Metaphor as Argument: Rhetorical and Epistemic Advantages of Extended Metaphors

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Abstract This paper examines from a cognitive perspective the rhetorical and epistemic advantages that can be gained from the use of (extended) metaphors in political discourse. We defend the assumption that extended metaphors can be argumentatively exploited, and provide two arguments in support of the claim. First, considering that each instantiation of the metaphorical mapping in the text may function as a confirmation of the overall relevance of the main core mapping, we argue that extended metaphors carry self-validating claims that increase the chances of their content being accepted. Second, we show how the recognition of an extended metaphor's sophistication and relevance (on behalf of the addressee) can benefit the speaker's perceived competence (ethos). We then assess whether these two arguments measure against the dual epistemic monitoring postulated in the notion of epistemic vigilance (i.e., assessment of the source of a message and assessment of the message) and conclude that extended metaphors may fulfil the requirements of epistemic vigilance and lead to the stabilisation of a belief. We illustrate our account with an analysis of the extended metaphor of the USA as an empire found in a political pamphlet written by the Swiss politician Oskar Freysinger.

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1 Introduction

Metaphors have long been considered to function as rhetorical devices fulfilling strategic goals in argumentative exchanges. As many rhetorical figures, they are believed to be particularly effective, sometimes more than literal formulations, when it comes to convincing an audience. This paper takes this claim seriously and attempts to examine, from an argumentative perspective informed by cognitive insights about information-processing, the extent to which metaphors—and in particular extended metaphors—may bring about epistemic effects geared to positively affect message acceptance.

The purpose of this paper is to assess the argumentative potential of extended metaphors,[1] in particular when these are used in political discourse to metaphorically represent entities of the world. Specifically, we will contend that multiple instantiations of the conceptual properties of a same metaphorical construal can fulfil an argumentative function: recurring exploitations of a metaphor can indeed be argumentatively articulated so as to converge towards the justification of the proposed metaphorical construal in some sort of confirmational dynamics, so much so that the metaphor may cease to be perceived as one, turning what was at first metaphorically construed into a representation about an actual state of affairs one can believe to be true. By combining this conception of metaphor as argument with recent work on *epistemic vigilance* in cognitive anthropology and psychology (see Sperber et al. 2010), we will try to characterise the rhetorical advantages offered by the structure of extended metaphors in terms of speaker *ethos* but also in terms of the epistemic strength of the content of the message. In other words, we will try to cognitively ground the claim that the careful construction of an extended metaphor may positively impact speaker credibility and trustworthiness but also the audience's perception of the truth of the message. We will illustrate these two arguments with the analysis of a pamphlet published on the website of Oskar Freysinger, a member of the National Council of Switzerland (the lower house of the Federal Assembly) and a representative of the conservative right-wing party *Union Démocratique du Centre*. In this pamphlet, Freysinger weaves the metaphor of the USA as an empire. We will show that the way the extended metaphor is constructed can be described as an argumentative strategy whose outcome is to convince the audience that the USA is actually literally an empire, and therefore that action should be undertaken for protection.

Our account is meant to explain how extended metaphors can constitute powerful argumentative devices. However, we will neither claim that extended metaphors are necessarily argumentative, nor that they cannot fulfil other functions. We focus on contexts in which speakers pursue legitimising goals and our account should therefore be understood as describing and explaining some strategies that can unfold within said contexts.

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[1] As a preliminary note, let us state that we will not claim here that all extended metaphors are necessarily convincing. Rather, we discuss their potential as an argumentative strategy speakers can opt for in discursive contexts where they want to convince an audience; we will show how this can be done, in light of the analysis of a political pamphlet where an extended metaphor is exploited throughout the text to ground a specific standpoint.

From an epistemological perspective, we adopt Relevance Theory's account of meaning construction (see for instance Sperber and Wilson 1995; Carston 2002), which, as far as metaphor is concerned and contrary to a widespread belief, is compatible to a certain extent with the cognitive linguistic account of metaphors (see Wilson 2011; Gibbs and Tendahl 2006). Following Wilson (2011), who highlights interfaces between both theories, even if the notion of conceptual mapping is not "essential to either the production or interpretation of metaphors" (2011, p. 53), we do believe that it can be contextually relevant for an addressee to represent such mappings as he processes metaphors, in particular extended and novel metaphors which are not instances of conceptual metaphors such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY, ARGUING IS FIGHTING or TIME IS SPACE, as our analysis will show.[2] In other words, we posit that the hearer might be led to consider in specific contexts which invite him to do so, and particularly when processing extended metaphors, that the metaphor maps (i.e., systematically establishes correspondences between) representations, thereby inviting him to construe one conceptual domain (the target domain) in terms of the properties of another representation (the source domain).[3] In other words, we consider that extended metaphors can typically make a particular metaphorical *mapping* relevant, even more so when what is at stake is an explicit assessment of the proposed metaphorical construal. Underlying our study is also the general assumption that an account of how people process and understand language—and in the case at hand, metaphorical language—is a first step in accounting for the mechanisms governing belief fixation in communicative exchanges. To sum it up in two key-words, we will focus on the relationship between *understanding* and *believing* and accordingly try to highlight the importance of comprehension with respect to beliefs (see also Oswald 2011).

Section 2 reviews some aspects of metaphor processing and motivates the following assumptions: (1) extended metaphors may fulfil an argumentative function and can be used to self-legitimate their conceptual mapping, the consequence of which could be a literalisation of the metaphor and (2) they simultaneously positively impact perceived speaker competence. Section 3 illustrates the suggested account with the analysis of an extended metaphor contained in Freysinger's pamphlet. Section 4 summarises the arguments advanced to this end and concludes on the relevance of cognitive insights to argumentation studies and discourse analysis more generally.

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[2] We adopt the conventional notation by which speakers are referred to as females and addressees as males.

[3] This is why we will occasionally use the traditional terminology of Cognitive Linguistics with the following definitions: a conceptual domain is defined as "any coherent organization of experience" (Kovecses 2002, p. 4); the source domain as "the conceptual domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions to understand another conceptual domain" (ibid.) and the target domain as "the conceptual domain that is understood this way" (ibid.). The term 'mapping' denotes a "set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of B [the source] correspond to constituent elements of A [the target]" (ibid., p. 7).

2 Metaphors, Meaning, Discourse and Argumentation

2.1 Metaphor and Meaning: Costs and Benefits

There is a great deal of experimental work on the nature of metaphor processing (see Gibbs and Tendahl 2006 for a review). In particular, quite some effort has been devoted to exploring the issue of whether metaphor processing is cognitively costly, and whether the conventional or novel nature of metaphors influences processing effort.

Noveck et al. (2001) and Glucksberg (2001), among others, have shown that conventional metaphors are relatively unproblematic in processing terms: their comprehension does not require significantly longer reading times compared to literal equivalents. One could thus suspect that the degree of conventionality of a given metaphor may play a significant role in the derivation of its meaning. Conventional metaphors might be easily accessible mainly because the same encyclopaedic information has been selected over time as they have been repeatedly processed, which could also be interpreted in terms of the familiarity and salience of their conventional meaning (see Giora 1999). In turn, this would suggest that conventional metaphors convey lexicalised meanings.[4] For instance, if the interpretation of (1)—which is conventionally interpreted as meaning something like (2)—

(1)   Jeffrey is a clown
(2)   Jeffrey is a joker

is not particularly costly in terms of processing effort, this is presumably because being a joker, among other things, is part of the intension of 'clown'; the metaphor's conventionality is somehow determined by the accessibility to a prototypical relation (here, the information that clowns are supposed to be jokers by definition). In that respect, the way conventional metaphors are processed does not significantly depart from the way literal language is processed.

