

Advertising: the *modus operandi* of visual argumentation and the rhetoric of image

«Qu'elles soient ou non légendées, les images me parlent¹»

O. Abstract: Since Classical Antiquity, Rhetoric has combined three important and inseparable elements: the orator (*ethos*), the public (*pathos*) and the message (*logos*), respecting several parts of composition and argumentative operations: *inuentio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *actio*, *intellectio*. Their articulation is developed and consolidated by tropes, figures of thought and many others linguistic and conceptual expedients (involved in a process of *amplificatio*), which have an intrinsically visual power to represent reality without forgetting aesthetical features such as: *puritas*, *perspicuitas* and *ornatio*.

Advertising invokes all these sources and uses all these instruments in order to find new perspectives and persuasive methods, exploring rhetorical genres of discourse, in particular the epideictic. Rhetoric and Advertising share the same intention: to seduce, to persuade, to manipulate and this is the reason that explains why they also follow a common argumentative strategy. In fact, they share the same metaphorical program, instigating an elliptic and an heuristic thought, by a *conceptual underspinning*, based on Aristotle's efrastic definition of bringing before the eyes «pro ommaton poein». So, what are the conceptual mechanisms converted into strategies of persuasion? How is possible to convince with images and at the same time conciliate the three rhetorical functions: *delectare*, *docere et mouere*? We will answer these and others questions by scrutinizing three well-known advertisements - winners in the Festival of Cannes – which shed light on classical precepts and provide their presence in contemporary rhetorical processes of publicity.

Key-Words: Social Advertising, Metaphor, rhetorical image, *Ekphrasis*, visual argumentation, believability icon

¹Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle, *L'éloquence des images : images fixes III*, P.U.F., Paris, 1993:20

1. Classical concepts in visual argumentation: the tradition of Antiquity

Carpent tua poma nepotes
Virgile, Buc. X

Rhetoric combines three important and inseparable elements: the orator (*ethos*), the public (*pathos*) and the message (*logos*)², always concerning with persuasion. This discipline manipulates fluid rules and different precepts to consolidate it, in a constant and endless challenge to discover new codes, new symbolic meanings for society. If we stop to consider for a moment the legacy of Antiquity, we have to recognize that the rhetorical tradition begins with Córax, Tísias, Górgias and Plato under their definition: *πειθούς δημιουργός* (breeder of persuasion). Aristotle introduces a variation by saying that Rhetoric is a discipline whose principal intention is to discover the way to persuade but also to conquer mechanisms to seduce³. The Aristotelian orator can control all the listener's passions and promote dialectic emotions – anger and quietness; friendship and hostility; shame and uninhibitedness; kindness and impoliteness; compassion and indignation – through a consistent argumentation, composed by distinct parts: *inuentio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio, intellectio*⁴. So, *ars bene dicendi ac ars bene persuadendi* are the conciliation of *ornatio* and *efficientia, res* (ideological contents) *et uerba* (aesthetical dimension), the pleasurable and the useful. These dualities combine two complementary but also opposing dimensions: truth and verisimilitude, involving an implicit discussion about moral and ethical issues. Louis Boudaloue, a French Jesuit and preacher (1632-1704) emphasizes this point by saying that «the moral idea is the first and the last priority by which the others are strengthened and completed»⁵.

Nowadays, the study of Rhetoric is divided into two main epistemic areas: its role in Literary production regarding all aesthetic and poetic aspects and its role in argumentation and persuasion – regarding the techniques and structures used in the composition of discourse and, always rooted in Aristotle's precepts, later followed by recognized scholars such as Chaïm Perelman⁶, Paul Ricoeur⁷. We will focus our attention on this second dimension, aiming to connect with advertising practices.

The rhetorical production develops stylistic and aesthetic features in order to satisfy *elocutio*'s qualities: *latinitas e puritas*⁸ (linguistic purity) – a clearness of expression – *perspicuitas*⁹ – ornamental effect – *ornatus* promoting by this way mnemonic potential. Their articulation is truly strengthened by tropes, figures of thought and many others linguistic and conceptual expedients, in a process of

² Mark Garret Longaker; Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetorical Analysis: A brief Guide for writers, Chapter 3 Argumentation – The Classical Pisteis: Ethos, Logos, Pathos*, Person Education Inc, Phoenix, 2011.

