simple home drawing is the image of a happy and peaceful home. With its triangle roof, it entirely symbolizes peace. Its color being white indicates that happy and healthy people live in it and that it needs to be protected. Infinite number of houses could have been drawn, but Lemel has used the simplest one among them, the one that firstly comes to mind, the one that evokes the phrase "home sweet home" (we see this phrase on souvenirs), and the one that even little children think of drawing. The image of a red heart is placed in the middle of the house. Generally, the heart image connotes love. However, the context here is changed. This heart connotes survival and life (because the deadly virus is outside). The artist does not refer to love, and the researcher should not interpret it as love. This heart is a very good example of "contextual metaphor." It is clearly seen that the meaning of a metaphor which is universally agreed upon to connote love has changed depending on the context. On the other hand, the images of Covid-19 in the design are greater in number. Just like snowflakes, they fall over the house and surround it. Their color being black is of course related to evil, the enemy, and death. An enemy that threatens us with death is outside the house and has pervaded everywhere. The artist has used pictorial simile here. Snowflakes invoke the coronavirus. The coronavirus falls over us *like* snow. Normally, the snow is white; it cleans the world; however, the artist seems to have used black on purpose. Associations out of visual oxymorons are significant signs as well. It is also possible to interpret the coronavirus images as rain drops; however, since they surround the house, they invoke snowflakes in the first place. In order to construct the concepts of death and danger outside the house and the concepts of life and happiness inside the house, an oppositeness relation has been created skillfully between the image of the heart and the image of the coronavirus. These oppositeness and similarities increase the connotations and the artistic value of the designs. Remembering that, when the virus threat arose, everybody retreated into their homes; education and work continued online from homes; lockdowns started; and slogans such as "stay at home" were publicized by governments, it can easily be suggested that these concepts have been embodied in this design. Thus, Yossi Lemel posted this design on Instagram with the #stayhome, #staythefuckhome, #coronavirus, #curfew, #protect, and #homesweethome hashtags. When these words are included in the interpretation, it means that a multimodal metaphor is being

analyzed. Just like interpreting the phrase “#homesweethome” above as the writing on souvenirs.

This design (Figure 10) is a static discourse and a monomodal metaphor. The artist has evidently drawn the Statue of Liberty in New York. The Statue of Liberty, one of the most famous monuments in the world, has been a landmark of America since 1886. The statue holds a torch in her right hand and a tablet in her left hand. The crown on her head symbolizes the continents. The Statue of Liberty is a metonymy. It is New York that is wanted to be conveyed so the Statue of Liberty is selected from the source domain and placed in the text. We cannot call this city Rome. The monument is associated with New York. “Pictorial simile” and “hybrid metaphor” have been used. Instead of the torch in the statue’s hand, the scythe in the hand of the death angel has been placed. With the scythe figure, the woman figure has turned into the Angel of Death. Death is the connotation of the Angel of Death. Thus, as to make the target domain associate death, the Angel of Death along with a part of it, the scythe (the scythe is at the same time a metonymy, based on part-whole relationship) has been selected from the source domain. The woman that is the Statue of Liberty is replaced by the Angel of Death; the torch is replaced by a scythe. If she did not have a scythe in her hand, it could not be interpreted as the Angel of Death, therefore death. The scythe is both a pictorial simile and a metonymy. Its color being black metaphorically refers to death and evil. The crown of the statue is designed as the image of Covid-19. The spikes of the crown refer to the continents. Moreover, “corona” means crown in Latin. The spikes on the outer edge of the coronavirus are merged with the spikes of the crown revealing a hybrid metaphor. It conveys that the virus has spread to all the continents; in other words, it refers to the pandemic (worldwide epidemic). There have been many deaths in New York because of the pandemic. The artist conveys that coronavirus dominates New York and the whole world (because of the crown), and “it stands over the city *like* the Angel of Death.”