It could be argued that novel metaphors, on the other hand, can differ from conventional ones in two ways: (1) the relevant features involved in the representation are not those which are normally selected; (2) the relevant conceptual properties involved in their interpretation may be completely unexpected, which forces the hearer to build up a representation from conceptual properties that have not previously been mobilised together. To illustrate this last point, imagine that (1) is uttered in a context involving a discussion about Jeffrey's shoe size: in such a scenario the hearer is led to reassess the metaphorical potential of 'clown' in order to single out a less salient property such as a clown's unusually big shoe size, which

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[4] Wilson notes that the process of ad hoc concept formation—which is taken to characterise metaphor processing—is the same for both lexicalised and non-lexicalised metaphors: "The adjustment process may be a spontaneous, one-off affair, involving the construction of an 'ad hoc' concept which is used once and then forgotten; or it may be regularly and frequently followed, by a few people or a group, until, over time, the resulting 'ad hoc' concept may stabilise in a community and give rise to an extra lexicalised sense (Sperber and Wilson 1998; Vega Moreno 2007; Wilson and Carston 2007)" (Wilson 2011, p. 52).

will allow him to infer that Jeffrey has unusually big feet. In this case, metaphorical creativity is defined by the fact that the properties selected in the source domain are not lexically the most salient ones, and therefore not the most accessible within the concept's intension. Arguably, novel metaphors inherit their creativity from the fact that the particular metaphorical operation they call for has seldom, if never, been processed before.

Under this view, the cognitive operations involved in the comprehension of both conventional and novel or creative metaphors are of the same kind. What distinguishes them is whether the information sets required for their interpretation are the ones that are usually mobilised or not. This, however, is not sufficient to conclude that conventionality entails ease of processing and novelty the opposite (see Gibbs and Tendahl 2006). This is because metaphors hardly ever have to be interpreted in neutral contexts. In fact, strong contextual constraints (such as thematic constraints for instance) will generate expectations about the type of contents that will be contextually relevant at a given time. These constraints may very well facilitate metaphor processing, even in cases of novel metaphor. To go back to example (1), it seems reasonable to assume that in a conversation about the size of people's feet, (1) will not cause particular interpretative problems and straightforwardly lead to the interpretation that Laszlo has big feet, precisely because in such conversation participants are expected to contribute information that is relevant to the topic. In Gibbs and Tendahl's terms, "it will be the context that determines how quickly we can process a metaphorical utterance of whatever kind" (2006, p. 396). The importance of context in the interpretation of metaphors thus seems to suggest that, more than processing effort, it is the nature of the information sets selected to perform interpretative tasks that determines ease of processing.

In our analysis we will take extended metaphors as a case in point and argue that their processing triggers significant cognitive effort on the addressee's behalf—if only because many different properties of the same core metaphorical construal need to be cumulatively processed throughout the text. As we adopt a relevance-theoretic perspective on the issue (as per Sperber and Wilson 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2012; Carston 2002), we will consider that the cognitive cost of the procedure has to be offset by some sort of benefit;[5] in the case of extended metaphors argumentatively exploited, for instance in political discourse, we suggest that this benefit can amount to the fulfilment of expectations about the argumentative purpose of the metaphor.

Relevance Theory (henceforth RT) distinguishes the interpretative procedure metaphors trigger (which is not idiosyncratic) from the effects they produce (which show some particularities, especially when the metaphor is novel). On the processing side, and similarly to literal approximations, the interpretation of

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[5] Relevance theory postulates that human cognition is governed by a principle of relevance according to which information is processed following a cost/benefit dynamics. One of the fundamental claims of the account is that establishing the relevance of any verbal input consumes cognitive resources and yields cognitive benefits such as the improvement of one's knowledge of the world (see Sperber and Wilson 1995). Relevance is therefore defined here in terms of balance between processing effort and cognitive effect.

metaphors is taken to rely on a lexical loosening device, which widens the word's literal denotation in order to make for the designation of a neighbouring concept. This mechanism, along with its narrowing counterpart in cases of meaning specification, is referred to as ad hoc concept formation (see e.g., Carston 2002, 2010; Wilson 2003). On this view, lexical meaning—including metaphorical meaning—is said to accommodate contextual constraints of relevance so that the specific intended meaning communicated by the metaphor is able to vary alongside contextual variation. As Carston puts it, "the description of such concepts as 'ad hoc' reflects the fact that they are not linguistically given, but are constructed online (on the fly) in response to specific expectations of relevance raised in specific contexts" (Carston 2002, p. 322).

On this account, ad hoc concepts are taken to be constructed in order to satisfy expectations of relevance in the meaning derivation procedure of lexical items: the lexical meaning of a concept thus becomes a pragmatic function of context, which is determined by the communicative needs of the speaker in every communicative exchange. The first cognitive benefit of the cognitive mechanism of ad hoc concept formation therefore has to be interpreted in terms of its contribution to the identification of speaker meaning. This perspective is in particular the one advocated by Noveck et al. (2001), who evaluate the cognitive benefits of metaphor in terms of better comprehension. Such a benefit is particularly straightforward in the case of conventional metaphors: their comprehension amounts to the derivation of a stable and predictable meaning, and since the latter is conventional, it can be taken to be derived pretty much the same way stable and predictable meanings are derived from literal approximations.

The effects produced by novel and creative (or poetic) metaphors in particular can be more complex and somewhat different. The relevance-theoretic model of lexical pragmatics holds in this respect that creative metaphors can be responsible for the generation of an array of *weak implicatures*. These are implicit contents which express a speaker's complex thought efficiently and faithfully, but which are identified as being intended by the speaker only with a low degree of reliability (see Blakemore 1992, pp. 128–132 and Sperber and Wilson 1995, pp. 197–202 for a discussion). In particular, the grounds on which addressees identify weak implicatures are far from strong, and as a consequence it may be fairly tricky for the hearer to ascertain whether the speaker intended to make manifest that she wanted the hearer to identify them as being meant by her. In relevance-theoretic parlance, weak implicatures are contents the communicative intention of which is not mutually manifest (see also Sperber and Wilson 2008). A particularly vivid example of this phenomenon is to be found in creative metaphors in poetic texts: the range of weak implicatures they are likely to license is dependent to a great extent on the addressee's own experience of the text he is reading (and obviously on his general background knowledge, preferences, etc.). Example (3) provides a clear illustration of this:

(3)   "My neighbour is a dragon" (Blakemore 1992, p. 163)

When uttering (3), the speaker may convey that her neighbour is unfriendly and fierce, but additional weak implicatures might also be drawn, such as 'the speaker's

neighbour has the appearance of a dragon' or 'the speaker's neighbour is terrifying beyond imagination'. These are not necessarily publicly endorsed by the speaker, but they would indeed offset processing cost, to the extent that the speaker has manifestly precisely *not* uttered the literal equivalent. Yet, in so doing, she has encouraged the addressee to further process the utterance to discover additional implicit contents. These are contents that "justify the speaker's utterance as the best means of representing his thoughts, and it is these implicatures which explain why even this rather standardized example of metaphor cannot be paraphrased without loss" (Blakemore 1992, pp. 163–164).

Both conventional and creative metaphors achieve relevance by being understood; some of them are furthermore able to trigger weak implicatures, resulting in the derivation of richer meanings. But these are cognitive effects strictly limited to processes of meaning derivation, and, as such, are matters of illocutionary concern. In this paper, we will consider possible *perlocutionary* effects of metaphoric creativity, in particular as to what regards belief fixation, by defending the idea that the relevance of an extended metaphor—through the satisfaction of expectations of relevance that can go beyond comprehension—can positively affect the acceptance of a belief derived from the content of the metaphor.

2.2 The Discursive Nature of Extended Metaphors

Extended metaphors are realised in discourse through the recurring exploitation of the same metaphor at several conceptual levels over a relatively long span of text. Their interpretation, in those cases, can accordingly be seen as an incremental process which gradually enriches the representation as different properties of the source domain successively appear in one form or another throughout the same discourse. A given text or discourse contains an extended metaphor when "a metaphorical field extends through an entire discourse" (Werth 1994, p. 83). They are generally found in poetic and literary works, since they may "express more abstract emotional experiences for which no *sui generis* language exists" (ibid. p. 84). They can nevertheless be used for other purposes, to the extent that they may be used to "make the expression more striking (the 'flowers of rhetoric' approach)" or to allow "the topic to be viewed simultaneously from more than a single perspective" (ibid.). In all three cases, however, extended metaphor can be characterised as involving poetic choice.