³ Françoise Desbordes, *La rhétorique antique: l'art de persuader*, Hachette, Paris, 1996.

⁴ Manuel Alexandre Júnior, *Hermenêutica Retórica*, Alcalá, Lisboa, 2004; _(trad) *Retórica de Aristóteles*, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, Lisboa, 2005.

⁵ A. Profillet (trad), *La Rhétorique de Bourdaloue*, Belin, Paris, 1864.

⁶ Chaïm Perelman, *L'empire rhétorique: Rhétorique et argumentation*, Vrin, Paris, 2009 ; _ *Le Champ de l'argumentation*, Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, 1970.

⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *Le Conflit des interprétations*, Seuil, 1969, Paris ; _ *La Métaphore Vive*, Seuil, Paris, 1975

⁸ *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.17; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 5.14.33; Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3.5, 1407^a, 20; D.L 7.1.40.

⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetorica* 3.2,1404b,1; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 8.2.22.

amplificatio, which have an intrinsically visual power to represent reality¹⁰. For this reason, a metaphorical discourse¹¹ assumes an undeniable role for an iconic construction at the service of rhetoric of image, absolutely dependent on similes, analogies, proverbs, hyperboles, belonging to the same conceptual family: “La metaforicidad es un ámbito ligado a las más primordiales realidades humanas: a partir de la metáfora se constituyen para nosotros el mundo, lenguaje y pensamiento. El pensar metafórico es el modo esencial humano de hacer (*actio*), decir (*oratio*) y conocer (*logos*); el modo desde el que originariamente se abren al mundo, desde la intimidad de una imagen, el hecho, la palabra y la idea”¹². In fact, the creation of metaphors means to multiply possibilities of meanings, to enlarge the *imaginarium* and to construct others realities.

Accordingly, Sara Newman says that «the speaker of a successful *ekphrasis* is therefore a metaphorical painter¹³». Furthermore, *ekphrasis*, coming from Greek, means ‘visual description’ and has as special feature the ‘*enargeia*’, a concept close to the latin word *evidentia* and both denominate the capacity of language to appeal the imagination of the audience and its mnemonic potential¹⁴. The latin rhetoric considers *ekphrasis* or *evidentia* under the follow definition: “affective figures”¹⁵. In fact, the close connection between visualization and memory in ancient thought is further underlined by the importance of visual images in ancient theories and techniques of memorization¹⁶. Concerning this point Ruth Webb explains:

«The production of *enargeia* involves competence which was not more than simply lexical; rather it is a cultural competence, a familiarity with the key values of a culture and the images attached to them. The audience’s own culture competence was and still is a crucial factor in the reception of *enargeia* [...] In the case of *enargeia* his advice varies between the enigmatic and the illuminating. The vagueness about the linguistic aspects of *enargeia* and the confidence in its powers displayed by rhetoricians are significant. They point to the complexities of a phenomenon which goes beyond the normal functions of language and which can often only be expressed as in the case of *ekphrasis* itself by recourse to metaphor and simile. They are also a consequence of the way in which language and image were thought to interact in the mind of both speaker and listener¹⁷».

¹⁰ Larry Arnhart, *Aristotle on Political Reasoning. A Commentary on the «Rhetoric»*, Dekalle Northern Illinois University Press, Illinois, 1981.

¹¹ Vide taxonomy of Metaphors in Aristotle, *Poética* 21, 1457b

¹² José Sevilla Fernández (ed), *Metáfora y discurso filosófico*, editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 2000, 11. Vide Giuseppe Patella, «Filosofía en Forma. Escritura, Estilo Y Metáfora en Filosofía», in José M. Sevilla Fernández (ed), *Metáfora y discurso filosófico*, editorial Tecnos, Madrid, 2000, 193: «la metáfora produce pensamiento y no al contrario, el verdadero pensamiento es el pensamiento por su naturaleza metafórico, esto es, pensamiento poético, pensamiento total.»

¹³ Sara Newman, «Aristotle’s Notion of bringing before the eyes» its contributions to Aristotelian and contemporary conceptualizations of Metaphor, Style and Audience» in *RHETORICA – volume 20, number 1*, University of California Press, 2002, p 27.

¹⁴ Francis A. Yates, *L’art de la mémoire*, Gallimard, Paris, 1975 ; Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis : the illusion of the natural sign*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992.

