The Role of Ostension in Visual Argumentation[1]

El rol de la ostensión en la argumentación visual

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Abstract: I argue that images can figure in arguments as objects of ostension. Typically ostensive acts take place as parts of a directive speech-act (e.g. the speech-act conveyed by *Look at O*). In the cases described below directives work as premises in an argument scheme whose warrant can be stated in the form "perception of the ostended object (or event) counts as a reason for the conclusion". These are heterogeneous or multimodal arguments making use of both verbal and visual resources. Images play a substantial role in such arguments from ostension since they furnish a sort material evidence that words cannot convey.

Keywords: Advertising, directives, inference, multimodality, visual argument, ostension.

Resumen: Mantengo que las imágenes pueden aparecer en los argumentos como objetos de ostensión. Normalmente los actos ostensivos forman parte de actos de habla directivos (por ejemplo, el acto de habla realizado al decir *Mira O*). En los casos descritos en el artículo los directivos funcionan como premisas en un esquema argumentativo cuya garantía puede formularse como "la percepción del objeto (o evento) de ostensión es una razón para la conclusión". Son argumentos heterogéneos o multimodales que combinan recursos verbales y visuales. Las imágenes desempeñan un papel sustantivo en tales argumentos por ostensión puesto que suministran un tipo de evidencia material que las palabras no pueden dar.

Palabras clave: Argumentación publicitaria, argumentación visual, directivos, inferencia, multimodalidad, ostensión.

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1. Two concepts of argument

Visual arguments seem to enjoy an eternal youth in argumentation theory. *Argumentation and Advocacy* published monographic issues on visual argument in 1996 and 2007. A comparison between them yields the conclusion that eleven years later the central question remained whether there are or not visual arguments. Nor has it changed in the last five years, as one can ascertain reading, for instance, the recent paper by Barceló (2012).

To address the question of the existence of visual arguments one has to settle first what counts as an argument. The concept of argument can be understood in many different and perhaps complementary ways. The terms of the debate on the existence of visual arguments change depending on the chosen account. I will consider here two interrelated oppositions:

a) structural vs functional definitions of argument,
b) argument as product vs argument as process.

Structural definitions of argument are common in logic textbooks:

> An argument is a connected series of statements or propositions, some of which are intended to provide support, justification or evidence for the truth of another statement or proposition. Arguments consist of one or more premises and a conclusion. The premises are those statements that are taken to provide the support or evidence; the conclusion is that which the premises allegedly support. (Matthew McKeon, "Argument". *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* IEP, http://www.iep.utm.edu/argument/ accessed July 7, 2014).

> An argument is a set of claims in which one or more of them –the premises- are put forward so as to offer reasons for another claim, the conclusion (Govier, 2010, p. 1).

> An argument is a set of propositions, some of which are designated as premises and, in the simplest case, one of the propositions is designated as the conclusion to be proved (Walton, 2013, p. 89).

Although for some authors the constituents of arguments are statements while others talk instead of propositions or claims, for present purposes

these are minor differences. From this point of view, to ask whether there are visual arguments is to ask whether images or pictures can express statements (i.e., if they can have propositional content): "Visual arguments are to be understood as propositional arguments in which the propositions and their argumentative function and roles are expressed visually" (Blair, 1996, p. 26). Thus the structural account of argument leads to a first topic in the debate on visual arguments.

We should distinguish between purely visual arguments, the component parts of which are exclusively visual and not verbal, and what Barceló, following Barwise, calls heterogeneous arguments. These are «arguments that are not conveyed through a single medium, but instead make use of both verbal and visual resources» (2012:356). To have heterogeneous propositional arguments it will be enough that images can occur as parts of propositional units playing the role of premise or conclusion.[2]

However a visual argument is more than an argument containing images. Johnson (2003) proposes a test based on the idea that visual arguments are those in which images do the essential argumentative work.