Lemel has used Superman, Wonder Woman, and Batman, that were created by DC Comics, one of the biggest comics companies in the US, in separate designs. These are superheroes. One of the designs related with superheroes can be interpreted as follows:

A superhero is the general name given to a person who has powers to do the things that ordinary people cannot and uses these powers for the sake of society. They also have a secret identity and a special costume and accessories (Seçmen, 2014, p. 23). In the comics and the films, Superman is a journalist. His secret identity here is a doctor. In this design (Figure 11), it is understood from the posture (his hands on his waist, his muscled arms, etc.) and the cape of the shadow behind the doctor that the doctor

(secret identity) is Superman. The shadow invokes a superhero from popular culture known by everybody through a “pictorial metaphor.” A nameless doctor has been concretized in this way. The topic, that is, the target is the doctor, and Superman is something else, that is, the source (A is B). Superman diminishes the threats against the world by stopping earthquakes, floods, nuclear wars, and the ones who try to destroy humanity; he brings peace and security to the world. The destroyed cities are restored at the end of the films. Superman films (like other superhero films) are always grounded in a threat against the whole world. In 2020, the world is threatened by Covid-19 with massive deaths. News concerning the reduction of the population has circulated. Just like in films, it is also rumored that the virus is human-made. Consequently, a superhero is needed to save the world. Doctors are the ones who have been fighting at the front line. A white coat and mask is the metonymy building the concept of a doctor in our minds. The posture of the shadow and the cape also associates Superman metonymically. The image of the coronavirus is under the doctor’s feet like a spotlight. Furthermore, unlike other designs, the image is designed white for the first time. Here, the color white is a sign that blesses the profession and the doctor and underlines the heroic deed of the doctor over and over again. The doctor is illuminated with this light, and his shadow falls at the back as Superman. In this visual metaphor the image of coronavirus is merged with the spotlight (hybrid metaphor). It is also seen that the doctor works on Covid-19, and he is the closest person to the corona threat.

The design is a static discourse and a monomodal metaphor. “The doctor is *as* strong as superman,” “The doctor is a superhero *like* Superman.”

*World War Z* is a zombie film directed by Marc Foster in 2013 starring Brad Pitt. The writing on the poster metaphorically directs the researcher to this film. The design should be interpreted as a static discourse and a multimodal metaphor. Lemel posted this film poster (Figure 12a) together with the poster of the original film (Figure 12b) in the same place. Brad Pitt plays the leading role in the original film, and Covid-19 plays the leading role in *World War C*. The film is released in “March 2020.” From this writing on the poster, it is understood that with the Covid-19 pandemic “we have been in a film *like* a zombie film” since March 2020. In the design, a syringe tries to destroy the coronavirus increasing in masses (vaccination). The syringe is likened to the military helicopter. Pictorial metaphor has been used. In the original poster, zombies climb on each other and manage to reach a helicopter. They are very strong and fast. They can only be killed by being shot in the head. Ones who are familiar with zombie films will see the coronavirus images as the heads of the zombies. The syringe is like a firing helicopter (vaccination). Zombie films are a subgenre of horror films. In order to be

saved, one must “go in somewhere” and hide. There must be something to eat at home; otherwise, the heroes need to go out to find some food. When they find a market or an empty house, they take the things they find there and bring them to where they hide. Outside the house is very dangerous; there are zombies everywhere. This information brings to mind the slogan “stay at home,” which is included in our conceptual world (source domain) related to Covid-19. Moreover, when the pandemic started, we had seen that shopping centers were looted (even in the most modern societies) all over the world, people bought more than they needed without thinking of the others which was a sign of selfishness. Zombies are a metaphor for the problems of the world, such as global warming, environmental pollution, or consumption madness. Since the 1970s, these problems have been approaching slowly and increasing like zombies. In each film production, zombies are getting faster. In 2013 film *World War Z*, they can climb walls and run very fast, much like the increase in global warming, environmental pollution, or consumption madness that cannot be controlled. It is believed that choosing the color red in all the selected designs is just because it is a striking, attention-drawing color.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Firstly, how the picture of a real Covid-19 turned into an image has been shown in the study. Some images which are very familiar universally have more familiarity than their actual appearance, like the heart image. It can easily be suggested that the Covid-19 image, which we have been introduced to in 2020, also has more universal familiarity than its real-life appearance. An image is the ideational copy of the things that can be perceived by sense organs. The graphic artist Yossi Lemel has created his image of the coronavirus and has used it in his designs ornamented with visual metaphors and metonymies. He has reflected the source domain terms that are constituted in our minds related to the coronavirus such as masks, vaccines, medicine, social distance, staying at home, etc. (we have already learnt about them through experience) in 50 designs. Only five of these designs have been interpreted in the study. Considering the terminology of semiotic analyses, the scope of the study is limited to visual metaphors and metonymies. The fact that “A, in fact, conveys B” in metaphors is explained with many examples. The visual metaphors and metonymies that the artist (creator) weaves into the visual texts are full of meanings. They reflect the mapping between the target domain and the source domain in the artist’s mind. Metaphors build up totally new meanings with distinct mappings between these two domains.