¹⁵ Heinrich Lausberg, *Elementos de Retórica Literária*, trad e prefácio de R.M. Rosado Fernandes, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa, 2011.

¹⁶ Ruth Webb, «Mémoire et imagination: les limites de l’enargeia dans la théorie rhétorique grecque» in *Dire l’évidence (Philosophie et Rhetorique antiques)*, Editions l’Harmattan, Paris, 1977.

¹⁷ Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*, Ashgate Publishing Company, England, 2009, p 97; _«Ekphrasis ancient and modern: the invention of a genre», in *A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, Taylor and Francis, Philadelphia 1999.

2. Advertising: the rhetoric of image and persuasive argumentation

«I have discovered the most exciting, the most arduous literary form of all, the most difficult to master, the most pregnant in curious possibilities. I mean the advertisement.»

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

The term advertising comes down to us from the medieval Latin verb *advertere* “to direct one's attention to” and in line with its etymology, it can be defined simply as any type or form of public announcement intended to direct people's attention. Advertising may primarily be regarded as a form of communication and from this point of view, the effectiveness of the advertiser's communications will depend in the first place, on his knowledge of the persons whom he is addressing. Ideally, advertising aims at the goal of a programmed harmony among all human impulses and aspirations and endeavours. This is the reason that explains why advertising invokes all these sources from the classical tradition because the majority of these rhetorical concepts and effects– visual power, iconic construction, mnemonic potential, appealing to the imagination– gravitates towards publicity and media, always seeking new persuasive methods, exploring rhetorical genres of discourse, in particular the epideictic.

The key point is to recognize that Rhetoric and Advertising share the same intention: to seduce, to persuade and to manipulate so, it is conceivable that they also follow a common argumentative strategy, appealing to the sense of sight and bringing the referent into the presence of the audience. As far as is concerned, the advertiser must consider, among other things, the size of the visual image he wishes to present and he must also ask himself how much information he should provide about the product. In fact, semi-nakedness is more provocative than nakedness partly because of the so-called barrier effect: even being equal, we want and prefer things as more harder they are to get¹⁸.

In addressing the theoretical issues raised by these arguments, it will be useful to shed light on their metaphorical program, instigating an elliptic and heuristic thought, by a *conceptual underspinning* based on Aristotle's efrastic definition of bringing before the eyes, «*pro ommaton poein*» and throughout the process of «metapherein» (*meta* “beyond” + *pherein* “to carry”)¹⁹. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) complete this etymology saying that the essence of metaphor is understanding or perceiving one kind of thing in terms of another kind of thing. Moreover, these authors assert that a large portion of cultural groupthink is built on such metaphorical images, which they call cultural or cognitive models. Before Lakoff and Johnson's trend-setting work, the study of metaphor fell within field of rhetoric, where it was viewed as one of various tropes, i.e. figures of speech. Since the mid-1950s the practice has been to use the term metaphor to refer to the study of all figurative language and

¹⁸Alexander Wilson, *Advertising and the community*, Manchester University Press, Oxford, 1968, p.3

¹⁹Aristóteles, *Retórica*, pref. e introdução de Manuel Alexander Júnior, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, Lisboa, 2006; Sara Newman, «Aristotle's notion of bringing before the eyes and its contributions to Aristotelian and contemporary Conceptualizations of Metaphor, Style and Audience», in *RHETORICA- A Journal of the History of Rhetorica*, volume 20, number1, University of California Press for International Society for the History of Rhetoric, 2002, :1-23.

to consider the other tropes as particular kinds of metaphor²⁰. Definitely, metaphor is one of the most relevant operative strategies in the creation of a brand identity and the most common function of this expedient is to spruce up literal ways of thinking and speaking.

Furthermore, this point is related with didactic value of mimesis because a representation is always a variation, in a creative performance²¹. An ad - as a rhetorical source - is a kind of representation of reality, interpreting and recreating a world view by a process of mimesis and representation. The discourse of advertising is an endless exercise of innovation and surprise, a constant challenge to discover new codes and symbolic meanings because - as in rhetoric - they want to discover and to conquest new aspirations and satisfy new necessities in society.