From a cognitive pragmatic perspective, such poetic phenomena may be approached through the notion of weak implicature, as seen above, in order to deal with the effects of extended metaphor in terms of meaning potential. As far as cognitive processing is concerned, and assuming that the search for relevant correspondences between the source and target domains can be at the heart of their interpretative process, extended metaphors appear to be demanding in terms of effort, since understanding them and establishing their relevance will require the addressee to perform, if not unexpected conceptual associations, at least multiple ones. Trivially, extended metaphors involve significant cognitive processing because they extend through discourse. Once they are recognised as such, extended metaphors will thus generate expectations for further—and perhaps even full—exploitations of

the conceptual mapping. What an extended metaphor does, then, is encourage the addressee to keep on exploring several aspects of the proposed metaphor in terms of an elaboration of the construal the speaker wants to convey. Extended metaphors can consequently be said to involve complex multi-stage representational operations triggered cumulatively as discourse unfolds.

The processes involved in these representational steps are inferential; that is, they require the hearer to combine information contained in the linguistic form with contextual information in order to derive conclusions in the form of additional, new, representations. From the analysis of an excerpt of *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster, Werth suggests that the inferences required to process the extended metaphor can also lead to the revelation of an "underground metaphor" (Werth 1994, p. 85) which the hearer is supposed to extract from the text. Extended metaphors may therefore provide the grounds for rich inferential work *geared towards the derivation of specific conclusions*. We owe this possibility to the discursive nature of extended metaphors: the conclusions we draw from them "are cumulative, and, crucially, achieved by way of text and discourse processes, rather than sentence processes" (ibid.).

The discursive realisation of the metaphorical elaboration involved in extended metaphors makes it approachable with discourse-analytical tools. Notably, as already highlighted by several scholars (see e.g., Kimmel 2009; Koller 2003), the discursive notion of coherence could be used to describe the way metaphorical operations within a same text can 'hold together', notably in terms of thematic coherence. Interestingly, coherence in itself is a complex notion which can be characterised by means of many different types of relationships between discourse constituents; this is the main tenet of approaches to discourse such as Rhetorical Structure Theory (see Mann and Thompson 1988), which postulates that the relationship of justification is one such relationship of coherence. In other words, argumentation is one way of building coherence. Yet, it has also been argued, from a cognitive perspective, that coherence can be reinterpreted in terms of relevance (see Reboul and Moeschler 1996). Under this view, judgements of coherence follow from the perception of relevance between discourse constituents. Therefore, if the multiple occurrences of an extended metaphor throughout a text are not only mutually relevant but also relevant with respect to the core metaphor exploited in the text, addressees will be drawn to perceive the overall extended metaphor as relevant.

Owing probably to the literary nature of the corpus analysed therein, the research referred to in what precedes tackles little more than effects of *meaning*, even if some do point to the argumentative and persuasive dimension metaphors may exploit (e.g., Koller 2003, p. 120). We argue that in particular cases—for instance in political discourse—extended metaphors are ideally suited to contribute material that can be used for argumentative purposes, this being made possible by the subordination of metaphorical occurrences, throughout the text, to a core metaphor (see Sect. 2.3.2 below for a development of this idea). We suggest that extended metaphors can be used to convince their audience of the truth of certain states of affairs, this in turn making them good candidates to implement persuasive strategies. The various occurrences of an extended metaphor in a text can therefore

be argumentatively used so as to function as a set of justifications for the metaphor in some sort of confirmational dynamics: every occurrence of an additional aspect of the source domain, to the extent that it is mapped onto the target domain in a plausible (see below) manner, may serve as a confirmation of the overall relevance of the initial metaphorical construal.

2.3 Metaphor and Argumentation

2.3.1 Metaphor in Argumentation Theory

Literature on the role of metaphor in argumentation is not very extensive (see Santibáñez 2010). As far as modern-day argumentation theory is concerned, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (2008[1958]) are probably among the researchers who addressed the issue of metaphor in most detail in the twentieth century. Their account of metaphor within argumentation is formulated along the lines of arguments by analogy, thereby making 'argumentative' metaphors a subtype of arguments establishing the structure of reality: "We could not, at this point describe metaphor better than by conceiving of it, at least in what regards argumentation, as a condensed analogy, resulting from the fusion of an element of the *phoros* with an element of the theme" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 2008, p. 535).[6] In the New Rhetoric, metaphors are moreover said to play a complex instrumental role as contents which are used to legitimise analogies, inasmuch as they can "intervene to accredit the analogy" (ibid. p. 536), but also as contents that are derivable on the basis of the analogy itself: "(…) oftentimes the author does not hesitate, during his presentation, to make use of metaphors which have been derived from the proposed analogy, thereby habituating the reader to see things as he [the author] shows them to him" (ibid.).

Although this account is more focused on the argumentative nature of metaphor in terms of argument schemes, it does make room for remarks on the rhetorical advantages of metaphorical discourse, as it also considers that the "fusion of the theme and the *phoros*, which brings their respective domains together, facilitates the realisation of argumentative effects" (ibid.). And crucially, we find an idea here that is very relevant to the purpose of this paper—and which we will echo in cognitive terms further along—, namely the idea that exploiting a mapping between source and target domain at length (i.e., repeatedly) is one way of making the argument stronger in terms of its convincingness: "When, through the development of an analogy, we strive to draw conclusions from the *phoros* that are relevant to the theme, the force of the argument will be more important if, thanks to the fusion of the theme and the *phoros*, we have previously described at length the *phoros* in terms of the theme" (ibid.). Translated in cognitive linguistic terms, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca may be understood to contend that the more you exploit the metaphor, i.e., the more you instantiate your target domain in terms of your source domain in an argument, the stronger the argument. We will also shortly show how this very idea can receive a cognitive reinterpretation in terms of relevance.

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[6] All translations from original texts in French are ours.

Going along the rhetorical path, more recent insights can be found in Plantin's work (2011) on the topic. Following Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Plantin considers that argumentative metaphors rest on a mechanism of analogy, and that extended metaphors in particular are to be construed as specific forms of structural analogy, whereby "the argumentative operation consists in drawing the sceptic's attention to the fact that 'if the domains are analogous, then their corresponding elements are too' (…)" (Plantin 2011, p. 120). More interestingly, he mentions that the rhetorical effectiveness of a metaphor is partly determined by the addressee's inferential input in working out metaphorical meaning: "From a rhetorical point of view, it [the metaphor] has been appraised as a condensed comparison, *the elucidation of which has been entrusted to the audience*" (ibid., p. 122, our italics). What we think is at stake here is some kind of pleasure or 'cognitive' reward—already present in Aristotle's characterisation as noted by Kirby (1997)—associated to the full grasping of the metaphorical meaning; in this sense, the addressee's cognitive processing in comprehending the metaphor and its relevance is necessary, even if probably not sufficient, for the metaphor to be rhetorically effective.

Another element in Plantin's work is worth mentioning here, as our cognitive account of metaphor as argument will develop along similar lines: it has to do with the status of extended metaphors after they have been exploited at length. Plantin considers that "the argumentative force of metaphor is due not only to the fact that, like analogy, it introduces a model of the target situation, but also to the fact that it pushes the analogy over to the point of identification" (ibid., p. 123). Extended metaphors, provided they are exploited in a way that is perceived as relevant by the audience, can lead to an identification of source and target domains. If we take the argument further, this could mean that argumentatively exploited metaphors can lead to a 'de-metaphorisation' of the construal. In so doing, extended metaphors might be able to provide grounds for a whole new set of further inferences that become, pretty much as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca contend, legitimised or accredited by a metaphor.

While Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca construe metaphors as taking part in the structure of arguments from analogy, Santibáñez departs from this conception by arguing that arguments from metaphor are not necessarily arguments from analogy, mainly on the grounds that similarity is not as important in metaphor as it is in analogy (see Santibáñez 2010, pp. 976–977 for a discussion). He then moves on to discussing the role of metaphors in argumentative chains, and in doing so, he focuses on metaphor not in structural terms, but in terms of content and in terms of the argumentative function it might fulfil. His conclusion, dovetailing with the Toulminian perspective, is that metaphors can act as backings. In other words, metaphors have legitimising potential in so far as they can function as major premises in an argument. For instance, if I want to argue that one individual is responsible for the decay of an entire community by uttering 'Jeffrey is the rotten apple of our community', I may resort to the proverb 'A rotten apple spoils the barrel': the informational import of the proverb will be selected (and thus deemed relevant) as the major premise linking the standpoint ('Jeffrey is responsible for the decay of the whole community') and the premise that Jeffrey is metaphorically the 'rotten apple' of the 'barrel' (i.e., the community in which he lives). This is

something that is also relevant to our own purposes, to the extent that Santibáñez focuses on the representational—as opposed to the formal—aspects of metaphors in argumentation. Beyond its relationship with analogy, metaphor is above all a conceptual phenomenon responsible for the generation of particular representations which people can communicate; paying attention to the specificities of these representations becomes relevant if we are to perform a rhetorical analysis of arguments from metaphor.

Although some other studies in argumentation revolving around the notion of metaphor (see e.g., Plug and Snoeck Henkemans 2008; Lakoff 2006; Pielenz 1993) are available, for the purposes of this paper we will restrict ourselves to the aspects discussed above. Suffice it to highlight for the time being that metaphors have been said to play a fundamental role in argumentation in terms of the rhetorical possibilities they open up and in terms of the constraints they can impose on the representation of propositions that will be used as premises and conclusions in argumentative chains.

2.3.2 Extended Metaphors as Argumentative Devices: A Cognitive Take[7]

In Sect. 2.2 we have evoked how extended metaphors are inherently discursive, insofar as they set up a core metaphorical construal and exploit it throughout discourse. Such a discursive structure in our view makes for an argumentative exploitation.

The main idea behind our argumentative account of extended metaphors is that they are ideally suited, both discursively and cognitively, to provide an argumentative structure where the initial metaphorical construal becomes a standpoint, while the various instantiations of the metaphor throughout the text function as arguments in support of this standpoint. In political discourse in particular, where speakers constantly try to legitimate their claims, this can become an argumentative strategy. Once the metaphor is set up at the beginning of the text, its extension, by mention of several of its properties, may provide evidence to legitimise the initial construal. In order to illustrate this, let us extend Chilton's analysis of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (Chilton 2005). In the chapter titled *Volk und Rasse*, Hitler conceptualises the Jew as a parasite and tries to justify that it makes sense to take on the proposed construal. In order to do this, he lists some of the properties associated to parasites and observes that these are also typical of the Jews. According to Hitler, just like parasites, Jews (1) are not nomads, (2) spread, (3) are thrown out of host nations, (4) seek a new feeding ground when this happens, (5) drain their hosts from their resources, etc. Hitler thus attempts to systematically map the conceptual properties we normally associate to parasites onto the different properties, in terms of *behaviour*, of the Jews. The inherent structure of extended metaphor can thus provide an ideal argumentative ground to give weight to the metaphorical construal. We show in more detail in Sect. 3 how this can be achieved.

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[7] We thank an anonymous reviewer for their insightful questions on a first draft of this section, which allowed us to sharpen our account.

The cognitive benefits of this rhetorical strategy now need to be spelled out. We postulate here that the more plausible the metaphorical mappings exploited in an extended metaphor are (i.e., the more the addressee perceives that the construal of the target domain in terms of the source domain is justified), the more its overall perceived relevance increases. Our use of the notion of plausibility is grounded on the notion of justification. A metaphorical mapping will thus be deemed plausible if it is justified, i.e., if the content of the particular instances of the metaphor are interpretable in terms of arguments. We do not need to impose restrictions on the type of arguments that may be used to this end for the time being—and this will remain an open question. We will nevertheless see in our analysis in Sect. 3 that arguments by example can provide powerful evidence for the justification of a metaphorical construal. To go back to Hitler's example, the strategy would unfold as follows: once the core mapping linking Jews and parasites has been established, the extension of the metaphor could take each property of the parasite one by one and systematically link each of those properties to an actual state of affairs. The accumulation of concrete examples illustrating that the behaviour of Jews matches the different conceptual properties of parasites would then constitute evidence that it does make sense to construe them as parasites. At the end of the text, the hearer is left out with a correspondence matrix pointing to the plausibility of the initial metaphor. In principle, thus, extended metaphors may be used for legitimation purposes.

But there is more: sometimes extended metaphors can go beyond the legitimation of the initial metaphorical construal's meaningfulness: we claim that extended metaphors may even be used to provide evidence for the truth of a claim—with the provision of an enabling context. Of course, in the case of literary texts, it would make little sense to argue that an extended metaphor is meant to convince the reader of the literal truth of what was initially construed as a metaphor.[8] However, in political discourse the situation might be different, partly because of the genre (political discourse is inherently argumentative and prone to containing standpoints whose truth is justified by the speaker) and partly because the speaker might initially present a metaphor, which, by being extended, ends up considered as a literal statement in order to invite concrete reactions on behalf of the addressees. Quite paradoxically, thus, in light of concrete evidence (in case the construal is extended so as to appear to be literally true for an unusually important number of properties) an extended metaphor may become less and less metaphorical throughout the text. We could then imagine cases in which what justifies the relevance of the extended metaphor is the impression that the metaphor fades away; under these circumstances, extended metaphors might actually become more relevant by failing to meet the expectations of non-literalness raised by their initial metaphorical status. In other words, we hypothesise that extended metaphors may lead their addressee to eventually abandon the metaphorical construal altogether—and this is part of an

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[8] The anonymous reviewer we referred to in the previous footnote rightly pointed out that one would never infer from Carl Sandburg's poem ("The fog comes on little cat feet./It sits looking over harbour and city on silent haunches and then moves on.") that the fog literally has feet.

argumentative strategy. We claim that this is what happens in the corpus we will analyse below (see Sect. 3.3.).

In order to specify this claim on cognitive grounds, we will use the notion of "relevance to an individual" (Sperber and Wilson 1995, pp. 265–266). The general idea is that utterances might be deemed relevant not only because they contribute to comprehension, but also because they are instrumental to the satisfaction of other cognitive functions, such as "the reorganisation of existing knowledge, or the elaboration of rational desires" (Sperber and Wilson 1995, p. 266). To these, we could also add cognitive or epistemic goals such as for instance gaining a better representation of how the world is in order to take action on more reliable grounds, which are goals that go beyond the comprehension of the information contained in the stimulus. On this count, we assume that creative and extended metaphors perceived as relevant can also contribute to the long-term stabilisation of a given representation of the world, to the extent that they may be shown as faithful and accurate descriptions. Creative and extended metaphors perceived as relevant in terms of their comprehension can subsequently be relevant for other purposes, including epistemic or argumentative ones. In the case of political discourse, extended metaphors can give rise to the representation of gradual and near-systematic confirmations that it makes sense to connect the source and target domains of the metaphor in the proposed way. One can consequently end up considering that there are solid grounds to conceptualise the target domain in terms of the source domain. Furthermore, numerous relevant instantiations of the mapping, within an enabling context, can have argumentative implications: the more an addressee is led to find confirmations that the proposed construal is applicable, the more its content might be believed to reflect actual states of affairs, which can eventually lead him to consider that the (initially) metaphorical mapping is actually true—i.e., literal. In such cases, the extended metaphor could be thought to cognitively function as an argument meant to 'de-metaphorise' the metaphor.

The epistemic potential of metaphor has already been proposed in the past: it echoes for instance some of the assumptions underlying Chilton's analysis of fragments of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (Chilton 2005). In this paper, Chilton defends the use of conceptual metaphor theory and blending theory to explain why ideas are influential, i.e., why and how they propagate and generate stable representations. To this effect, Chilton states that

> conceptual constructs can become meme-like and 'infect' the mind (under the right social conditions) when they have complex blending potential that recruits fundamental knowledge domains along with the core mechanisms of metaphor. There is a further ingredient that seems to go along with textualised memes of this kind – the delivery of some kind of credibility assurance and *epistemic warrant* (Chilton 2005, p. 40, our italics).

