

ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Visual Rhetoric: From Elocutio To Inventio



1. The Semiotic Ornatus Perspective on Visual Rhetoric

In his article "The rhetoric of the image" Roland Barthes assumes that if classical rhetoric were to be rethought in structural terms it would "perhaps be possible to establish a general rhetoric of the signifiers of connotation, valid for articulated sound, image, gesture" (1977: 50):

"This rhetoric could only be established on the basis of a quite considerable inventory, but it is possible now to foresee that one will find in it some of the figures formerly identified by the Ancients and the Classics; the tomato, for example, signifies Italianicity by the metonymy and in an other advertisement the sequence of three scenes (Coffee in beans, coffee in powder, coffee sipped in the cup) releases a certain logical relationship in the same way as an asyndeton" (: 49f).

This 'figurative' approach to visual rhetoric is pursued more fully in the text "Rhétorique et image publicitaire". Here Jacques Durand defines rhetoric as the art of fake speaking ("l'art de la parole feinte") (1970: 70), and describes its task as transforming or converting the proper expression ("le langage propre") into a figurative or rhetorical expression ("langage figuré"). What is said by using a rhetorical figure or trope could also have been said in a different, or normal, manner. Durand sought to "find a visual transposition of the rhetorical figures in the advertising image" (1987: 295) by examining more than one thousand magazine advertisements. This was done by considering "a rhetorical figure as a transformation from a 'simple proposition, to a 'figurative proposition'" (: 295). In these cases Barthes and Durand are exponents for what I will call a semiotic ornatus perspective on visual communication and argumentation, i.e. a search for meaning through a search for metaphors, metonymies, repetitions, inversions, and the like in visual communication.

My point here is not to dismiss or reject the great importance and semiotic value of a text such as "The Rhetoric of the Image". Indeed, in this paper I use the concepts of anchorage and relay taken from Barthes' influential article. However,

as the major point of departure for both theoretical and analytical texts dealing with visual rhetoric, such a semiotic perspective is problematic in several ways. In this working paper I will briefly touch upon four arguments where this is the case. I will then try to sketch an alternative approach to visual rhetoric by taking the point of departure in the rhetorical art of *inventio*, rather than in the art of *elocutio*.

2. Four Arguments for the Lack of Usefulness of the Semiotic Ornatus Perspective

Argument 1: The 'transformation theory' is problematic.

The ornatus perspective on visual rhetoric is based on what we could call the 'transformation theory', i.e. the presumption that expressions (either verbal or visual) are transformations from a 'natural' or 'normal' way of expressing the same thing. A point can be expressed in *ordo naturalis*, the natural or ordinary way. However, if we want to add more emotional power and better adherence, the same point can also be expressed in *ordo artificialis*, the artful or artificial way. So, we have a distinction between the proper way of saying something (*langage propre*), and the rhetorical or figurative way of saying something (*langage figuré*). The theoretical problem with this theory of transformation from the natural to the figurative expression – which is a traditional rhetorical view – is, of course, that it is difficult, if at all possible, to distinguish between the two ways of expression, and to define what the so-called natural expression is. It is easy to presuppose a 'natural order', but rather difficult to say what this natural order of a figurative expression might be. The transparent or 'sober' expression is itself a rhetorical choice and strategy. What then, is this kind of expression a transformation from? This presumption of a 'natural' or 'normal' expression is equally problematic when dealing with visual representations. A distinctive feature of an iconic representation is that it has a 'natural presence' in its own right. In other words, it is what it shows. When dealing with images one can choose between countless expressions created by techniques of editing, framing, duration, *mise-en-scène*, and so on. Often, it is rather difficult to judge one expression as more 'natural' than another. Of course, we tend to notice when the regular conventions of a particular genre of images are changed: If the commentator in a news programme is seen in extreme close-up or from a bird's-eye perspective, or if the characters in a movie suddenly face the camera and start talking directly to the audience. In rhetoric, however, the main purpose of figurative language is to stir the emotions unnoticed, without drawing attention to the language style itself. In fact, a general rule of rhetoric is that the language and the language form must be

transparent – as an unnoticed window through which we see the message.

Argument 2: Ornatus is a very limited part of rhetoric, and the semiotic ornatus approach therefore contains a limited understanding of rhetorical persuasion.