Concerning the *modus operandi* of Advertising, it is also pertinent to regard the framework of Roman Jakobson, who explains the fundamental elements in this process of visual communication²²: we have a message (poetic function) between a sender (expressive/emotional function) and a receiver (conative function from latin *conatio*>effort) and from this interaction (fatic function), in a particular context (denotation function), is created a code (metalinguistic function). Thus, advertising has a complex framework combining various elements and features, searching for theoretical instruments which are always concerned with individuals' desires, passions and feelings. This is the reason why there is no indisputable proof or firm theories because it represents a mirror of a human being's complexity and his changeable relations in society.

Réné-Jean Ravault suggests the following definition for "Advertising": a combination of 'coercion' and seduction' (*coerseduction*) because, in fact, its mechanism impels man to do or to buy something. This suggestive purpose and this inductive power are illuminated by semiotics²³. The semiotician Roland Barthes drew attention in the 1950s to the value of studying its messages and techniques with the theoretical tools of the science of semiotics. After his publication *Mythologies*, a new branch of research sprang up, focusing on how advertising generates its meanings, animating, at the same time, a society-wide debate on the broader ethical and cultural questions raised by the entrenchment of advertising as a form of discourse in contemporary societies²⁴. This discipline makes explicit the communicative potential, exploring the effects of the message on listeners from three perspectives:

a)Qualitative-iconic: at this level we analyze all plastic aspects like color, dimension, brightness *et cetera* that are responsible for the first impression and also responsible for the captivation, what in rhetoric we call *captatio benevolentiae*. These concrete characteristics

²⁰ George Lakoff, *Metaphors we live by*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1980; B. Johns, «Visual metaphor: lost and found», in *Semiotica* 52, 291-333.

²¹ Benjamin Walter, *Selected Writings: Volume Three, (On the Mimetic Faculty)*, translated by Rodney Livingstone, Cambridge, MA, The Belknap Press, 1999, pp. 720-723.

²² Roman Jakobson, *Essais de Linguistique Générale*, Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1974.

²³ Jean Marie Floch, *Sémiotique, marketing et communication*, PUF, Paris, 1990.

²⁴ Ron Beasley; Marcel Danesi, *Persuasive Signs: Approaches to applied semiotics*, Mouton de Gruyter, New York, 2002.

induce abstract qualities such as sophistication, strength, elegance and fragility that are responsible for associations articulated by the first impression.

b) Singular – indicative: at this level we analyze the message as something circumscribed in a time and space. All the qualities that compose the message are read in function of its uses.

c) Conventional-symbolic: at this level we interpret all potential representations, we discover the meanings and the values aggregated by the culture and the society, we recognize the status of the product which the message conveys.

Semiotic theory, applied to the study of publicity and advertising, comprehends many processes - psychological, ideological, symbolic and social – and makes the scrutiny of the message's strategies and the influence of iconic representation in mental associations possible. The message of advertising is utopic for excellence and for this reason it is also hyperbolic, it stirs up expectations and virtual possibilities. If I promise a gift to a child when she arrives at home and when the child arrives I do not give her a gift, she will be more than surprised. Thus, advertising's rhetoric subsists under some vital dialectics: Information vs Suggestion and Rationality vs Emotion. The informative dimension is many times secondary because the priority is to appeal to the emotion and the desire to consume, to suggest feelings. In this way, visual and verbal language aims to establish a direct link to the listener's subconscious²⁵. Information can be the whole truth or part of the truth, being the art of telling untruths without actually telling lies. Concerning this aspect, Nicole Delbecque argues that "el poder persuasivo no se explica por argumentos racionales, ya que una preferència no tiene que ver en primer lugar con la lógica sino con el mundo imaginativo y el conjunto de las ilusiones y símbolos que remiten a esse mundo psicológico y subjetivo en una cultura dada"²⁶.

We have to remember that this induction or suggestion and the emotional involvement of the listener occurs on a psychological level that is pre-logical and pre-rational. The strategy is to make a surreptitious fusion between extrinsic values with the intrinsically qualities of the product/idea, exploring all the symbolic dimensions of co-operative languages. Invoking an example, "Coca Cola" constructs an image of youth, dynamism, energy, where happiness is much more than a drink because with the slogan "Open Happiness" it creates an icon, a philosophy and a way of life²⁷. Perhaps we do not have the perception that a product constructs an identity but every time we look at a new advertisement we make an unconscious value judgment about the product. If we truly examine the reception of the image, we can conclude that advertising sells our own expectations, identities and ideologies, shared by everyone in a common cultural scenario. The ambiguity of meaning is a recurrent and fruitful technique, playing with the possibility of varying interpretations: «Ambiguity can either be

²⁵ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, (ed. By Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss), The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967.