According to Chilton, metaphors spread, at least partly, because their propositional meaning is believable and additionally carries some sort of epistemic warrant, which is precisely what we are concerned with in this paper. The claim we put forth is that recurring metaphorical entailments exploited by extended metaphors contribute to establishing said epistemic warrants, i.e., justifications of the

metaphor's content overall adequacy and relevance, which incidentally make for the "warrant of truth and relevance" (Chilton 2005, p. 41) recipients of political discourse usually expect to find. By 'overall adequacy and relevance of a metaphor's content', we mean that the propositional content of the metaphor can be perceived by an addressee to correspond to a faithful representation. To go back to Chilton's analysis of Hitler's words, the idea is that if we are exposed to a series of examples, illustrations and arguments to support the view that the Jews are parasites, we may end up adopting the representation that the Jews are parasites (whatever this might exactly and contextually mean).

The metaphor's contribution to the propagation of an idea is a perlocutionary matter,[9] as it concerns issues that have to do with the effect of the metaphor on people's minds, and, in some cases, also on people's behaviour. Research in cognitive linguistics on the rhetorical potential of metaphor (e.g., Chilton 2005; Lakoff 2006; Charteris-Black 2006) has shown that in principle metaphors and argumentative utterances are able to generate similar effects. The following section will be devoted to examining the implications of this claim should we generalise it to postulate the argumentative potential of metaphorical expressions, and in particular of extended metaphors.

2.3.3 Extended Metaphors as Conceptual Argumentations: Epistemic Issues

Extended metaphors require the addressee to assess different aspects of the same metaphorical mapping within the same text and can in principle be exploited to strengthen the perceived relevance of the construal in a specific way, i.e., by achieving a 'de-metaphorisation' of the initial metaphor. The relationship between each occurrence of a particular conceptual mapping of properties between source and target domain and the extended metaphor as a whole can thus be seen as one of *argumentative confirmation of relevance* with epistemic implications; if every mapped conceptual property is found relevant, chances are that this will also count as a justification of the overall extended metaphor's relevance (in terms of conceptualising the target domain through the source domain), and, as we shall argue, as an attempt to convince the addressee, in light of a complex correspondence matrix, that the proposed construal can in fact be taken as literal. In other words, by inviting the addressee to process in depth and at length different aspects of the extended metaphor, the speaker is weaving an argumentative path in which the accuracy, legitimacy and/or relevance of the metaphorical mapping is the standpoint, while the different instantiations of conceptual mappings for different properties count as arguments in support of said standpoint. Before we turn to the analysis of the data, let us further elaborate this idea of *metaphor as argument*.

The assumption that extended metaphors can be conceptualised as complex argumentations bears at least two implications for their study within a discourse analytical framework. First, it implies that extended metaphors, as any argumentative device, can be used to convince: in this case, this perlocutionary goal

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[9] Recall that Austin's first example of perlocution in the William James Lectures is the act of persuading (cf. Austin 1962, p. 101).

translates into attempting to convince the addressee that there are solid grounds to legitimate the truth of what is metaphorically presented at first, and, ultimately, to convince the addressee that there are grounds that come from facts and states of affairs which will allow us to believe the truth of the conceptual construal and accordingly adopt adequate courses of action.[10] Second, it means that metaphors, just like arguments, may bear a rhetorical function,[11] and that as such they are exploitable as rhetorical strategies, otherwise commonly observed in argumentative practices. One subset of rhetorical strategies of particular interest to us here lies in the various ways in which a speaker can positively affect her *ethos*, which can roughly be defined as the image the speaker wishes to convey through her words, particularly in terms of trustworthiness, consistency, competence and benevolence.

The link between rhetoric and pragmatics has already been highlighted in terms of the relationship between rhetorical figures and conversational aspects of communication, notably with respect to politeness and face-management issues (see e.g., Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1994, 2002). Following and extending this line of argument, we believe that a pragmatic analysis of metaphor can also incorporate a rhetorical dimension that sheds light on the effectiveness of extended metaphors with respect to belief fixation, via the examination of the effects that the use of an extended metaphor that turns out to be perceived as relevant can have on perceived speaker competence. We therefore postulate that, just like well-thought argumentative demonstrations, well-thought extended metaphors which are recognised as such can positively influence the speaker's perceived image.

Rhetoric considers since Aristotle that the effectiveness of arguments depends on at least three factors: they may convince by virtue of their rational and logical qualities, their ability to resonate with their audience's beliefs, desires and emotional states, but also by virtue of the speaker's charisma, perceived trustworthiness, benevolence and competence.[12] We postulate that some effects of extended metaphors can be interpreted as rhetorical, notably in what regards speaker *ethos*. The argument goes like this: if the various occurrences of an extended metaphor in a text achieve overall relevance in his cognitive environment, then the addressee will be led to entertain a rich and sophisticated representation that he takes to correspond to a state of affairs the speaker intended to communicate. To the extent that he recognises this richness and sophistication, he might conclude that only a knowledgeable and skilful speaker can be responsible for such a dense and presumably accurate construal. In other words, the hearer can tentatively be led to postulate the speaker's competence, for he himself (the hearer) would not have been able to come up with such a level of conceptual complexity. If the extended metaphor presents relevant mappings down the line in every occurrence of the

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[10] We will propose in our analysis that this is what happens in Freysinger's pamphlet: the initial metaphor of the USA as an empire is gradually weakened as a metaphor and strengthened as a propositional content throughout the text in order to lead the addressee to the conclusion that there are necessary actions to undertake in order to protect Switzerland from the threat.

[11] We are here concerned with the argumentative dimension of rhetoric—not so much with its stylistic dimension—and with the role metaphors play in convincing or persuading the addressee.

[12] These are obviously the respective components of the traditional rhetorical triangle composed of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.

metaphor, chances are that in the end, the hearer will be left with the impression that the speaker perfectly knows how to handle her story.

Specifically, recognising that each occurrence of the metaphor is relevant by being led to infer that every property instantiated echoes an actual state of affairs might be seen as analogous to recognising the cogency and validity that accompanies a solid argumentative chain. The abstract form of a rhetorically successful extended metaphor can this way be conceptually compared to the abstract form of a rhetorically successful complex argument: in such an argument the standpoint S would be presented as true or acceptable by providing arguments X, Y, Z in support of S; similarly, in a rhetorically successful extended metaphor, the primary metaphorical mapping is presented as highly relevant and, by successively advancing specific aspects of said mapping that act as arguments in its support, it might come to be believed as referring to an actual state of affairs. Each correspondence thus functions as an argument supporting the conceptual mapping's adequacy to the world, thereby de-metaphorising the initial construal. The fact that the addressee recognises, based on a rich matrix of correspondences, that the extended metaphor is relevant will arguably lead him to consider that only a competent and smart speaker (therefore perceived as someone clever, who has spent significant time and effort reflecting upon the issue, and by extension someone we can trust) would have been able to conceptualise the correspondences in such a way.

Along these lines, if we consider that extended metaphors can have a self-argumentative function of legitimation, it does make sense to describe them as argumentative devices. They draw on linguistic and cognitive mechanisms that are at play when people assess not only speaker meaning, but also *epistemic* aspects of their content, i.e., clues as to whether the information they convey should be accepted or not. Recent work in cognitive and evolutionary anthropology (cf. Sperber et al. 2010) has postulated that the selection of communication as a stable property of human life through evolution supposes that its benefits have outweighed its disadvantages in the long run, and thus that the human species has found a way of dealing with cheaters and deceivers while still preserving communication. For Sperber et al. this means that we have presumably developed some abilities to spot cheaters and to assess the reliability of communicated material, some kind of "suite of cognitive mechanisms for epistemic vigilance, targeted at the risk of being misinformed by others" (Sperber et al. 2010: 359). From this perspective, epistemic vigilance is defined as a cognitive ability which is intimately linked to the possibility of communication, in that it appears to be a necessary condition for communication to stabilise. Sperber et al. indeed note that "a disposition to be vigilant is likely to have evolved biologically alongside the ability to communicate in the way that humans do" (Sperber et al. 2010: 360–361).