> If you can take away the text and what remains can be seen to constitute an argument, then the argument is visual. If, when you take away the text, it becomes unclear either that there is an argument or what that argument is, then the message is not a visual argument (Johnson, 2003, pp. 3-4).

But it can be objected that in fact Johnson's test takes a visual argument to be one in which verbal elements do not play any essential role. Thus it is not appropriate for heterogeneous arguments, in which both verbal and visual elements can play an essential argumentative role.

Johnson's criterion embodies one of the current objections to the existence of visual arguments; viz. that visual argumentation depends on verbal argumentation.

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[2] The concept of multimodal argumentation generalizes that of visual argumentation to "modes of arguing that invoke non-verbal sounds, smells, tactile sensations, music and other non-verbal entities" (Groarke, 2015, p. 133).

> Argumentation requires the use of language. [...] non-verbal means of communication can never completely replace verbal ones: argumentation without the use of language is impossible (van Eemeren, Grotendorst & Kruiger, 1984, p. 3).

However this objection does not bear against heterogeneous arguments. A suitable test to identify heterogeneous arguments will rather be something like this:

> If you can take away visual elements and what remains can be seen to constitute an argument, then the argument is not visual. If, when you take away the visual elements, it becomes unclear either that there is an argument or what that argument is, then the message is a visual argument.

The scope and adequacy of this test depends on the intended meaning of "take away". The dependency of visual elements on verbal ones can be understood in two ways.

1) In a genuine visual argument there are visual components that cannot be removed.
2) In a genuine visual argument there are visual components that cannot be replaced by verbal elements.

At first sight Blair (1996) and Johnson (2003) disagree over the existence of visual arguments. But this is only an apparent disagreement. Blair accepts that there are visual arguments in sense 1) but not in sense 2). When Johnson rejects the existence of visual arguments on the grounds that «ultimately the process of reconstructing visual images as arguments will depend on our ability to "translate" them in words», he is considering sense 2). An argument containing visual elements that satisfies condition 2) is irreducibly visual; otherwise it is reducibly visual. Hence Blair and Johnson agree that there are no irreducibly visual arguments.

Table 1. A taxonomy of visual arguments.

Visual arguments	Homogeneous	Reducible
		Irreducible
	Heterogeneous	Reducible
		Irreducible

To sum up, to prove the existence of irreducible heterogeneous arguments a structural concept of argument requires that images can be part of premises or conclusions in such a way that they cannot be replaced by verbal elements.

Now let us consider the discussion on visual arguments from a functional point of view. According to a widely used functional definition, an argument is an attempt to persuade with reasons.[3]

> …an argument is discourse directed towards rational persuasion. By rational persuasion l mean that the arguer wishes to persuade the other to accept the conclusion on the basis of the reasons and considerations cited, and those alone (Johnson, 2000, p. 150).

There are two key words in this definition: discourse and reasons. Alcolea (2011, p. 208) lists six different ways of understanding discourse: as text, as verbal structure, as mental process, as action, as interaction and as conversation. Such a wide scope advises to replace "discourse" by "complex speech-act" as proposed by pragma-dialectics (vid. van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1983, 1992, pp. 29-32). An argument then becomes a complex speech-act whose constitutive goal is rational persuasion. Hitchcock defines an argument in the same vein:

> … an argument is a claim-reason complex consisting of an act of concluding (which may be of any of the five main types in Searle's taxonomy of speech-acts) and one or more acts of premising (each of which is an assertive) (Hitchcock, 2007, p. 6).

[3] Blair (2012) argues that argumentation is not to be identified with attempted rational persuasion, pointing out that argumentation can also be used to inquire into the truth of a proposition or tenability of a prescription, evaluation or injunction and it can be used to arrive at a decision or a solution to a problem.

The possibility of analyzing some uses of images as speech-acts leads Bird-sell and Groarke (2007, pp. 104-105) to think that the pragma-dialectical principles of communication can be applied to the interpretation of images in argument. Groarke endorses a pragma-dialectic definition of real visual arguments, as those in which images "can, like verbal claims which are the epitome of argument, be understood as speech or communication acts that contribute more directly to argumentative exchange" (2002, p. 140). The question concerning visual arguments now becomes whether the performance of some speech-acts involves the use of images and how it does it.