²⁶ Nicole Delbecque, *Linguistique cognitive – comprendre comment fonctionne la langage*, De Boeck Université, Bruxelles, 2006:199.

²⁷ Vide Coca Cola advertisements: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=auNSrt-QOhw> (COCA-COLA Security cameras) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ih0DrTuufc> (COCA-COLA Creates Park : roll out happiness); <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dHOzw5KSIE> (There are reasons to believe in a better world)

used for humorous reasons or to provoke interest in the ad. A statement could be said to be ambiguous if different meanings can be expressed by using the same word or if different meanings are expressed by words that are alike in spelling and pronunciation»²⁸.

The Rhetoric of argumentation in advertising and the semiotic approaches sometimes reduce their perspectives to the study of figures and tropes but we have to broaden our methodology and we cannot forget a determinant part: the taxonomy of discourses. The classical tradition has transmitted three genres of argumentation and they are judiciaire, deliberative and épideictique²⁹: «Nous croyons que les discours épideictiques constituent une partie central de l'art de persuader et l'incompréhension manifestée à leur égard résulte d'une fausse conception des effets de l'argumentation»³⁰. The argumentative scheme of discourse epideictique is based in the process of *amplificatio*, by the use of hyperbole, repetition, métaphore and antithese: «le sens figurative depend des oppositions et des correlations formelles, mais surtout de la dynamique actualisante que'engendre sur l'image l'activité de lecture»³¹.

3. Advertising: an artistic *modus operandi* of visual argumentation

«L'image sollicite peu la composante «explicative» de l'argumentation, fondée sur le *docere* de la tradition rhétorique avec sa rigueur démonstrative, sa recherche de l'univocité et sa rationalité. En revanche, elle privilégie la composante «séductrice» de l'argumentation. S'intégrant dans le *mouere et placere* de la rhétorique³²»

Advertising has become a kind of cultural meta-language, synthesizing verbal and nonverbal elements into a « compressed » textuality that sends out its message instantly, effortlessly, sensorially. In fact, advertising has become the poetry of contemporary society seizing art and literature with all available signifiers and signifieds. Although we may superciliously be inclined to condemn its objectives, as an aesthetic-inducing experience, we invariably enjoy it. Advertisements convince, please and seduce under a rhetorical role as commonplaces creators and invariably, have become a mass communication in today's « global culture ».

Whether the techniques of advertising are simply to transmit information or whether they are also to manipulate the consumer's values, by persuasion or otherwise, the message tends very often to be addressed to what we popularly call the 'imagination'. A great challenge of advertising sustains, nourishes or inspires a train of fantasy. No wonder then, advertising is being acknowledged as art more

²⁸ Jean-Michel Adam; Marc Bonhomme, *L'argumentation publicitaire: Rhétorique de l'éloge et de la persuasion : l'analyse des divers aspects du discours publicitaire*, Nathan Université, Paris, 2003.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Rhétorique I*, 1368a

³⁰ C. Perelman et L. Olbrechts –Tyteca, *Traité de l'argumentation*, éd. De l'Université libre de Bruxelles, Bruxelles, 1988

³¹ Jean-Michel Adam; Marc Bonhomme, *L'argumentation publicitaire: Rhétorique de l'éloge et de la persuasion*, Nathan Université, Paris, 2003, p.186

³² Idem, p.194

and more having even its own prize category at the Cannes film festival. Our purpose now is to regard moral advertisements nominated at the festival, recognizing their merit and underlining all this theoretical precepts like *asthesia*: the ability to lead us to the experience sensation in art appreciation. We believe these contributions provide a more comprehensive window into how metaphors work in moral advertising, when the intent is not to sell a product but to transmit an important message or idea, alluding several problems shared by everyone.