Epistemic vigilance mechanisms are globally believed to be responsible for the assessment of (1) the source of the message and (2) the message's content. As far as the source is concerned, addressees will typically try to assess speaker competence (one's possessing genuinely reliable information) and benevolence (i.e., the intention of sharing that genuine information) and try to look for evidence of the speaker's reliability and overall trustworthiness in order not to be misled or cheated. Assessment of the source requires a metarepresentational ability, since it supposes

the necessity of being able to make assumptions about a speaker's intentions. As far as message assessment is concerned, the account of epistemic vigilance basically relies on the relevance-theoretic framework: "the search for a relevant interpretation, which is part and parcel of the comprehension process, automatically involves the making of inferences which may turn up inconsistencies or incoherences relevant to epistemic assessment" (Sperber et al. 2010: 376).

Scanning the source of the message in order to establish its trustworthiness typically involves assessing whether the speaker is competent. This is where the link with the rhetorical potential of extended metaphors used in argumentative contexts comes in: if a speaker is able to work out an extended metaphor in such a way that what was initially taken as a metaphor ends up being believed as literal, chances are that the addressee will consider that the speaker is competent, and therefore trustworthy, which is a condition that maximises the chances of belief fixation—we believe what the speaker says because we find her reliable. Following this line of argument, we hypothesise accordingly that rhetorically successful extended metaphors match the minimal conditions required to go past our epistemic vigilance monitoring; this, we contend, may in turn be achieved via the implications noted above on speaker *ethos*.

But there is more: through the argumentative conception of extended metaphors we proposed, the second type of assessment managed by our dedicated epistemic vigilance filters—namely, monitoring the message and tracking inconsistency and incoherence—may also be passed: if the numerous instantiations of the mapping in the text are found relevant, the epistemic status of the overall proposed description will be strengthened, and chances are that the proposed mapping will be accepted as literal, thus leading to the acceptance of the literal proposition behind the metaphor (in the example below, the conception of the USA as an empire *stricto* sensu).

To sum up, let us highlight that the pragmatic account exposed postulates that extended metaphors may be used by speakers to carry argumentative claims of legitimacy or self-acceptability, that these depend on whether the multiple occurrences of the metaphorical mapping in the text are found relevant, and that these claims in return can positively influence speaker *ethos*. These properties taken together allow us to consider extended metaphors as devices that are able to satisfy the requirements imposed on our information-processing mechanisms by epistemic vigilance filters. Let us now turn to the analysis of the example in order to illustrate these points.

3 A Case in Point: "*A l'ombre des tours du Mordor*", Pamphlet Written by Oskar Freysinger[13]

3.1 The USA as an Empire: Identifying the Extended Metaphor

As an illustration of an extended metaphor's interpretative potential and its implications on argumentative and political issues, we propose an analysis of a

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[13] "In the shadow of Mordor's towers". Available on Oskar Freysinger's official website: http://oskar.sw1.ch/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=7, last accessed 24.03.2013.

pamphlet by Oskar Freysinger, one of the prominent figures of the far-right Swiss political party UDC.[14] The text, published on the politician's personal website, glorifies the right for countries to be self-determined and praises Switzerland's economic and political independence. In that context, the United States of America are identified as an imperialistic threat for the autonomy of world countries, and in particular Switzerland's. Freysinger's goal in this pamphlet is to convince his readers that his party represents the only solution to protect Switzerland.

In the text, Freysinger metaphorically construes the USA as an empire. Although one could at first have doubts about whether Freysinger means this metaphorically, there are a few indications suggesting that he does indeed. First, the USA cannot reasonably be literally defined as an empire—and it would be overly charitable to assume that Freysinger, as a writer, politician and high school teacher, ignores this: the USA is a democratic regime governed by an elected president, a regime where executive, judiciary and legislative powers are separated, and a regime which does not colonise other territories.[15] Furthermore, it could be argued from the perspective of argumentation theory that Freysinger would not even need to try to convince his readership that the USA is an empire if he thought that the readers already believed so. As argued within mainstream theories of argumentation (see e.g., Pragma-Dialectics, van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004), the standpoint of any argumentative discussion is a proposition that has to be critically submitted to doubt; this follows from the construal of argumentation as a means of resolving a difference of opinion. In this pamphlet, Freysinger's ultimate goal is to justify that we should indeed construe the USA as an empire and take action in order to protect the country (by voting for his party), which is an indication that he expects his audience or a potential opponent not to think that this is the case. We will argue that the strategy he implements consists in starting from the metaphor and extend it so as to make his readership come to the conclusion that in fact, the metaphor should be abandoned to privilege a literal interpretation. But what is perhaps the clearest indication that 'the USA is an empire' is metaphorically intended by Freyinger is his construal of the American president as the Roman Emperor Nero:

(4)   "And Nero will watch the Christian world of the Occident burn from across the Atlantic."
       "*Et Néron de regarder brûler le monde chrétien d'occident depuis l'autre côté de l'Atlantique.*"

Although the metaphor associating the USA to an empire is conventional to a certain extent (at least in communities where the American superpower is criticised), the originality of Freysinger's text lies in an attempt to implicitly but systematically question the metaphor's overall relevance as a metaphor, so that the depiction of the USA as an empire licenses (1) the derivation of representations such

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[14] The acronym stands for *Union Démocratique du Centre* (Democratic Union of the Centre); the German name of the party is SVP (*Schwizerische Volkspartei*—Swiss people's party).

[15] We consider colonisation here as physical occupation destined to expand the territory and claim ownership of the conquered land, which is something the USA does not do. Of course, the USA's international influence in many respects is open to discussion; yet, *stricto* sensu, this is not an empire, like for instance the Roman or the Ottoman empires were.

as the need for protection against the empire and (2) weak implicatures enjoining the reader to sympathise with the political party Freysinger represents. His strategy is to select characteristic and prototypical properties of empires that can be mapped as such onto American foreign policy. As a result, the (alleged) adequacy between prototypical representations of empires and descriptions of facts regarding America functions as evidence for the construal's relevance. Consider excerpts (5) to (15), which refer (either explicitly or implicitly) to identifiable features of empires:

(5)   "[…] in order to spread its humanitarian manna it [the empire] occupies."
        "[…] pour répandre sa manne humanitaire, il occupe."

(6)   "he exercises his armies in real situations."
        "il exerce ses armées en situation réelle."

(7)   "and the multiple garden gnomes that always surround the imperial giant bring the clarion of its conquests to their mouth, take its marching tanks and cluster beneath its bombers' wings."
        "Et les multiples nains de jardin qui entourent toujours le géant impérial, embouchent le clairon de ses conquêtes, prennent ses tanks en marche et s'agglutinent sous les ailes de ses bombardiers."

(8)   "The empire knows how to be magnanimous, as long as no one disrupts its circles."
        "L'empire sait être magnanime, tant que l'on ne vient pas déranger ses cercles."

(9)   "[…] it is enough for his valets to swear allegiance, to be helpful, to be a strong link through which the empire chains nations to its particular interests."
        "il suffit à ses valets de faire allégeance, de se rendre utile, d'être l'un des maillons forts par lesquels l'empire enchaîne les nations à ses intérêts particuliers."

(10)   "[…] in order to fertilise resisting territories, it bombards them and pollutes them."
        "[…] pour fertiliser les terres qui résistent, il les bombarde et les pollue."

(11)   "Serbia, Afghanistan and Iraq were his favourite toys. Others will follow too in the future."
        "La Serbie, l'Afghanistan et l'Irak furent ses jouets de choix. D'autres encore suivront dans le futur."

(12)   "The empire cannot tolerate that something in his circle of influence escapes its control."
        "L'empire ne peut tolérer que dans son cercle d'influence quelque chose lui échappe."

(13)   "The current European Union is nothing but a footman of the empire, the mat by the doors of the Middle East and Asia."
        "L'Union Européenne actuelle n'est qu'un valet de pied de l'empire, le paillasson aux portes du moyen orient de l'Asie."

