SOME USES OF IMAGES

Most visual materials that accompany written arguments serve one of two functions—they appeal to the emotions (a photograph of a calf in a pen so narrow that the calf cannot turn, in an essay on animal liberation) or they clarify numerical data (a graph showing five decades of male and female law school enrollments). There are of course additional uses for pictures, for example cartoons may add a welcome touch of humor or satire, but in this chapter we concentrate on appeals to emotion and briefly on graphs and related images.

APPEALS TO THE EYE

We began the preceding chapter by distinguishing between argument, which we said relies on reason (logos), and persuasion, which we said is a broad term that can include appeal to the emotions (pathos)—for example, an appeal to pity. Threats, too, can be persuasive. As Al Capone famously said, "You can get a lot more done with a kind word and a gun than with a kind word alone." Indeed, most of the remarks that we can think of link persuasion not with the power of reason but with the power of emotional appeals, of flattery, of threats, and of appeals to self-interest. We have in mind passages spoken not only by the likes of the racketeer Al Capone, but by more significant figures. Consider these two remarks, which both use the word interest in the sense of "self-interest":
Would you persuade, speak of Interest, not Reason
—Ben Franklin

There are two levers for moving men—interest and fear.
—Napoleon Bonaparte

An appeal to self-interest is obviously at the heart of most advertisements: "Buy X automobile, and members of the opposite sex will find you irresistible," "Use Y instant soup, and your family will love you more," "Try Z cereal and enjoy regularity." We will look at advertisements later in this chapter, but first let’s talk a bit more about the use and abuse of visual material in persuasion.

When we discussed the appeal to emotion (p. 69), we quoted from Mark Antony’s speech to the Roman populace in Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, you will recall, Antony stirred the mob by displaying Caesar’s blood-stained mantle, that is, by supplementing his words with visual material:

Look, in this place ran Cassius’ dagger through;
See what a rent the envious Casca made;
Through this, the well-beloved Brutus stabbed.

In courtrooms today, trial lawyers and prosecutors still do this sort of thing when they exhibit photos of a bloody corpse, or when they introduce as witnesses small children who sob as they describe the murder of their parents. The appeal clearly is not to reason but to the jurors’ emotions—and yet, can we confidently say that this sort of visual evidence—this attempt to stir anger at the alleged perpetrator of the crime and pity for the victims—is irrelevant? Why shouldn’t jurors vicariously experience the assault?

When we think about it—and it takes only a moment of thinking—the appeal in the courtroom to the eye and then to the heart or mind is evident even in smaller things, such as the clothing that the lawyers wear and the clothing that they advise their clients to wear. To take the most obvious, classic example: The mugger who normally wears jeans, a T-shirt, and a leather jacket appears in court in a three-piece suit, dress shirt, and necktie. Lawyers know that in arguing a case, visuals make statements—perhaps not logical arguments but nevertheless meaningful statements that will attract or repel jurors.

Another sort of visual appeal connected with some arguments should be mentioned briefly—the visual appeal of the specific setting in which the argument occurs. Martin Luther King Jr.’s great speech of August 28, 1963, “I Have a Dream,” still reads very well on the page, but

Martin Luther King Jr. delivering his “I Have a Dream” speech on August 28, 1963, from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. The visual aspects—the setting (the Lincoln Memorial with the Washington Monument and the Capitol in the distance) and King’s gestures—are part of the persuasive rhetoric of the speech.
part of its immense appeal when it was first given was due to its setting: King spoke to some 200,000 people in Washington, D.C., as he stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. That setting was part of King’s argument.

Pictures—and here we get to our chief subject—are also sometimes used as parts of arguments because pictures make statements. Some pictures, like Edvard Munch’s The Scream (this page), make obvious statements: The swiftly receding diagonal lines of the fence and the walkway, the wavy sky, and the vibrating vertical lines to the right of the figure all convey the great agitation experienced by the figure in the woodcut. Some pictures, like the photographs shown to members of Congress during the debate over whether permission should be given to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are a bit less obvious: Opponents of drilling showed beautiful pictures of polar bears frolicking, wildflowers in bloom, and caribou on the move; proponents of drilling showed bleak pictures of what they called “barren land” and “a frozen wasteland.” Both sides knew very well that images are powerful persuaders, and they did not hesitate to use images as supplements to words.