Embrace life: always wear your seat belt : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-P17ysYsQM>



Fig.1

The *pathos*, suggested in this first advertising by the slow motion and by the music, is constructed and intensified – *amplificatio* – by a visual metaphor, under an important analogy: a family at home, playing and enjoying in the beginning and everything change, turning immediately to a new scenario and transferring the *imaginarium* for an accident on the road. His wife and his child represents threads of reality, an emotional link that deserves our careful in order to avoid a disaster. The *enargeia* (*evidentia*) is given by the metaphorically representation of man's wife and child instead of seat belt. If we pay attention, we can find all the distinctive parts of rhetoric in figure's *inuentio*, in a *dispositio* of meticulous narrative, enriched by *elocutio* of image, color and music, articulating *memoria*, *actio* and at least, the *intellectio* through the activity of interpretation and learning process. Advertising image has always necessity of a linguistic message, just for develop the argumentation effect³³. So, as principal features of visual argumentation we find:

Qualitative-iconic: the harmony in the beginning, the family smiling, family's serenity, music's harmony and the climax of both corresponds to the accident moment.

Singular-indicative: a context circumscribed, an accident on the road.

Conventional-symbolic: everything changes in seconds, it is important to prevent an accident to avoid the suffering of our family.

³³J.A.C. Brown, *The Techniques of persuasion*, Penguin, 1966, p.25-27; J.R. Rossiter & L.Percy, «Visual communication in advertising», in R.J.Harris (ed) *Information processing research in advertising*, Hillsdale, N.J.Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1983.

Niños con Cancer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI4Jglh4Q1s>



Fig3.

This Advertisement provokes our compassion, empathy and solidarity **because** *pathos* is suggested by the music and by the childish interpretation of disease, based on the dialectic: literal sense versus metaphorical sense. For this child, the healing for her brother's problem is so simple like hair's changing and this is the leit-motiv for the slogan: "we don't ask more than what you can give, help is easy". Due to the analogical connection between each image and its corresponding concept, these images can be considered visual metaphors, the *ecfrasis* process bringing an idea before the eyes. Philips and McQuarrie also point to the necessity to develop a refined framework for visual rhetoric and metaphors in particular³⁴. Accordingly, this topic of visual metaphor has been examined by several writers, Hatcher (1988), Hausman (1989), Johns (1984), Kaplan (1990). On the whole, these writers tend to use the term metaphor rather expansively encompassing some type of visual devices and for the purpose of our discussion, we can define visual metaphor somewhat more narrowly as the representation of an abstract concept through a concrete visual image that bears some analogy to that concept³⁵.

In fact, the presence of pictorial metaphors in advertisements normally requires more processing efforts by the consumer than pictorial elements that are not metaphorically linked. Throughout inferential and heuristic processing, we can state that advertising converts into a narrative fiction whose contents are framed by characters, having the final purpose to involve and to seduce the public³⁶.

Beyond attracting the viewer's attention, the image(s) in ad are typically meant to give rise to some emotional disposition, in this case, toward the social cause. The iconicity of visual images serves this process by making it possible for images to draw upon the rich variety of visual *stimuli* and associated emotions to which we are already attuned through our interactions with our social and

³⁴«Specific pictorial elements can be linked to particular consumer responses and the palette of available pictorial elements has an internal structure such that the location of a pictorial element within this structure indicates the kind of impact that the pictorial element can be expected to have» in Philips and McQuarrie (2004), pp.114.

³⁵Concerning differences in the kind of impact that a visual metaphor can have can be explained by Relevance Theory and the Principle of Relevance vide D. Sperber and Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1986.

³⁶S. Chaiken, «Heuristic versus systematic information processing and the use of source versus message cues in persuasion», in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 39, 752-766

natural environments. By virtue of their iconicity, and under several kinds of conceptual connections – causality, contrast, analogy, generalization - visual ads are able to erect before our eyes a mirror world, with whose inhabitants we are invited to identify or to imagine that we are interacting.

If we assume as a starting point the premise that in an age when consumers are exposed to an estimated 3000 advertisements per day, what does it take to get an advertisement noticed? And are all visual metaphors equally effective? Scott (1994) has shown convincingly that pictures are a convention based in a symbolic system that must be processed cognitively, rather than absorbed peripherally or automatically³⁷. Concerning this aspect, it is pertinent to remember *the elaboration likelihood model (ELM)* posited by Petty and Cacioppo (1981)³⁸ serving as a useful framework for integrating *Aad effects*³⁹ and the more commonly utilized brand attribute ratings. The ELM postulates two basic routes by which a persuasive communication may exert influence on its audience: central processing, where the message content is the primary influence and peripheral processing, in which the audience is affected more by the source and strategies of the message or contextual factors than by actual message content.

