How are images used for visual argumentation?
The logic of images in philosophy of language and semiotics

1 and not image = 2 or 🌅

THE
image
TWELFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

PICTURE A PANDEMIC

The Visual Contruction of Meaning in Digital Networks

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PARRHASIVS VELO, VOLVCRIS CEV FALLITVR VVA.

Zeuxis and Parrhasios were competing to see who could paint the most lifelike image. Zeuxis painted grapes so lifelike that birds flew to the painting and wanted to eat the grapes. But Parrhasius presented Zeuxis with an image that seemed to be covered by a cloak of linen. When Zeuxis wanted to remove the cloak, he realized that he had fallen for an optical illusion or trompe l'oeil.

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Logic and visual argumentation

Immanuel Kant, 1791

"Thoughts without content are empty,
intuitions without concepts are blind."
(Kant and Weischedel 1983, B 76, A52)

This is followed by an account of how semiotics supports a **logic of images** in coherence with the concept of logic from the ancient Greek as a **thinking art, procedure, consequentialism, or reasonable inference** (cf. Pfeifer and Braun 1993; Schopenhauer 2019, 98).

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Image based logic

"We understand visual arguments to be arguments (in the traditional premise and conclusion sense) which are conveyed in images."
(Birdsell, David S., Groarke, Leo 2007, 103)

Albrecht Dürer's painting Young Hare, 1502

This rhetorical trick can be easily exposed, because then likewise, a punch in the eye of an antagonist appears to such an extent evident or empirically significant as to finally convince him of one's own opinion, in an otherwise linguistic dissent.

For example, Albrecht Dürer's painting Young Hare provides evidence that convinces, because it visually argues by means of a photorealistic representation in 1502, how a field hare can be designated as realistically ("verisimilitude") as possible by similarity.

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Images do present a premise or a visually communicative assumption in a particular, more expansive definition of the term, but they do not contain a conclusion. Accordingly, the term "visual argumentation" can in no way mean an argumentation that is equivalent to the use of symbols in a language with a vocabulary.
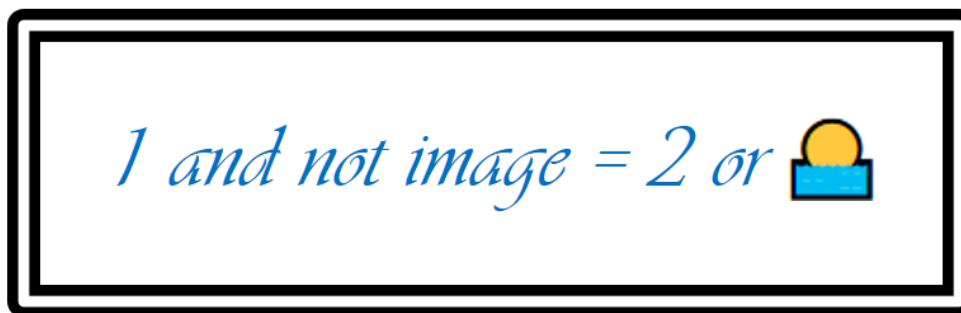

Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

For images, there are no argumentative counter-images that put the facts of a first image in contradiction to those of a second image. Logical terms and usually also the dialog itself do not occur or rarely occur within visual communication.

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What is meant by logic of images?

$$1 \text{ and not image} = 2 \text{ or}$$

This historical development of the terms probably led to the interpretation of the term >logic< as the doctrine of thought, procedure, and finally consequentialism of reasoned conclusion.

In a more metaphorical interpretation, the notion of a visual argumentation seems clearer, if it implies that the logic of images describes a consequentiality which suggests that recipients might be convinced or seduced by an evidence of the images.

Foto:: Andreas Schelske

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Syntactics of visual argumentation in Peirce's semiotics

Pragmatics → **I**nterpretant (meaning)
rheme,
decisign (overwhelming argument),
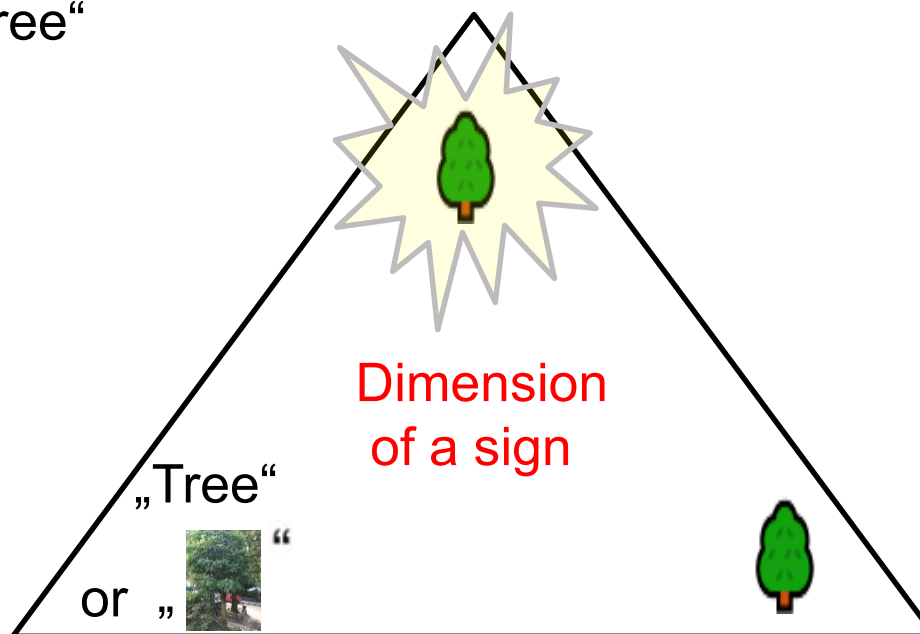argument (logic argument)

" or „Tree"

„

Syntaktics

Semantics

Representamen
qualisign,
sinsign,
legisign (for instance: linear perspective)

„Tree"

or   „ "

Dimension
of a sign

Object
Icon,
Index,
Symbol

The Essential Peirce, 2:272–73, foto: Schelske 2021

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Semantics of visual argumentation

As an overwhelming argument, the
iconic object reference appears, for example,
when recipients perceive a bear (decisign)
as so cute (rheme),
that they claim that such a cute-looking bear
could never kill people.