The existence of purely visual arguments doesn't fit well with the definition of a speech-act as the minimal unit of linguistic communication by Austin and Searle.

> To put this point more precisely, the production of the sentence token under certain conditions is the illocutionary act, and the illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication (Searle, 1965, p. 222).

The same is not true for heterogeneous arguments. In *Philosophical Investigations* §27 Wittgenstein characterizes ostensive definition as a language-game on its own, and it is well-known that the concept of language-game anticipates that of speech-act. An ostensive explanation, just like an ostensive definition, incorporates both verbal and visual elements.

> So one might say: the ostensive definition explains the use—the meaning—of the word when the overall role of the word in language is clear. Thus if I know that someone means to explain a colour-word to me the ostensive definition "That is called 'sepia' " — And you can say this, so long as you do not forget that all sorts of problems attach to the words "to know" or "to be clear" (Wittgenstein 1986: §30).

"That is called 'sepia'" is a pro-sentence, a sentence containing context-dependent expressions. Its use in a situation like that described by Wittgenstein produces a statement when the context provides additional information to give the content of the demonstrative pronoun "that". This information can be visual and hence the expression of the components of

an argument can depend on visual elements. When that is the case, are we facing a visual argument?

Let us imagine that "That is called 'sepia'" is used as a premise in an argument. Visual elements will be needed to determine the reference of "that". Without them the use of the sentence will produce no statement and the result will be a failed speech-act. Of course without statement there is no premise, and without premise there is no argument. In such a case visual elements are needed to say something using a sentence, and hence they play a communicative role. But it can be objected that in order to have visual arguments *stricto sensu* visual elements must play an argumentative role.

Hence to prove the existence of irreducible heterogeneous arguments, a functional concept of argument requires that images can be part of acts of arguing in such a way that they cannot be replaced by verbal elements without loss of argumentative power or strength.

The distinction between the structural and functional senses of argument is related to the well-known distinction between argument as a product or text, and argument as a process or act.[4] Acts of arguing can be described as speech complexes, as do pragmadialecticians, Hitchcock or Bermejo-Luque:

> On my account acts of arguing are speech-act complexes because they are composed of two further speech-acts, namely, the speech-act of adducing [a reason] and the speech-act of concluding [a target-claim]. In turn, I take these speech-act complexes to be second-order because they can only be performed by means of a first-order speech-act - namely constative speech-acts (2011, p. 60).

But it is obvious that speech-acts don't have the properties that we usually associate with the premises or the conclusion of an argument. One can question a premise or to deem it as false, but one cannot do the same for a speech-act. Rather the argument as product is abstracted from the argument as process, usually for evaluation purposes, and its components are usually taken to be the content of the corresponding speech-acts.

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[4] As far as I know the distinction was proposed for the first time by O'Keefe (1977).

Structural accounts of argument favour the understanding of arguments as products, while functional accounts favour the understanding of arguments as processes. For our present purposes it is enough to realize that these are quite different questions:

–Can the premises or the conclusion of an argument include essentially visual elements?
–Can images play an essential role in the performance of an act of arguing?

Thus they can be answered differently. Dove (2012), as far as I understand him, answers "no" to the first and "yes" to the second. From now on I will use "act of arguing" to refer the argument as process, reserving the term "argument" for the product. These two questions will be addressed in the following pages.
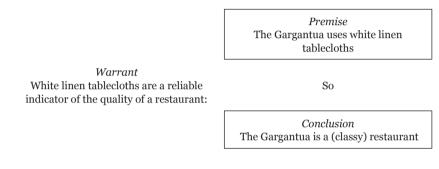
2. The adventure of the two tablecloths

I will argue next that that images are sometimes part of directives and hence that there are irreducible heterogeneous acts of arguing. I have noted on several occasions that, in the absence of other data, a white linen tablecloth is compared with a red and white checker tablecloth a sign of the higher category of a restaurant. This a topic in Aristotle's sense, an *endoxon*. Let us consider three different situations involving this *endoxon*.