We again invite you to think about the appropriateness of using images in arguments. Should argument be entirely a matter of reason, of logic, without appeals to the emotions? Or can images of the sort that we have already mentioned provide visual (and emotional) support for reasons that are offered? The statement that “The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is a home for abundant wildlife, notably polar bears, caribou, and wildflowers” may not mean much until it is reinforced with breathtaking images. (And, similarly, the statement that “Most of the ANWR land is barren” may not mean much until it is corroborated by images of the vast bleakness.)

A Rule for Writers: If you think that pictures will help you to make the point you are arguing, include them with captions explaining sources and relevance.

ARE SOME IMAGES NOT FIT TO BE SHOWN?

Images of suffering—human or, as animal rights activists have made us see, animal—can be immensely persuasive. In the nineteenth century, for instance, the antislavery movement made extremely effective use of images in its campaign. We reproduce two antislavery images on page 86, as well as a counterimage that sought to assure viewers that slavery is a beneficent system. But are there some images not fit to print?

Until recently, many newspapers did not print pictures of lynched African Americans, hanged and burned and maimed. The reasons for not printing such images probably differed in the South and North: Southern papers may have considered the images to be discreditable to whites, while Northern papers may have deemed the images too revolting. Even today, when it is commonplace to see in newspapers and on television screens pictures of dead victims of war, or famine, or traffic accidents, one rarely sees bodies that are horribly maimed. (For traffic accidents, the body is usually covered, and we see only the smashed car.) The United States government has refused to release photographs showing the bodies of American soldiers killed in the war in Iraq, and it has
Images played an important role in the activities of the antislavery movement in the nineteenth century. On the top left is a diagram that shows how human cargo was packed into a slave ship; it was distributed with Thomas Clarkson's Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species (1804). On the top right is Frederick W. Mercer's photograph (April 2, 1863) of Gordon, a "badly lacerated" runaway slave. Images such as the slave ship and Gordon were used against the claims of slaveowners that slavery was a humane institution—claims that also were supported by illustrations, such as the woodcut at the bottom from Josiah Priest's In Defense of Slavery.
showing a criminal being executed. (On this topic, see Wendy Lesser, *Pictures at an Execution* [1993].) The most famous recent example of an image widely thought to be unprintable concerns the murder of Daniel Pearl, a Jewish reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*. Pearl was captured and murdered in June 2002 by Islamic terrorists in Pakistan. His killers videotaped Pearl reading a statement denouncing American policy, and being decapitated. The video also shows a man’s arm holding Pearl’s head. The video ends with the killers making several demands (such as the release of the Muslim prisoners being held by the United States in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba) and asserting that “If our demands are not met, this scene will be repeated again and again.”

The chief arguments against reproducing in newspapers material from this video were that

- The video and even still images from it are unbearably gruesome;
- Showing the video would traumatize the Pearl family; and
- The video is propaganda by an enemy.

Those who favored broadcasting the video on television and printing still images from it in newspapers tended to argue that

- The photo will show the world what sort of enemy that the United States is fighting;
- Newspapers have published pictures of other terrifying sights (notably, people leaping out of windows of New York’s twin towers and endless pictures of the space shuttle *Challenger* exploding); and
- No one was worried about protecting the families of these other victims from seeing painful images.

But ask yourself if the comparison of the Daniel Pearl video to the photos of the twin towers and of the *Challenger* is valid. You may respond that the individuals in the twin towers pictures are not specifically identifiable and that the images of the *Challenger*, though horrifying, are not as visually revolting as the picture of a severed head held up for view.

The *Boston Phoenix*, a weekly newspaper, published some images from the Daniel Pearl video and also put a link to the video (with a warning that the footage is "extremely graphic") on its Web site. The editor of the *Phoenix* justified publication on the three grounds we list. Pearl’s wife, Mariane Pearl, was quoted in various newspapers as condemning the "heartless decision to air this despicable video," and a spokeswoman for the Pearl family, when asked for comment, referred reporters to a statement issued earlier, which said that broadcasters who show the video

fall without shame into the terrorists’ plan. . . . Danny believed that journalism was a tool to report the truth and foster understanding—not perpetuate propaganda and sensationalize tragedy. We had hoped that no part of this tape would ever see the light of day. . . . We urge all networks and news outlets to exercise responsibility and not aid the terrorists in spreading their message of hate and murder.