Ornatus is but one of four elements of elocutio, in addition to perspicuitas, puritas and aptum. Furthermore, elocutio is but one of the five stages of composition. To make tropes and figures the starting point of a discussion of visual rhetoric is therefore a violent limitation of the art of rhetoric, because it only entails a fourth of a fifth of the art. Consequently, we no longer talk about rhetoric but rather of stylistics.

Tropes and figures are primarily means of expressing arguments – found in the stage of inventio – as evidently as possible. They are means for catching audience attention, making the audience remember the arguments in the speech, and, most importantly, stirring the emotions of the audience. Of course tropes and figures can have a persuasive effect, and they can show or illustrate important arguments or lines of reasoning. But they do not constitute the argument or the reasoning itself.

From an argumentative point of view, tropes and figures constitute the micro perspective whose main task is limited to creating rhetorical pathos. In this sense, ornatus performs a rhetorical and a persuasive appeal. But the emotional appeals of ethos and pathos do not give a comprehensive and understanding view of rhetoric unless they are connected to the most important rhetorical appeal, – logos. A unity of ethos, logos and pathos is thus a prerequisite in the search for a theory of visual rhetoric.

Argument 3: Ornatus is embedded in verbal language.

Because of the strong connection between ornatus and the verbal language – where the first in a sense is embedded in the second – the ornatus perspective gives us a very unhelpful and unmanageable starting point for critical and theoretical treatment of visual rhetoric.

Whereas the general and universally valid thoughts of argumentation and topoi in inventio are more or less free from the constraints of verbal expression, the tropes and figures of ornatus often are their verbal form or shape. The meaning of tropes and figures such as prosopopoeia (confirmatio), anaphora, and alliteration are embedded in the expressions themselves. Expressions and meanings such as these are either impossible to find in visual representations or can only be located with an unreasonable constraining of both the figurative expression and the visual

representation.

Argument 4: The semiotic ornatus approach can say nothing about hierarchies of values, or of the importance of the rhetorical situation.

Because the semiotic ornatus approach neither deals with hierarchies of values nor with the rhetorical situation, it provides only a limited contribution to knowledge about the structures, elements and effects of visual argumentation. The fundamental structuralist view of pictures and visual argumentation in this approach also tends to concentrate primarily on relations inside the picture frames, and therefore tends to overlook the rhetorically very important aspects of the rhetorical situation: For instance the classic concepts of the right moment of speaking, *kairos*, and of proper adaptation of the speech to the occasion, *aptum* (*decorum*). These are necessary and important rhetorical considerations concerning the relations between the five constants in the rhetorical situation. Cicero puts it this way: “no single kind of oratory suits every cause or audience or speaker or occasion” (*De Oratore* III.liv.210).

Along with the importance of the rhetorical situation itself, also the concepts of *topoi* and hierarchies of values are important for understanding argumentation. In *The New Rhetoric*, Chaim Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca says that “all argumentation aims at the adherence of minds” (1971: 14). Adherence of minds requires that the rhetor finds a common ground of values or attitudes both for himself and the audience. A common ground – or warrant – is required in order to persuade. Basing the argumentation on the common ground that “democracy is good”, a politician opposed to membership of the EU can try and persuade an audience that the EU is an undemocratic institution. If members of the audience accept that the EU is undemocratic, they will be influenced (or even persuaded) into casting a “no” vote to membership of the EU, on the basis of their adherence to the warrant that democracy is good. We cannot make considerations like these through the semiotic ornatus approach. This is because it is not a theory about argumentation, merely one about semiotic signification. Of course, semiotic theories are significant. But it is important to remember that analysis of semiotic signification does not automatically include analysis of argumentation. The attempt to understand persuasive signs and discourses through tropes and figures, or through concepts such as denotation, connotation, paradigm, and syntagm, does not entail thoughts or concepts that in a reasonable way can account for situational constraints or for the elements, structures, and hierarchies

of argumentative topoi and values. Neither can the semiotic ornatus perspective in a practical analytical way distinguish between a statement and an argument, or distinguish between a good and a bad argument.