(1) Nicholas and Martin are arguing about whether The Gargantua is a restaurant properly speaking or it is just a café. Nicholas says: "There are white linen tablecloths, hence it is a restaurant".

(2) The same discussion but now Nicholas and Martin look at the dining room of The Gargantua from the street. Nicholas says "Look at the tablecloths: this is a restaurant", or simply pointing to the tables: "Look, it's a restaurant".

(3) This time Nicholas is the restaurant owner and Martin a potential

customer. Nicholas is acquainted with the topic of white linen table-cloths and he uses white linen tablecloths to make his customers believe that The Gargantua is a classy restaurant.

Now in which cases does Nicholas use arguments? Case (1) seems uncontroversial: Nicholas is arguing. Presumably he is advancing what is usually classified as an argument from sign:

	Premise The Gargantua uses white linen tablecloths
Warrant White linen tablecloths are a reliable indicator of the quality of a restaurant:	So
	Conclusion The Gargantua is a (classy) restaurant

The second case is similar to the first. The difference is that the declarative sentence *There are white linen tablecloths,* which provided the premise in Nicholas' argument, has been replaced by the directive pro-sentence *Look at the table clothes.* Taking for granted that Nicholas is still arguing, an explanation is needed of how a directive pro-sentence can work as a premise. This could be achieved through indirect speech-acts: even if it looks as a directive, in fact it is an assertive with the same content as *There are white linen tablecloths.* If Nicholas is performing an indirect speech act, the two utterances will express the same statement.[5] Therefore Nicholas will be advancing the same argument in both cases. If this were so, the visual element would play a role in the act of arguing without being an element of the argument. This is Dove's position:

> The role I think these images can play in argumentative situations is evidentiary. That is, photographs and diagrams may verify, corroborate or refute some claim. This relation is different from that of logical support.

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[5] A statement is what is said by a declarative utterance when it is used in a speech act with the force of an assertion and the speech act has all the ingredients to provide the context dependent parts of the sentence with content (Frápolli, 2011, p. 230; my translation).

> For, in the case of logical support the truth of some claim is a function of the truth-value of some other claim or set of claims (2012, p. 226).

The alternative is to explain the notion of a good inference without resorting to truth-transmission since directives are not susceptible of truth-value attribution. I will come back to this later on.

In case (c), unlike cases (a) and (b), Nicholas is not arguing. Instead Nicholas is trying to induce a belief in Martin, taking advantage of the mental habit (as Peirce would say) to move from the perception of white linen tablecloths to the belief that The Gargantua is a (classy) restaurant. But as Johnson claims an argument is an exercise in manifest rationality, a patent and open exercise of giving reasons. If follows that for Nicholas to be arguing, he should have the communicative intention that Martin realized that with his behaviour he was trying to persuade him that The Gargantua is a (classy) restaurant. Even worse: probably Martin's recognition of the intention that leads Nicolas to use white linen tablecloths would diminish the intended persuasive effect. Case (c) is not even a case of inferential communication for although Nicholas intends to induce some belief in Martin, he does not intend to make manifest that intention.

The idea that argument is an open and deliberate attempt to persuade rationally by giving reasons for some claim can be developed drawing upon Grice's intentional analysis of meaning. After all, argumentation is a sort of communication and according to Grice expression and recognition of intentions are essential features of most human communication. Here is a preliminary sketch.

> S argues that C on the grounds that P if and only if for some audience A, S said P intending thereby
>
> 1. that A recognizes P as a reason for C,
> 2. that A forms the belief that C on the basis of (1),
> 3. that A recognizes that that's what he intended to do.

Perhaps the difference between cases (b) and (c) can also be explained resorting to Pinto's distinction between inferences and proto-inferences. Pinto defines an argument as an invitation to inference.