(14)   "[…] this empty shell [the E.U.] begins to crawl only when the empire injects its conquering gladiators in it."

"[…] cette carapace vide ne se met à ramper que lorsque l'empire y injecte ses gladiateurs conquérants."

(15)   "Over its long history, this small alpine country [Switzerland] has been in contact with and has confronted numerous empires that have vanished the same way they once came: in a blood bath."

"Dans sa longue histoire, ce petit pays alpin a côtoyé et confronté de nombreux empires qui ont disparu comme ils sont venus : dans le sang."

All these are particular instantiations of the main mapping which are relevant to the overall metaphor of the USA as an Empire. Let us assess in detail what these amount to.

Freysinger first refers to an empire's expansionist goals using literal ("occupy", "spread") or nonliteral terms ("fertilise"). In (5), he emphasises hypocritical pretexts (providing humanitarian aid) that are put forward to legitimise expansion, and in (10) the bombing referred to denotes radical military means that are deployed in case of resistance. (6) also mentions the military presence of the USA and (7) links it to expansionist ambitions ("conquests"). These continuous conquering ambitions are reinforced in (11) through the mention of previous occupied territories (Serbia, Afghanistan and Iraq) and add up to the description. Also, he alludes to the property of an empire to behave as a centralised authority that exerts governance on its annexed territories, which is what excerpts (9) and (12) are about. Furthermore, he underlines that imperial policies enforce domination over weaker entities (the "valets" alluded to in (9)). As an illustration, he insists on the weak position of servility and dependency the European Union has towards the USA (in (13) and (14), the EU is depicted as the "footman of the empire" and as an "empty shell"). In addition, Freysinger portrays the empire as militarily powerful (10), just like the Roman Empire, which seems to be a source of inspiration for him: hints to Rome are made through references to gladiators in (14) or through the explicit mention, elsewhere in the text, of an odious "*Pax Americana*" imposed onto the conquered world, thus echoing the period of peace imposed by the Roman Empire onto its conquered territories (the so-called *Pax Romana*). Finally, in (15) empires are said to have common births and destinies, since they are bound to emerge and disappear in violence; this counts as Freysinger's own prediction about the American empire's future.

What is remarkable about most of these examples is that they combine two levels of the semantic description; namely, they may be interpreted intensionally as general remarks on empires and at the same time extensionally as specific observations about the American empire (assuming, as we suggest Freysinger intends, that the reader ends up considering that the USA is indeed an empire). This is particularly salient in French where the definite article 'le' (in "l'empire") does not constrain the attribution of a specific referent but may be also used to designate a general category of items. Even though America is eventually identified by the reader as the target domain of the metaphor, the interpretative ambiguity persists, since these descriptions may be applicable to any empire in a nontrivial way. In other words, although the proposed descriptions are presented as true for the USA, they are constructed from definitional (or at least prototypical) features of empires:

our lexical entry for the concept of empire tells us that empires occupy, perpetrate violent actions, have expansionist ambitions, exert a centralised authority, and so on. The referential ambiguity caused by the use of the definite article here results in a perception of America as the empire *par excellence*, the one which best exemplifies the conceptual category of "empire".

We have mentioned referential ambiguity from a syntactic point of view with Freysinger's use of the definite article when he refers to the empire; we should also mention that referential uncertainty is furthermore exploited by the absence of any explicit mention of the USA until late in the text. Given that the concept of "empire" is not indefectibly linked to America, other entities (any economic world-power, for that matter) or abstract notions (e.g., capitalism, globalism) would at first also be acceptable candidates as target domains for the metaphorical mapping. Moreover, at the very beginning of the text, countries' sovereignty is said to be threatened by the "mad dragon of the new world order" ("*dragon fou du nouvel ordre mondial*"). This initial metaphor could be misleading for the reader who is looking for the relevant target domain, dragons being usually symbolically associated with far Eastern countries such as China for instance—a country which incidentally also incarnates some sort of "new world order", and which could thus also turn out to be relevant as a tentative target domain, should the remainder of the text corroborate it.

Through this presentation of the metaphorical data contained in Freysinger's pamphlet, we see how the conceptual mapping is exploited at length in the text. We now turn to examine some aspects that are related to the way this extended metaphor might be processed.

3.2 Processing the Extended Metaphor: Cognitive Benefits

We will assume that the interpretation of the extended metaphor of the USA as an empire throughout the discourse is costly for two main reasons. First, given that several features of the source domain's standard representation are given as relevant within the target domain, their successive instantiations force the reader to constantly reassess the same conceptual unit. Second, the empire's prototypical features themselves are often metaphorically denoted—see excerpts (5), (7), (8), (9), (11), (13), (14) or (15); these 'secondary' or 'embedded' metaphors make the overall interpretation of the extended metaphor more costly and tentatively more complicated, because they introduce interpretative 'obstacles' which arguably render access to conceptual features more complex from a conceptual viewpoint. Adding this to the referential ambiguity mentioned earlier, and assuming that the global effort and effect constraints on comprehension obtain (as per RT), we conclude that these difficulties represent cognitive burdens that will need to be compensated in one way or another in this particular context.

If we turn to the potential rewarding effects that would justify the processing cost, we could postulate that the identification of the relevant target domain, which constitutes the first step of the interpretative procedure, satisfies a need for basic comprehension and as such that it may be considered as a cognitively gratifying effect. However, it should be noted that this operation is not straightforward in the

text, if only because in the Swiss geopolitical context the most salient candidate for saturation of the reference to an empire would be the European Union (which is its closest supra-national power and incidentally one which geographically and economically surrounds Switzerland). Coupled to the delayed explicit mention of the relevant target domain, this makes any referential assumption uncertain at the beginning of the text.[16]

An additional interpretative benefit that can be gained from the extend metaphor's full comprehension resides in the variety of implications it is likely to license. Once the reader accepts the proposed description of the USA as an empire, he may search for relevant implications with respect to potential threats for the right of countries to self-determination (echoed in the final lines of the text, where Freysinger exalts independence through the slogans "Long live sovereignty!", "Long live people's self-determination!", and "Long live freedom!"). If there is an empire of which Switzerland is not a part and which surrounds the Swiss territory, there is indeed a potential threat that it will want to conquer the country and put its autonomy at risk. In turn, this also bears implications as far as the reaction to the threat is concerned. These are explicitly confirmed at the end of the text through the aforementioned slogans pointing to the possibility—and even the need—of resistance.

Weak implicatures of political significance can also be triggered once we accept the representation of the USA as an actual empire and its ensuing threat, among which (16), (17) and (18), inferable from (13) but also from the global portrayal of the world in which the USA is a powerful empire:

(16)   Since the EU is the USA's vassal, Switzerland should take its distances from European policies in order not to fall within USA's influence
(17)   Switzerland's future must be decided outside worldwide relations of influence
(18)   In order to protect itself, Switzerland should vote UDC, since this party promotes Switzerland's economic and political independence

It makes sense to refer to them as weak implicatures to the extent that their calculation supposes an interpretative procedure which has not been evidenced by the speaker: we do not indeed find clear indications in the text that Freysinger intends these contents to be derived by his readers. However, these weak implicatures are likely to be beneficial in terms of positive cognitive effects: they are relevant to those who take on Freysinger's description of the USA as an empire, since they constitute concrete guidelines for action that would presumably represent the first steps of resistance against the empire's expansionist goals.

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[16] Note that if the target domain had been identified correctly before its explicit mention, the reader would presumably experience some sort of confirmation effect.