3. A Rhetorical Conception of Argumentation – Inventio as the Point of Departure

As already indicated, the project of Roland Barthes – and of his followers – is more semiotic than it is rhetorical. “The Rhetoric of the Image” is more about semiotic signification than it is about rhetorical argumentation. It is furthermore doubtful that we can find one general or universal rhetorical form independent of medium or substance, and if possible, it is certainly doubtful both that such a form represents a truly persuasive rhetorical operation, and that such an operation has its ontological foundation in ornatus. We are more justified in claiming that such universal ways of argumentation and appeals are to be found in the rhetorical art of inventio, which is not in the same way tied up in and embedded in verbal language. I believe that two assumptions are important with inventio as the point of departure for a theory or an analytical view of visual argumentation:

(A) Rhetorical argumentation is an attempt to gain adherence to a claim or an attitude among an audience. This is done by strengthening and changing relevant hierarchies of lines of reasoning, values or viewpoints (common topics), by appealing through the three rhetorical proofs: ethos, logos and pathos.

(B). Practical rhetoric can be characterised as situational intentionality. Rhetoric rests on the orator who tries to promote his intention and gain adherence to his points in a particular situation through the use of language.

Let’s take a closer look at these two points:

(A) The Understanding of Argumentation as Creating or Changing Persuasive Hierarchies

According to Aristotle (A.I.3; 1354a), we can distinguish between proofs that belong to the art of rhetoric, ‘intrinsic proofs’ (entechnoi) and proofs or things that do not, ‘external proofs’ (atechnoi).**[i]** The “intrinsic proofs” are proofs that are furnished through the speech and which may reside in the character of the speaker (ethos), in a certain disposition in the audience (pathos) or in the speech itself (logos). Only these proofs – or ways of appeal – Aristotle says, are intrinsic to the art of rhetoric. He considers the rational logos appeal as the most constitutive point of departure for rhetorical argumentation, while the emotional appeals of pathos and ethos are necessary supports for logos. They are supports or pillars that indicate the degree of credibility, importance and value in the

argument.

Aristotle then ascribes two modes of argument to rhetoric: the enthymeme, which is a rhetorical syllogism, and the example which is considered a rhetorical induction. The enthymeme is viewed as the most important kind of deductive demonstration and proof. This significant rhetorical way of providing proof is characteristic in its dealing with topical reasoning and thought patterns which arrange information and unite it in a coherent and persuasive form of argumentation. By topical reasoning I mean topics in Aristotle's sense of the word: structural argumentative forms without content in their own right (B.XVII; 1391b). These are structures of rational argumentation that are manifest as common topics, or common structural forms of argumentation.

Aristotle points to "the possible and the impossible" as an example of a common topic. For instance: "[I]f one like thing is possible, so is the other" (B.XVIII.5; 1392a). This latent persuasive structure can be found in practical everyday argument such as: "When countries similar to ours can do without the EU, Norway too can do without the EU".

In other words, our use of specific arguments is based on a variety of common topics in which the arguments and their premisses are embedded. The rhetorical appeal of a specific argument is placed on this foundation of common topics, and is furthermore based on common social, cultural and universal human values and premisses.

In their treatment of such common topics - or loci according to their terminology - Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The New Rhetoric* talk about the quantity locus and the quality locus (1971: 85-92). The first term implies that something is better than something else for quantitative reasons, such as the superiority of that which is accepted by the majority. Thus, the quantity locus is the foundation of the democracy warrant mentioned above.

Opposed to this, there is the quality locus which emphasizes superiority of the unique, and it therefore implies that one bright person may be more right than several who are not so bright. Common topics such as these can be found both in verbal and in visual argumentation. For instance, in advertising it is possible to argue both by means of images and in words that a product is a good one because many people use it.

If we accept this line of reasoning, that some topical arguments can be manifested both in verbal and in visual communication, we can also assume that although visual and verbal argumentation are different forms or substances of communication, they do at least share some kind of common argumentative

ontology. If this is the case, we may use the art of rhetoric to say something about visual argumentation. Contrary to what is the case with the semiotic ornatus approach, this kind of general perspective may run into fewer problems in the inter-semiotic translation of rhetorical appeal from one substance or medium to another.