> ... an argument is best viewed as an invitation to inference that it lays out grounds or bases from which those to whom it is addressed are invited to draw a conclusion (2001, p. 68).

Pinto goes on to tighten up his definition by distinguishing inferences from proto- inferences (*Op.cit.*. pp. 39-40). A proto-inference is a causal transition from belief in premises to belief in a conclusion, dependent somehow on the presence of a recognized pattern that embraces the premises and the conclusion. What distinguishes inferences from proto-inferences is that in an inference the transition from premises to the conclusion is open to critical reflection. We could then say that in case (b) Nicholas is arguing so far as he is proposing an inference, while in case (c) he is not arguing for he is proposing a proto-inference.

The idea of argument as an exercise in manifest rationality reminds us another well-known objection to visual arguments: the charge that visual arguments are not open to rational criticism (*Cfr*., e.g., Fleming, 1996, p. 13; or Johnson, 2003, p. 10). However comparison of cases (b) and (c) suggests that argumentation (or even rational persuasion) does not depend on the use of images but on how they are being used.

3. Arguments from Ostension

The preceding cases conclusively show that images can play an essential role in the performance of acts of arguing. However the move from visual (or heterogeneous) acts of arguing to visual (or heterogeneous) arguments was blocked by the assumption that, in the second case, Nicholas is despite the appearances performing an assertive speech act. So when he says "Look at the tablecloths", he really means *The Gargantua uses white linen tablecloths.* I will argue that directives should be allowed to occur as a proper part of acts of arguing, and that when arguments from ostension are analysed accordingly, their premises essentially include visual elements.
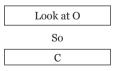
Should directives be allowed to occur as a proper part of acts of arguing? As we have seen, Hitchcock allows directives to work as acts of concluding, and a similar opinion is endorsed by Walton:

> The analysis of argumentation schemes is much affected by the recognition of practical reasoning as a distinctive type of reasoning, as distinguished from what might be called theoretical or discursive reasoning. Practical reasoning […] is a kind of goal-directed, knowledge-based reasoning that is directed to choosing a prudent course of action for an agent that is aware of its present circumstances. In a practical inference, the conclusion is an imperative that directs the agent to a prudent course of action (Walton, 1996, p. 11).

I think there is at least a good reason to admit that the speech act of adducing can be performed by means of a directive speech act. According to Wenzel when we come to analyse an argument we encounter four versions:

(a) There is the version of the argument that exists in the mind of the speaker,
(b) There is the version of the argument overtly expressed in speech or writing, or some other symbolic form,
(c) There is also the version that comes into being in the mind of the listener, and finally
(d) There is the reconstruction of the argument for logical examination and criticism.

It is a sound methodological principle that versions (b) and (d) should be kept as close as possible to each other. This principle is threatened by the indirect speech act account of the tablecloths case.

A key aspect of my analysis of Nicholas ostensive argument is that its premise is, in fact, the imperative look at O.

Look at O
So
C

Let us define an imperative as follows, paraphrasing the definition of *statement* mentioned in note 5:

> An imperative is what is said by a directive utterance when it is used in a speech act with the force of a directive and the speech act has all the

ingredients to provide the context dependent parts of the sentence with content

By defining the imperative as the content of the directive speech-act I am already facilitating the step from a visual act of arguing to a visual argument. The question at issue is still whether O, or rather the perceptual image of it, is an element of the imperative conveyed by *Look at O*.

The inference suggested by an argument from ostension will be justified in so far as the perception of O counts as a reason for C. In the story of Nicholas and Martin, the perception of tablecloths counts as a reason to believe that The Gargantua is a restaurant, and not just a café, because white linen tablecloths are a distinctive sign of a restaurant. Pinto (2006, p. 287) says that an argument is valid only if it is entitlement-preserving. If I am right, to explain why and when this kind of argument are entitlement-preserving one has to mention a perceptual image. Hence their premises include essentially a visual element

Dove holds that is such cases the visual element serves as support for a linguistic claim without being part of it. Thus he contends that the image doesn't play any role in the argument, although to evaluate the argument requires examining the tablecloths.