The study is based specifically on Forceville's definitions concerning the types of visual metaphors and Max Black's interaction theory. In the light of this theoretical background, it has been put forward that in order to find and interpret visual metaphors and metonymies in a visual text, first, the text should be identified as a static or a dynamic discourse. Then, the modalities in the text should be checked. If a single mode, for example, only drawing or only a photographic image is used, the text is monomodal. However, if it also contains writing, sound, music, or movement, multimodal metaphors can be found. All the existing modes should be interpreted one by one. Drawing, camera angles, sounds, and music should be interpreted one by one. It should be remembered that even silence has a meaning. When a metaphor is detected, which distinct things the artist replaced with others between the target and the source domain should be considered (For example, in the Statue of Liberty, the torch in the hand of the woman figure is replaced with the scythe of the Angel of Death). In fact, while interpreting, the researcher starts to think like the artist and tries to discover what the artist intended to tell/how the artist intended to tell it.

As pointed out above, visual metaphors and metonymies are related to meaning, and they are among the fundamental means of producing meaning and interpreting the produced meaning. Roman Jakobson, as cited in Rifat, indicates that we perform two operations in speech. The speaker, on the one hand, selects among the linguistic units that are associated with each other in some aspects, that are substitutable (there is similarity between these units) and, on the other, combines the selected units in a way that gradually gets more complex (there is contiguity between these units). This involves the operations of selection and combination (Rifat, 2017, p. 40). This is also the case for semiotics, which are rooted in linguistics. While constructing the visual text, the artist, just like in syntax, selects and combines the visuals, and the researcher separates and interprets them one by one. According to Margot van Mulken and her colleagues, "understanding relatively difficult visual metaphors does not lead to an enhanced appreciation of the [design]" (as cited in Forceville, 2016). The important thing is to make the reader notice and understand the visual metaphor at once. Using Forceville's method, several researchers have conducted studies on different visual texts such as photographs, advertisements, caricatures, animations, films, and sculptures (Kennedy, 2008; Eggertsson & Forceville, 2020; Kashanizadeh & Forceville, 2020; Schilperoord & Maes, 2009; Alousque, 2015; Klug & Stöckl, 2016; Cienki & Müller, 2008; Coëgnarts & Kravanja, 2012; Forceville & Renckens, 2013; etc.). It is believed that the visual language full of connotations which he skillfully uses underlies Yossi Lemel's success as a graphic artist.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In 1955, in celebration of the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the novel, a sketch of Don Quixote by Pablo Picasso was featured on the August 18-24 issue of the French weekly journal *Les Lettres Françaises*. The drawing is interesting because the sun is foregrounded instead of the windmill. In the drawing, Don Quixote is looking down on four windmills from far.

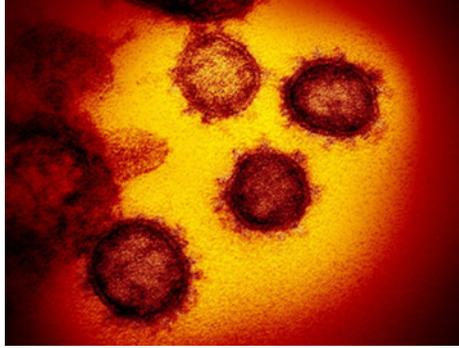
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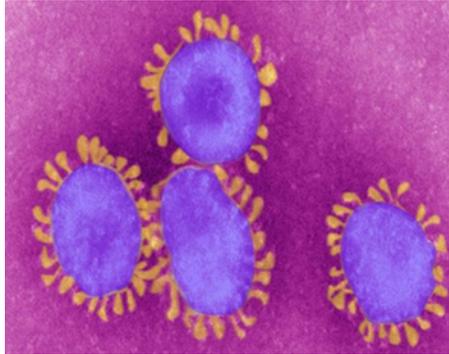
## TABLES AND FIGURES