In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, *logos* is described as the primary and only independent rhetorical proof (A.I.3, A.II). The proofs of *ethos* and *pathos* are always secondary, and they are always dependent on *logos*. The rhetorical enthymeme is, as he describes it, "the flesh and blood of proof" (A.I.3, 1354a; p. 66). By looking at Aristotle's rhetorical enthymeme we can locate its persuasiveness in two assumptions:

1. The existence of common and interconnected *topoi* in the form of human values, attitudes and convictions, that tie social and cultural groups together and create the foundation upon which the persuasive appeal can be built.
2. The assumption that a person will accept the conclusion in the rhetorical enthymeme, if he or she accepts the premisses in the same enthymeme.

This Aristotelian conception of enthymemic argumentation presupposes that a strong stirring of emotions will follow from the acceptance of an attitude or an assessment. As pointed out by for instance Edwin Black (1978: Chapter IV & V), the emotional effect is, in a way, a consequence of the attitude or assessment that the argumentation creates.

If the rhetorical proofs and the use of *topoi/loci* are to function in a persuasively controlling way, they need to function in a structured hierarchy of values. Hierarchies such as these arrange our conception of the world, and hence our attitudes and actions. Broadly speaking, we induce change in actions and attitudes by introducing different structures or compositions of these hierarchies, or by exchanging the values or common topics upon which they are based. To label the EU as an undemocratic institution is to categorize EU into a persuasive hierarchy of values based on the locus of quantity, or more specifically on the grounding value or warrant: "Democracy is good".

An understanding of verbal as well as visual rhetoric requires an understanding of rhetorical operations such as the cognitive structuring of *topoi*, values and attitudes. We cannot find any good explanations or accounts of conditions and circumstances such as these by using the semiotic ornatus approach. Instead, we may use for instance Stephen Toulmin's model of argumentation (1958, Toulmin

et al. 1978), which contains the possibility of placing argumentative elements in a structured hierarchy.

Toulmin's model takes a pragmatic and analytical approach to argumentation by focussing on the process of argumentation and on the structuring of elements. Hence, we may learn something about the function of the various elements in a persuasive discourse by using the model.

It is of course not possible to unfold neither the argumentation theory of Toulmin nor its implications here. But I believe that a model of argumentation such as the one from Toulmin can give us not only the possibility of seeing the structures both of a single argument (the micro level) and of a more elaborate string of reasoning (the macro level). It can also provide us with a view of the hierarchical layout of arguments. By determining which elements function as claim, datum and warrant, it can illustrate the connection between the elements, and indicate which elements that are based on one another.

Let us now go to the second assumption for inventio as a starting point for a theory or analytical view of visual argumentation. My argument so far presupposes that rhetorical discourse is always driven by intention in a particular situation, and that it has the persuasiveness as its most important constitutive feature. I have chosen to term this conception of rhetoric as situational intentionality.

(B) Rhetoric as Situational Intentionality – The Persuasive Continuum

With very few exceptions, rhetorical theorists generally agree that rhetoric has to do with persuasive discourse. Rhetoric is not constitutively about style, form or genre, but rather about intentionality. Placing intentionality at the core of rhetoric gives us an useful limitation and distinction. Consequently, a discourse is not rhetorical if it is not consciously intentional. I do not behave rhetorically when screaming "ouch!, that hurts!" when I accidentally hit myself with a hammer and thereby unintendedly "persuade" my wife to come to my rescue.

Even if we limit rhetoric to intentionality, we are still left with a tremendously broad topic which is hard to get into proper theoretical perspective. One may say that I behave intentionally when asking for the salt, or when I slam the door during a quarrel. But is it rhetoric?

As I indicated above, it may be hard to distinguish between what is rhetoric and what is not. With the limited propositional syntax of images (Messaris 1997:x), this distinction turns out to be even more problematic in visual argumentation. Maybe such a distinction is not very practical. Maybe we should rather

distinguish between different forms or degrees of rhetoric or intentionality, depending on how “much” rhetoric is needed to get the adherence of minds in the audience.

In this manner, we can distinguish between different forms of rhetoric according to the relationship between the orator and the audience, and according to the degree of their disagreement, divergence or opposition. In a rhetorical perspective it is the positions in the communicative situations that are interesting, as different positions lead to, or at least demand, different forms of rhetoric.