> The photo doesn't support the claim logically, as logical support is about the flow of truth values or truth-like values from a reason or set of reasons to a conclusion. Instead, the photo merely verifies truth without offering logical support. One doesn't infer the truth of the claim from the photo, one perceives it (Dove, 2010).

However, this is to confuse the evidence (the tablecloths), with the act of presenting it as a reason ("Look at the tablecloths") and the content of that act (the corresponding imperative).

4. Multimodal arguments from ostension

The occurrence of the verb *Look* in the premise indicates that this is a visual argument from ostension. The example of visual argument that Barceló (2012:358) borrows from Stainton belongs to the same genre.

> Suppose Alice and Bruce are arguing. Bruce takes the position that there are not really any colored objects. Alice disagrees. A day or so later, Alice meets Bruce. Having just read G.E. Moore, she offers the following argument. She picks up a red pen, and says "Red. Right?" Bruce, guileless fellow that he is, happily agrees. Alice continues, "Red things are colored things. Right?" Bruce nods. At which point, Alice springs her trap: "So, Bruce, there is at least one colored thing. This thing".

Here the ostensive visual argument instantiates another argument scheme since it is an argument from example. However in both arguments visual elements appear as the content of an ostension. Being arguments based on perception, they are closely related to the argument from appearance described by Walton (2006) and to the argument from perception in Walton, Reed and Macagno (2008, p. 345):

> Premise 1: Person P has a φ image (an image of a perceptible property).
> Premise 2: To have a φ image (an image of a perceptible property) is a prima facie reason to believe that the circumstances exemplify φ.
> Conclusion: It is reasonable to believe that φ is the case.

Hearing, smell, taste or tactile variants can be easily conceived. An argument scheme is identified by the principle upon which depends the legitimacy of the proposed inference. Accordingly the force or strength of an argument from ostension depends on the degree to which the perception (or apprehension) of O is a reason to accept C. What is to be a reason for something has to be explained in terms of the epistemic notion of justification. Justification is not a relation between statements but between mental states (at least from an internalist perspective). For the simplest kind of standard argument – moving from statements to statement-, the proposed elucidation runs

> A statement E expresses a reason for a conclusion C iff the belief that E justifies the belief that C.

This can be easily adapted to imperatives:

An imperative *Look at P* expresses a reason for a conclusion C iff the perception of P justifies the belief that C.

More generally:

An imperative *Do A* expresses a reason for a conclusion C iff the result of doing A justifies the belief that C.

5. Ostensive Arguments in Advertising

Even if it were granted that arguments from ostension are a sort of visual or multimodal arguments, it could be objected that the most important uses of visual argumentation (advertising, cartoons, etc.) fall outside of an ostensive analysis. To refute that claim I will analyse a Shell Chimie advertising poster or affiche from 1990.
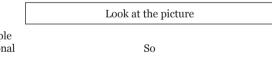

Figure 1.

The Shell affiche shows a persuasive duplicity that reflects the two goals of communication in advertising distinguished by Adam & Bonhomme (2000, p. 33):

> On the illocutionary level we may consider two complementary rather than antagonistic goals: a descriptive, informative goal taking the form of a constative act, and an argumentative (incitative) goal. In this sense communication in advertising is info-persuasive (my translation).

The persuasive duplicity I want to stress consists of a combination of two persuasion strategies, based on an inference and a proto-inference. The Shell affiche uses on a conscious plane, so to speak, an argument from ostension presenting a red ice cube tray as an example of an object with both a functional (practical) and beautiful (aesthetic) design. The conclusion is verbally stated: "*Le pratique et l'esthetique ne sont plus en froid»* (practicality and aesthetic are no longer in cold terms). In a book or a paper caption typically appears below the picture; here it is above the picture. This layout imitates the sequence "Thesis. Supporting reason" common in argumentative texts. Thus the advertisement proposes an inference using a theoretical argument from ostension. This move corresponds to the descriptive goal of advertising mentioned by Adam & Bonhomme.