**Figure 1:** Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

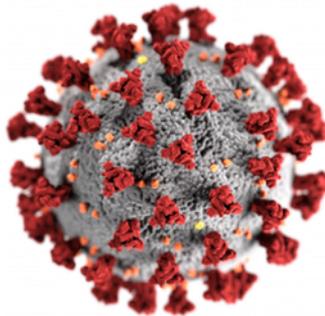


**Note:** From *Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2* [Photograph], by NIAID, 2020, Flickr (<https://flickr.com/photos/niaid/49530315718>). CC BY 2.0.

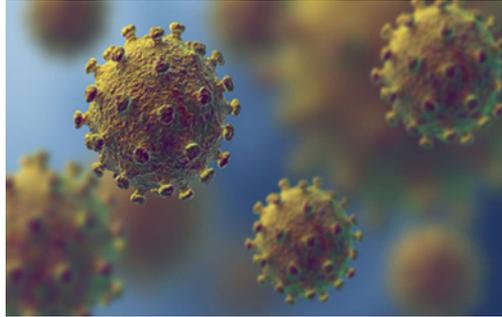
**Figure 2:** Electron Microscope Image of SARS-CoV-2



**Figure 3:** Covid-19 Illustration



**Figure 4:** Covid-19 Illustration



**Figure 5:** MP1 or Contextual Metaphor Example (“bag is like a sculpture”)



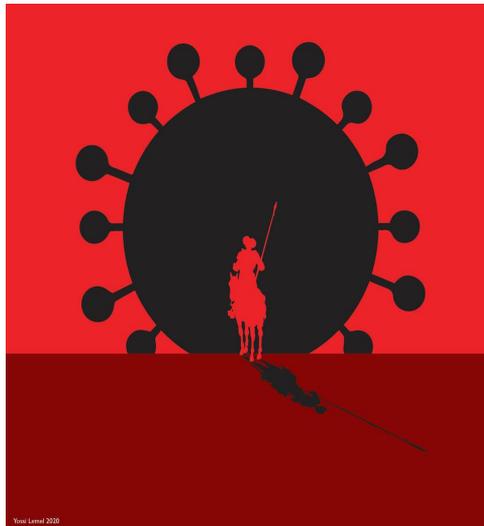
**Figure 6:** MP2 or Hybrid Metaphor Example “relaxing herbal tea bag is like a pillow”



**Figure 7:** Pictorial Simile Example “coffee cups are like the Leaning Tower of Pisa”



**Figure 8:** Don Quixote and the windmill (#horsmenoftheapocalypse #donquixote)



**Figure 9:** A heart at home and images of Covid-19 (#stayhome #homesweethome)



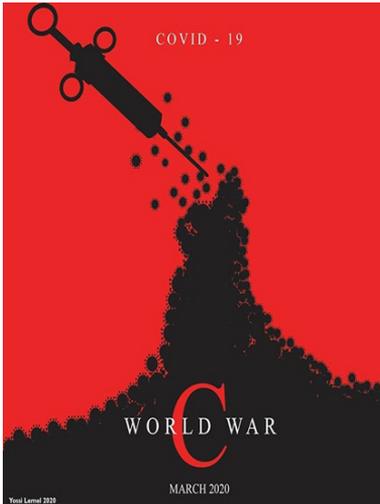
**Figure 10:** The Statue of Liberty in New York and the scythe (#newyorkcity #plague)



**Figure 11:** The doctor, the spotlight, and the shadow of Superman (#superhero #doctors)



**Figure 12a-b:** The poster of a film named *World War C* (#worldwar3memes #worldwarC)



**Note:** Both are posted in the same place on Instagram