When a teacher explains how the EU is functioning, the teacher is using rhetoric in a broad persuasio sense. Here, the teacher’s intention is to create an understanding of the EU, and in so doing, language is mainly used referentially. If a student objects to the truthfulness and relevance of the account, the teacher’s subsequent attempt at persuading or convincing the student of the accurateness and the relevance of the argument would maybe still be dominated by referential language. What is important here, however, is that it is also likely that the teacher’s discourse would now contain a higher degree of persuasiveness because of the student’s opposition. The teacher would arrange or manage his discourse according to the objections of the student, and he would try to put forward the best reasons and arguments for his own view. He would thus exercise rhetoric in a restricted persuasio sense.

We can thus place the different rhetorical appeals and addresses on a continuum between a slightly opposed audience and a strongly opposed audience. This is what I will term the persuasive continuum. It is common and classical rhetorical knowledge that an orator cannot successfully speak in the same way to audiences that are either negative or positive to the message. We can find it in the already mentioned remark of Cicero that an orator should not always speak in the same way to everybody, against everybody, for everybody or with everybody, and we can also find it in Socrates’ remark that it is not difficult to praise Athenians in Athens.

4. Can This Understanding of Argumentation Contribute to an Illumination of Visual Rhetoric?

Towards what kind of analytical approach to visual rhetoric do these considerations about rhetorical argumentation point? Of course, this is neither the time nor the place to unfold a full theory of visual rhetoric. Still, it is clear, I think, that at least three elements must be more central to such a work:

1. The rhetorical proofs (ethos, logos and pathos)

2. The argumentative hierarchies of values and topoi
3. The situational intentionality of rhetoric

A few remarks are needed to point the direction of such a rhetorical inventio approach to argumentation in visual argumentation. First of all, the difference to the semiotic ornatus approach lies in the possibility and choice of questions one is directed to, and may ask, in connection with a treatise of visual argumentation.

While the semiotic ornatus approach will lead the examiner of visual rhetoric to ask questions of how to find visual elements which somehow fit the rhetorical figures of ornatus, the approach lacks the possibility of asking questions about the kinds of proof, the argumentative hierarchies, and the situational intentionality. These kinds of questions, I believe, may not only be asked, but will also be satisfyingly answered through the approach such as the one I indicate here.

Before continuing with the remarks about which questions and possible answers the inventio approach might direct us towards, it is necessary to provide a more precise indication of what I mean with the term visual rhetoric, and what the particular visual contribution in a piece of visual rhetoric might be. This we will do with a short – and by no means complete – listing of different kinds of visual techniques and manifestations that can perform visual rhetoric. This overview covers visual rhetoric in moving images, although it also includes the rhetoric of non-moving images. We can distinguish at least three basic kinds of visual rhetoric, or main areas where the visual plays an important role in the argumentation.

1. The Rhetoric of Mise-en-Scène

The term rhetoric of mise-en-scène includes the visual aspects within a single shot (or picture or photograph) that are used to support or co-create the rhetorical intention of the message. This may for instance be setting, colours, shapes, symbols, and cameramovement, -angle, -perspective, and -distance.

The rhetorical function of such visual techniques, or visual rhetorics, is to induce general moods and feelings in the viewer, and to create associations. Primarily, they are emotional appeals (ethos and pathos) and particularly dependent on anchoring in order to create a complete rhetorical argument, including the appeal of logos. The concept of actio, as it is treated by traditional rhetoric, can be seen as a special and significant part of the mise-en-scène.

2. The Rhetoric of Editing

The rhetoric of editing includes the creation of meaning and argumentation

through the connecting of different images; The use of fades, dissolves, cuts, following or breaking the rules of continuity to support the rhetorical message; The use of editing pace, for instance rapid editing as a way of signifying energy and youth, and thereby performing a certain ethos appeal.

3. *The Rhetoric of Dispositio*

The rhetoric of dispositio concerns the global form of and organising of either a single image or a longer construction of moving images. In a treatise of images in advertising, Scott (1994: 266) talks about “the arrangement of visual argument”, and how the order of argumentation may be guided by the layout of an advertisement. The film theorists Bordwell & Thompson discuss the rhetorical form (1990: 99ff.) of a film, and illustrate with a film that begins with “an introduction of the situation, goes on to a discussion of the relevant facts, then presents proofs that a given solution fits those facts, and ends with an epilogue that summarizes what has come before”. This thus follows the traditional rhetorical dispositio. However, we should not necessarily think of the traditional rhetorical dispositio when we are talking about the rhetoric of dispositio. By rhetorical dispositio, we here mean a global arrangement of the visual elements which convincingly supports – or even creates – the intentional message.