Although some journalists expressed regret that Pearl’s family was distressed, they insisted that journalists have a right to reproduce such material and that the images can serve the valuable purpose of shocking viewers into awareness.

1Quoted in the *Hartford Courant*, June 5, 2002, and reproduced on the Internet by the Freedom of Information Center, under the heading “Boston Paper Creates Controversy.”
Topic for Critical Thinking and Writing

Marvin Kalb, a distinguished journalist, was quoted as saying that the public has a right to see the tape of Daniel Pearl's murder but that "common sense, decency, [and] humanity would encourage editors . . . to say 'no, it is not necessary to put this out.' There is no urgent demand on the part of the American people to see Daniel Pearl's death." Your view?

READING ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertising is one of the most common forms of visual persuasion we encounter in everyday life. None of us is so unsophisticated these days as to believe everything we see in an ad, yet the influence of advertising in our culture is pervasive and subtle. Consider, for example, a much-reproduced poster sponsored by Gatorade and featuring Michael Jordan. Such an image costs an enormous amount to produce and disseminate, and nothing in it is left to chance. We are aware of a crowd watching him, but the people in this crowd appear tiny, blurred, and indistinct compared to the huge image in the foreground; the photograph, like the crowd, focuses solely on Jordan. He is a legend, an icon of American culture. He is dressed not in his Chicago Bulls uniform but in a USA jersey, connecting his act of gravity-defying athleticism with the entire nation and with our sense of patriotism. The red, white, and blue of the uniform strengthens this impression in the original color photograph of the advertisement.

What do we make of the verbal message boldly written along the left-hand margin of the poster, "Be like Mike"? We are certainly not foolish enough to believe that drinking Gatorade will enable us to perform like Michael Jordan on the basketball court. But who among us wouldn't like to "Be like Mike" in some small way, to enjoy even a glancing association with his athletic grace and power—to say nothing of his fame, wealth, and sex appeal? Though the makers of Gatorade surely know we will not all rush out to buy their drink to improve our game, they are banking on the expectation that the association of their name with Jordan, and our memory of their logo in association with Jordan's picture, will create a positive impression of their product. If Mike drinks Gatorade—well, why shouldn't I give it a try? The good feelings and impressions created by the ad will, the advertisers hope, travel with us the next time we consider buying a sports drink.

As we discuss the power of advertising, it is appropriate to say a few words about the corporate logos that appear everywhere these days—on billboards, in newspapers and magazines, on television, and on T-shirts. It is useful to think of a logo as a sort of advertisement in shorthand. It is a single, usually simple, image that carries with it a world of associations and impressions. (The makers of Gatorade would certainly hope that we will be reminded of Michael Jordan and his slam dunk when we see their product name superimposed over the orange lightning bolt.)

Let's look at an advertisement that combines pictures with verbal text (p. 92). The ad has two head shots, pictures of the sort that show "Ten Most Wanted Men." Both faces are widely known—Martin Luther King Jr. and Charles Manson—and viewers may initially wonder why they are juxtaposed. Then the large type above the pictures captures our attention with its size and a bold statement of fact:

The man on the left is 75 times more likely to be stopped by the police while driving than the man on the right.

We presume that the statement is true—that is, that dark-skinned people are stopped by police officers seventy-five times more often than whites—and we probably know why. Almost surely we do not conclude that dark people are far more likely than white to speed, go through red lights, or cross lanes. We have heard about racial profiling and racial prejudice, and we may also have heard about the wry offense of which all African Americans are guilty, "driving while black." The small print on this ad goes on to tell us that, every day, "Police stop drivers based on their skin color rather than for the way they are driving," and it supports this assertion with a fact: "For example, in Florida 80% of those stopped and searched were black and Hispanic, while they constituted only 5% of all drivers." We assume that these statistics are true and that most readers find the statement alarming. The poster might have had these very words without the two pictures, but would we then have read the small print?

Incidentally, the American Civil Liberties Union did not print this poster for any reason related to Martin Luther King Jr. or Charles Manson. The poster's purpose appears in very small letters at the end of the caption:

Support the ACLU.

We think that this ad is highly effective, and we invite you to perform a thought experiment. Suppose that the two pictures were omitted and that the text of the large type at the top of the ad was different, something like this:
Persons of color, notably African Americans and non-white Hispanics, are 75 times more likely than white people to be stopped by the police when driving.