3.3 Maximising the Construal's Relevance Through Extended Metaphors: Epistemic Implications

As said earlier, the mention of an empire in the beginning of the text raises expectations linked to the prototypical features associated to the concept of empire. The reader will thus expect to find in the text some sort of justification for the metaphor. And Freysinger provides it in detail, spending time on numerous properties of the conceptual source domain in order to find correspondences with states of affairs that he can link to the target domain, that is, the USA. Thus, as every property of the source domain is instantiated in the target domain, the likelihood of what was initially a metaphorical construal becomes gradually justified by concrete examples. In the text, excerpts (5) to (15) systematically link properties of the empire to states of affairs:

- (5) refers to the humanitarian aid that the USA allegedly uses to legitimate occupation thereby validating the property EMPIRES ARE EXPANSIONIST ENTITIES,
- (6), (7) and (10) make explicit mention of military action and *ipso facto* validate the property EMPIRES ARE VIOLENT ENTITIES,
- (8) and (12) assert the control over territories ("circles") and (11) names regions of the world where the USA's military presence is confirmed, which validate the property EMPIRES ARE OCCUPYING ENTITIES,
- (9) states that the empire hierarchically dominates its "valets" and (13) and (14) instantiate the European Union as a servant of the USA, thereby validating the property EMPIRES ARE ENTITIES WHO ENFORCE DOMINATION OVER WEAKER ENTITIES
- (15) summons the Swiss historical background to establish its independence against numerous violent empires, which can function as a way of legitimising the property EMPIRES COME AND GO IN BLOOD BATHS (which echoes and reinforces the property of an empire's inherent violent behaviour).

In this complex extended mapping of the empire, Freysinger manages to quasi-systematically link various conceptual features to actual states of affairs; in turn, this makes the mapping more justified, yet no longer as a metaphor, but as a literal description of the USA as an actual empire. Since all the instantiations of the metaphorical construal over the text are linked to actual states of affairs, there is reason to construe them as concrete examples of the conceptual properties of an empire. This is precisely where the argumentative potential of the extended metaphor is revealed: if the properties that are listed are systematically connected to states of affairs, that is, if for each conceptual property Freysinger is able to find an illustrative concrete example, then these examples could be cognitively taken as arguments by example in support of the content of the overall metaphorical construal. Because the metaphor happens to be literally true for a significant number of properties, it might come to be considered as a true statement by addressees.

  The structure of extended metaphor in this text is thus used to provide massive evidence that we have in fact a strong case for considering the USA as an empire (and that contextual implications—or weak implicatures—in terms of threat and

security are subsequently licensed). This is why we argue here in favour of an elaborate attempt of literalising the metaphor: as long as we assume that metaphor processing has to do with feature assessment, the strategy consists in providing evidence to make sure that none of these prototypical features are rejected from the emerging representation. Relevance, in this case, is achieved the moment "empire" is taken literally: Freysinger ultimately intends his readers to use the literal content of the metaphor to support his party, which he mentions in the text as follows:

(19)   "Thanks to a determined *souverainiste* [proponent of sovereignty] party, the UDC, and to the association for an independent and neutral Switzerland, it [Switzerland] blocks the neoliberal and internationalist offensive of the new Europe."
        "*Grâce à un parti souverainiste déterminé, l'UDC, et à l'association pour une Suisse indépendante et neutre, elle fait barrage à l'offensive néolibérale et internationaliste de la nouvelle Europe.*"

The pamphlet is geared toward eliciting sympathy from the readers towards the only political party that takes the imperial threat seriously. The argumentative power of the extended metaphor lies in providing grounds to support the action of the UDC as described in (19): the conceptual mapping between source and target domain seems so overwhelmingly relevant (each property is validated by a corresponding state of affairs) that it cannot be a matter of coincidence. The complex conceptual correspondence matrix between source and target domain is here warranted by systematic illustrations related to *facts*; in this respect, the extended metaphor functions as an argumentative device geared towards the validation of epistemic claims.

    For this reason, we believe that a strong perlocutionary effect is favoured: in light of detailed evidence, the speaker is trying to push the reader towards accepting the metaphor as a literal description, together with its entailments. The argumentative nature of the relationship between occurrences of properties found in the source domain and states of affairs adduced by Freysinger as concrete realisations of these procedures weakens the metaphorical status of the message and therefore strengthens the grounds to consider that the USA can indeed be literally compared to an empire. From a psychological point of view, we could even defend that such an incremental confirmational process is able to induce a heuristic bias known as the *confirmation bias*, whereby a subject confronted to repeated, yet far from absolute, evidence in favour of a specific piece of information he deems believable will rule out coincidence and strengthen the likeliness of said information. In Freysinger's pamphlet, this would be realised through the first instantiation, via a metaphorical expression, of the assumption that the USA is an empire. This assumption is the output of the interpretative procedure resulting from the reader's representation of a source and target domain. Now, if this assumption is the one that is retained, it will raise, as mentioned earlier, expectations of relevance that will be fulfilled through further instantiations of the metaphor. In other words, the requirements of metaphor processing at the interpretative level will provide the grounds for the confirmation bias to play its role, which has been experimentally documented as the tendency to

prefer confirmations of assumptions held by people over disconfirmations (see Oswald and Grosjean 2004).

Our central argument regarding the effect that extended metaphors may have on beliefs is thus that their processing, also interpretable as a potential trigger of the confirmation bias, has an argumentative counterpart that leads to epistemic benefits: the addressee who processes the extended metaphor within an enabling context might end up convinced of its literal truth through numerous individual confirmations. What this illustrates in our view is the idea that extended metaphors, when used argumentatively in political discourse, may gradually lose their metaphorical status as a result of an evidential relationship building up between instantiations of the metaphorical construal and its initial (and literal) propositional content. In Freysinger's pamphlet, this effect is strengthened through a network of correspondences between the conceptual properties of an empire and the states of affairs presented as realisations of the latter.

4 Conclusion

The main claim of this paper can be summarised in the form of an argument grounding the argumentative potential of extended metaphors used in political discourse, both with respect to the type of processing they induce and with respect of the epistemic effects they are likely to yield, in particular in what regards belief fixation.

On the processing side, we postulated that the more each occurrence of the same metaphor is deemed relevant (and this can be achieved for instance through systematic links with corresponding states of affairs, as in Freysinger's pamphlet, analysed above), the more the metaphor is perceived as relevant and tentatively taken as a reliable piece of information, i.e., one that gets closer to its literal meaning. We assume that this is possible because instantiations of the various conceptual properties involved in the metaphor within the text may be taken as arguments by example. The rhetorical advantage gained in this process concerns the epistemic status the metaphorical operation inherits from the relevance of its multiple instantiations in the text; the information is presented in such a structured and justified way that it seems to argumentatively 'hold', insofar as it is presented as resulting from what appears to be a careful examination of the conceptual domains mapped together in the metaphor. One possible consequence of this process is the loss of metaphorical status: what seemed to be a metaphor at first is justified through metaphorical extension as a propositional content presented as reflecting an actual state of affairs. The analysis presented here shows how de-metaphorisation can be achieved through argumentative means, while yielding epistemic benefits. From a cognitive perspective, the success of this rhetorical move could be attributed to the confirmational dynamics described above: it taps into the confirmation bias and increases the chances of the overall mapping generating a belief in which the conceptualisation of the USA as an empire is legitimised. Additionally, such a dynamics meets the requirements of epistemic vigilance filters in what regards message coherence: the gradual confirmation of the mapping in the extended

metaphor appears to be coherent. This line of argument therefore allows us to draw an explicit link between cognitive processing of metaphors and their rhetorical advantages.

From a broader argumentative perspective, the second argument developed in this paper considered the effects extended metaphors can have on the speaker's perceived competence—or *ethos*. If the extended conceptual mapping is deemed relevant by the addressee, chances are that the repercussions for the image of the speaker will be positive, as the addressee will be led to conclude that only a competent speaker could have worked out such a complex and what appears to be appropriate description. As traditional but also more contemporary rhetoric has shown, personal characteristics of speakers can influence the outcome of the convincing endeavour. It was also our purpose to defend the idea that extended metaphors can contribute to *ethos*-oriented strategies and thereby also override epistemic vigilance filters that are directed at assessing the trustworthiness of the source.

From a methodological perspective, finally, we hope to have shown that there is an explanatory advantage to be gained from the combination of cognitive pragmatic aspects of information processing on the one hand and from the input of argumentation theory on the other. Accounting for the conditions under which people end up being convinced by discursive means has to incorporate some cognitive explanation. It is, we believe, by trying to assess the relationship between understanding and believing at the interface of language and cognition that the analysis of discourse can gain psychological plausibility and therefore explanatory power.

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