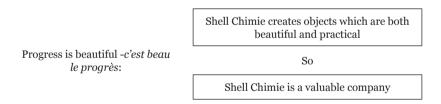|	Look at the picture
A red ice cube tray is an example of an object with both a functional (practical) and beautiful design:	So
	Practicality and aesthetic are no longer in cold terms

Proto-inferences can be classified according to their intended conclusions, just like inferences. Thus there are theoretical, practical and evaluative proto-inferences. The triadic model learn/like/do builts communication in advertising on three modules focusing on the receiver (*cfr*. Adam & Bonhomme, 2000, pp. 38-40). It is tempting to correlate kinds of inferences and proto-inferences with modules of advertising.

Table 2. Kinds of arguments and modules in advertising.

Inference	Module	realm
Theoretical	Cognitive - learn	know
Practical	Practical - do	can, do
Evaluative	Affective - like	wish, want

Advertising integrates theoretical, practical and evaluative persuasion, subordinating the first to the other two, and particularly to evaluative persuasion. The main aim of advertising is to create in the audience a favourable predisposition towards a product or a brand, to bring about an appreciation of it. From this point of view, the key of the Shell advertisement is that the red ice cube tray appears as an example of an object that is both beautiful and practical. The juxtaposition of the picture of the ice cube tray and the company logo purports to make us infer that Shell Chimie is the producer of the ice cube tray. As a result Shell appears as a creator (rather than a mere producer as indicated by the word *plus* [longer]) of simultaneously functional and beautiful objects. Finally it is intended that the audience draws the conclusion that Shell is a valuable company from its previous belief that Shell produces objects which are both beautiful and practical. At this level the Shell advertisement appears as a proto-argument from reciprocity transferring properties from the product to the producer.

Progress is beautiful -*c'est beau le progrès*:

Shell Chimie creates objects which are both beautiful and practical

So

Shell Chimie is a valuable company

The comparative importance of the implicit proto-argument vis-à-vis the explicit argument is confirmed by the advertisement layout. A right-to-left, top-to-bottom script follows an oblique visual tracking (a Z), going from the top left to the bottom right of the page.

Figure 2.

According to Adam & Bonhomme (2000, p. 94) this Z structure splits diagonally the page in two parts of unequal potential. The left part is a shadow or minimum reading area while the right part is a highlighted or maximum reading area. Corresponding to the subordination of theoretical persuasion to evaluative persuasion, the argument and the proto-argument are located respectively in the shadow area and the highlighted area.

In terms of Sperber and Wilson's ostensive-inferential model of communication, one might say that in the Shell advertisement there is a duplicate ostension. The publicist draws the attention of the receiver on an image and invites her to infer something from it, although at the same time he expects her to make another inference from the same image without manifesting the corresponding intention. This double ostension accounts for Blair's impressions:

> It strikes me that while magazine and television visual advertising often presents itself as more or less rational persuasion aimed at influencing our preferences and actions, what is in fact going on in the most effective ads is that the actual influence is accomplished behind this façade of rationality (2004, p. 276).

6. Conclusion

I have argued that images can figure in argumentation as objects of ostension. Typically ostensive acts take place as parts of a directive speech-act −e.g. the speech-act conveyed by *Look at O*. In the cases described above directives work as premises on an argument scheme whose warrant can be stated in the form "perception of the ostended object (or event) counts as a reason for the conclusion". These heterogeneous arguments can be irreducibly visual since images give a sort of material evidence, they appeal directly to the eyes of the audience.

Not every use of images to persuade gives rise to an argument. To identify argumentative uses of images I have sketched an intentional approach to argument. If, according to Pinto's celebrated definition, arguments are invitations to inference, it is important to distinguish inferences from proto-inferences. To make the point I have analysed the use of inferences and proto-inferences in a Shell advertising poster.

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