The image logic of visual argumentation works
in the icon with the expectation that the image
seduces, entices, or manipulates a recipient
into an action, although in formal logic a very
different conclusion would be necessary.

For formal propositional logic would express: If
brown bears are large predators and all large
predators can kill humans, then it can be
concluded that brown bears can kill humans.

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Semantics of visual argumentation

For example, Coca Cola advertising often shows happy people, although it is by no means to be expected that the consumption of a Coke makes everyone happy.

The overwhelming argument of an icon results from the communicative power to create things, bodies, and lifeworlds in signifying images, although sometimes they can never be experienced - as shown - and are not even meant to be experienced.

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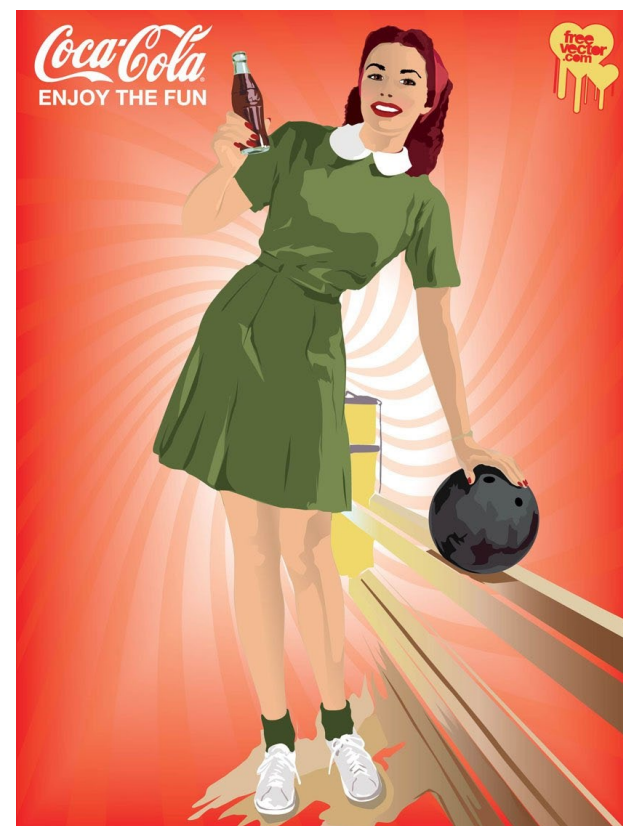
Semantics of visual argumentation

Visual argumentation is
never symbolic, because
it develops its persuasive
power from the
aesthetics of the material
or the means of
signification and the
iconic object reference.

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Pragmatics of visual argumentation

The first X-ray images in 1895 finally showed an undeniable fact and a specific reality of human skeletons and organs.

All examples of imaging techniques are based on the evidence that physical measurands depend on the causal relationship of cause and effect.

From such imaging measurements follows causality, which in the natural sciences is considered a basis of theory building and often evidence of a reality. The precision that Birdsell and Groarke ascribe to the meanings of words is clearly shown by images with respect to the visualization of measurands, although their meanings remain manifold or interpretatively open.

Source: Lange123; Röntgenbild eines Thorax mit Bronchialkarzinom https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C3%B6ntgen#/media/Datei:Thorax_pa_peripheres_Brronchialcarcinom_li_OF.jpg

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Images based on the causality of measured quantities have a much higher persuasive power than artistic images when scientific facts are to be proven in our culture (!).

In the European Middle Ages, for example, elephants were often drawn with no models, according to linguistic descriptions.
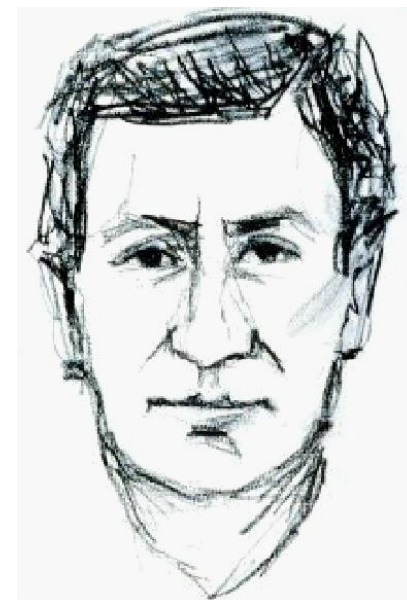
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Second conclusion on visual argumentation

The logic of images in the artistic type and in the type of measured quantities is based on the persuasive power of an overwhelming argument, which is to convince before all argumentation of a formal logic. If an image is based on the causality of measurands, then its overwhelming argument is to be recognized in this, since there is no counter-image to oppose it. If an image is based on the creativity of the communicator, then it achieves a willingness to follow because the image aesthetics subjectively please the viewer.

For example, a drawing can prove the fact of a gruesome murder, but at the same time, it disgusts viewers and in this respect is not aesthetically convincing.

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