We have to remember, however, that these kinds of visual rhetorics are not rhetorical in their own right. Yellow colour, fast editing, round or square shapes or lines, the global form or dispositio of a film, are all elements that acquire their rhetorical significance from the rhetorical discourse which they are a part of.

The viewers’ determination of the rhetorical significance of or meaning of a particular discourse does partly take place through what we may term the rhetoric of anchoring and relaying. The rhetorical meaning is in part created horizontally or diachronically, when we as readers of a text or viewers of a television programme are continuously evaluating and perceiving the elements and events in a discourse. We do this while keeping in mind our expectations for the future of the discourse and our experience with the discourse so far (Holub 1984: 90). Within reception theory (see for instance Iser 1978) this particular creation of meaning is described by the terms ‘wandering viewpoint’, ‘protension’, and ‘retention’.

But the rhetoric of anchoring and relaying is also partly a vertical or synchronous creation of rhetorical meaning. The reader or viewer create meaning of the rhetorical discourse through a continuous hermeneutic movement between the visual expression and for instance a written text, spoken words, sounds or music.

Not even the rhetorical discourse itself is rhetorical entirely in its own right. Rather, the discourse gains its rhetorical significance from a rhetorical situation (As pointed out by for instance Bitzer 1968). The viewer thus performs several intermingling rhetorical hermeneutic movements when trying to recreate a mediated argument: A horizontal and a vertical hermeneutic movement between the different elements in the rhetorical discourse, a movement between the rhetorical discourse and the rhetorical situation, and a movement between the elements in the discourse and the rhetorical situation.

Keeping in mind that the rhetorical situation is created by, or even has its ontological foundation in, an instance of situational intentionality, we can now more clearly see the importance of the concept of situational intentionality. We may also understand why it is problematic that the semiotic ornatus approach, with its inherent structuralist view, overlook the significance of situational considerations.

Some Questions and Considerations Concerning the Rhetorical Proofs:

When using the rhetorical appeals in criticism and analysis of visual discourse, we must first consider whether visual argumentation is actually able to persuade in a traditionally rhetorical sense. In Aristotle's view, the emotional proofs of such pure verbal texts are thought to function as supporting pillars for logos, which is the primary proof and the most constitutive point of departure in rhetorical argumentation. Does visual argumentation function in the same way? Can visual expressions rather be expected to evoke emotional dispositions that in turn create an attitude that fits the emotional disposition? Does visual argumentation operate in a different order, where the emotional effect does not emanate the acceptance of an attitude, but rather produces it?

Is it typical for visual argumentation to evoke and stir emotions, and then (for instance through verbal support) to legitimate these emotions with fitting attitudes? We may ask whether the basic persuasive elements and structures are common to both visual and verbal argumentation, but that their place or order in the persuasive motion are different in the two instances. A discussion of questions such as these constitutes one of the many small steps towards a more comprehensive understanding of visual rhetoric.

A reasonable point of departure might be an investigation of the use of more particular analytical considerations about the rhetorical appeals in visual rhetoric. Possible questions might be: Which appeals are mainly made by the visual part

and which are made in the verbal part of the expression? Which are present and which are absent?

Some Questions and Considerations Concerning the Argumentative Hierarchies of Values and Topoi:

The above reflections about argumentative hierarchies of values and topoi indicate another group of appropriate considerations and questions both in the theoretical uncovering of structures and elements in visual rhetoric, and in the practical critical analysis. These are considerations and questions such as: What is the topical foundation for the argumentation? Which topoi and values constitute the persuasive hierarchies, and how is the argumentation and its elements structured in these hierarchies? Which place and function does visual communication occupy in this structure of argumentation?

These circumstances can favourably be uncovered through argumentation analysis by using Toulmin's model of argumentation. This is so first of all because this type of analysis can illuminate both the hierarchies and structures of the argumentation, and the foundational values and topoi in the appeal. Secondly, this type of analysis may place a single argument into a larger structured hierarchy of arguments, topoi and values.