Images are complex figurative arguments and need to be described in a visual rhetorical framework. McQuarrie and Mick were the first to combine semiotic analysis and consumer response theories: their attempt to develop a rhetorical framework for both verbal and visual rhetoric in advertising⁴⁰. The distribution and proliferation of rhetorical figures in verbal and visual advertising communication is, however, not completely parallel: verbal advertising communication far more often contains schematic devices, such as rhyme and alliteration, whereas visual advertising communication contains relatively more tropical figures, especially metaphors, as we confirm in our examples.

Concluding remarks: is an advertising a kind of art and pedagogy?

In conclusion we can make another question: what is the value of advertising in general, and what is the value of visual metaphors in this process? Value from the use of advertising will vary from product to product and from time to time, because value is not inherent in the advertising expenditure but rather in the situation in which it appears. Value is not independent of the source and also the acceptance of an advertising message has been shown to vary with the viewer's belief in the truthworthiness of the source of the advertisement. Advertisers are responsible for the creation and the replication of « believability image ». When we think about that, we recognize that advertisers and educators have a great deal in common, based on the same pedagogical ideal as different members of a

³⁷ L.M.Scott, «Images in Advertising: the Need for a Theory of Visual Rhetoric», in *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21, 252-273, 1994.

³⁸ R.E., Petty & J.T. Cacioppo, *Attitudes and persuasion: Classic and contemporary approaches*, Dubuque, Brwon, 1981.

³⁹ Throughout the current discussion Aad is defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion. Vide A.A. Mitchell & J.C. Olson, Are product attribute beliefs the only mediator of advertising effects on brand attitude? In *Journal of Marketing Research* 18, 1981, 318-332.

⁴⁰ E.McQuarrie and D.G.Mick, «Figures of Rhetoric in Advertising Language», in *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, 424-437, 1996.

family whose common idiosyncrasies are obvious to all. They tend to have much the same objectives, at least of an avowed sort and a similar strength of conviction about their ability single-handed to achieve them.

Our study seeks to answer the following question: what is the distinctive contribution that visual images make to persuasive communication, whether in commercial advertising, or in political messages or in social issue campaigns ? An appropriate starting point for addressing this question is to ask a broader one : what are the visual images from other ways of communication? Peirce's system entails three categories : the icon, the index and the symbol : i) iconic signs are characterized by some form of similarity or analogy between the sign and its object ; ii) indexical signs – a sign is indexical if it is actually caused by its object and serves as a physical trace pointing to the object's existence ; iii) symbol : an arbitrary convention on the part of the symbol's users (ex : words).

The term icon is derived from a Greek word for picture or efrastic vision, it should be noted that, as far as semantic features are concerned, it is the indexical and iconic properties of visual images that most clearly set them apart from language and other modes of communication. By drawing on their intuitive understanding as well as a growing body of research concerning the relationship between vision and emotion, advertisers are able to elicit strong, sometimes primal reactions – desire, respect, pity. In short, iconicity gives advertisers access to a broad spectrum of emotional responses that can be enlisted in the service of an ad's cause. The iconicity of visual images is a topic with special relevance for contemporary developments in the world of commercial and social issue advertising. Both indexicality and iconicity may be thought of as « positive » characteristics of visual communication : these two semantic properties are qualities that images possess and that other modes of communication do not.

We also shed light on the relation between pictures and reality, so what are the implications of iconicity for the uses of pictures in ads ? An important first step toward an answer comes from recent work by Damasio (1994)⁴¹, although it may seem natural to think of visual perception as an autonomous psychological process, this writer stress the fact that real-world vision is intimately connected with emotion, which in turn is tied to our functional needs as biological and social creatures. The iconicity of visual images provides advertisers with a variety of tools for handling and we experience the image as a warp in reality not just the manipulation of a symbol. The iconicity and metaphorical power in visual communication make it a vehicle for the discovering of meanings between people who are separated by linguistic or cultural differences but at the same time, between people who are agents in the same commonplace and sharing the same understandable feelings.

⁴¹Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' error: emotion, reason and the human brain*, New York, 1994.

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