In the illumination of the function and value of images and visual representation in rhetorical utterances, the advantage of the Toulmin model is that it can more clearly show the function of the visual expression in the arguments of a persuasive discourse. Does it function as claim, data or warrant? What is the relation between the visual expression and the degree of explicitness in the argumentation? What is the connection between the visual expression and the kinds of claims, data and warrants in the argumentation?

Some Questions and Considerations Concerning the Concept of Situational Intentionality:

We should consider and clarify the communicative situation both in the attempt to say something about how a rhetorical discourse works and how well we can expect it to work. As previously mentioned, there are two significant elements: the rhetor's intention with the message and the discourse, and the audience's opposition.

Generally speaking this perspective implies that the stronger the opposition, the greater the necessity of using verbal anchoring in the structuring of the desired hierarchy of topoi and values. The opposite also applies: the slighter, or weaker,

the opposition, the less important the verbal anchoring will be. For instance:

The weaker the opposition in the audience

- the better is the possibility of succeeding rhetorically by visually confirming and supporting the present hierarchy of values and topoi in the audience,
- the greater is the possibility of succeeding rhetorically with hidden, indirect and vague argumentation through visual expressions.
- the more indirect and ambiguously advocating can the rhetor be,
- which is best done visually. And the lesser is the importance of giving clear and explicit guidance about what the audience is to do, or how or why, - which is very difficult to do visually.
- the more dominating can the aesthetic and emotional appeal through ethos and pathos be, - which is best done visually.
- the greater is the possibility succeeding rhetorically by mere creation of associative effects, - which is best done visually.
- the greater the value of what in advertising is known as product knowledge and product memory, - which is easily performed visually.

And the less the necessity of attitude - and action-changing rhetoric, which is difficult to perform visually. That is, the more functional will what we could call affirmative rhetoric be.

The stronger the opposition in the audience

- the greater is the demand for rhetor to create changes in the topical hierarchy of values in the audience, - which is rather difficult to do visually.
- the greater is the demand for explicit, direct and specific argumentation, - which is best performed verbally.
- the greater is the demand for discursive or analytical argumentation. That is a more "rational" line of reasoning, where the appeal of logos is central. This does, of course, not mean that emotional appeals are out of the question.
- the less is the value of product knowledge rhetoric and product memory rhetoric, and the greater the demand for rhetoric designed to change attitudes and action. In other words, the less effective affirmative rhetoric is.

5. A Few Concluding Remarks

This has been a very short and tentative account of some problems in the use of the semiotic ornatus approach to visual rhetoric, and a very limited indication of an alternative possibility. Even though this is truly work in progress, hopefully these considerations have made it somewhat clearer that a turn from elocutio to

inventio is required in the quest for a more comprehensive theory of visual rhetoric.

Compared with the semiotic ornatus perspective, such a turn improves the possibility of understanding visual rhetoric on its own terms without a distorting reliance on the formal structures of the verbal language. It can also better take the more general considerations about the rhetorical proofs, the argumentative hierarchies, and the situational intentionality into account.

Furthermore, an approach of this kind can more fully and precisely make explicit and explain the invisible and implicit macro level, supporting – and to a certain degree creating – an instance of visual argumentation. It is an approach that has the potential of uncovering the connections between such a macro level and the micro level of a particular piece of argumentation.

Of course, this rhetorical inventio approach is also problematic in several ways. For instance, in its present form there is a tendency to rely on a purely rational, Aristotelian understanding of rhetoric and argumentation, with the risk of neglecting some of the more irrational elements in visual argumentation. However, even though both the rhetorical art of inventio and the Toulmin model of argumentation are in many ways attached to rational – and in some degree verbal – argumentation, it still seems to entail the most comprehensive and illustrating approach. Although the semiotic ornatus approach leaves no room for the inventio approach, the latter can actually embody the first.

Here we have only briefly looked at a small part of what a rhetorical inventio dominated theory of visual argumentation would consist of and implicate. Naturally, adjustments will be necessary in the further search for a truly visual, comprehensive and illustrating theory of visual rhetoric.

NOTES

i. We here use Lawson-Tancred's translation of entechnoi and atechnoi, what Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971: 9) term 'technical' and 'extra-technical' proofs, what L. F. Bitzer (1968: 8) terms 'artistic' and 'in-artistic' proofs, and what the Loeb translation terms 'artificial' and 'inartificial' proofs.

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