And then suppose the rest of the text consisted of the words in the present ad. Do you think this alternate version would make nearly the impact that the ACLU ad makes? The text is essentially the same, the statistics are still shocking, but the impact is gone. When we see the ACLU ad, we are for only a tiny fraction of a second, puzzled: What can the two faces—a civil rights leader and a serial killer—have in common? The large print almost immediately lets us know why these faces are paired, and we are probably hooked by (a) the shocking juxtaposition of faces and (b) the astounding fact that is asserted. So we probably go on to read the small print, though ordinarily we would not bother to read such tiny writing.

Incidentally, the writing beneath the picture could have been as large, or almost as large, as the print above the picture, merely by reducing the blank space at the top and bottom of the page. Why do you suppose the writing beneath the pictures is small? Do you think the ad would have been as compelling if the type above and below were of approximately equal size? Why or why not?

One other point: The pictures of King and Manson catch the interest of a wide audience, an audience much wider than the group that would normally be targeted as persons who might contribute money or energy to an association chiefly concerned with civil liberties. That is, this ad speaks to almost anyone who may be concerned with fairness or decency.

Maps were obviously part of the argument in the debate over drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Advocates of drilling argued that drilling would take place only in such a tiny area. Their map showed Alaska, with an indication (in gray) of the much smaller part of Alaska that was the Refuge, and a further indication (cross-hatched) of what these advocates of drilling emphasized was a minuscule part of the Refuge. Opponents, however, showed maps indicating the path of migrating caribou, and the roads that would have to be constructed across the refuge to get to the area where the drilling would take place.

Graphs, tables, and pie charts usually present quantitative data in visual form, helping writers clarify mind-numbing statistical assertions.
A CHECKLIST FOR ANALYZING IMAGES (ESPECIALLY ADVERTISEMENTS)

- What is the overall effect of the design? Colorful and busy (suggested activity)? Quiet and understated (for instance, chiefly white and grays, with lots of empty space)? Old fashioned or cutting edge?
- What about the image immediately gets your attention? Size? Position on the page? Beauty of the image? Grotesqueness of the image? Humor?
- What is the audience for the image? Affluent young men? Housewives? Retired persons?
- Does the text make a logical appeal ("Tests at a leading university prove that . . . ", "If you believe X, you should vote 'No' on this referendum")?
- Does the image appeal to the emotions? Examples: Images of starving children or maltreated animals appeal to our sense of pity; images of military valor may appeal to our patriotism; images of luxury may appeal to our envy; images of sexually attractive people may appeal to our desire to be like them; images of violence or of extraordinary ugliness (as, for instance, in some ads showing a human fetus being destroyed) may seek to shock us.
- Does the image make an ethical appeal—that is, does it appeal to our character as a good human being? Ads by charitable organizations often appeal to our sense of decency, fairness, and pity, but ads that appeal to our sense of prudence (ads for insurance companies or for investment houses) also essentially are making an ethical appeal.
- What is the relation of print to image? Does the image do most of the work, or does it serve to attract us and to lead us on to read the text?

For instance, a line graph may tell us how many immigrants came to the United States in each decade of the last century.

A bar graph (the bars can run either horizontally or vertically) offers similar information; we can see at a glance that, say, the second bar is almost double the length of the first, indicating that the number is almost double.

A pie chart is a circle divided into wedges so that we can see—literally see—how a whole is divided into its parts. We can see, for instance,

**VISUALS AS AIDS TO CLARITY: MAPS, GRAPHS, TABLES, AND PIE CHARTS**

**COMING TO AMERICA . . .**

Both the percentage and number of foreign-born people in the United States dropped during much of the 20th century, but after 1970, the tide was turning again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central America and Mexico</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Most recent estimate*

Source: United States Census Bureau

**. . . FROM NEAR AND FAR**

Central America, Mexico, and Asia contribute most to the foreign-born population.
that of the entire pie—which may represent registered voters in a certain state—one fourth are registered Democrats, one fifth are registered Republicans, and the remainder do not give a party affiliation.

A NOTE ON USING VISUALS IN YOUR OWN PAPER

Every paper uses some degree of visual persuasion, merely in its appearance: perhaps a title page, certainly margins (ample—but not so wide that they tell the reader that the writer is unable to write a paper of the assigned length), double-spacing for the convenience of the reader, paragraphing (again for the convenience of the reader), and so on. But you may also want to use images—for example, pictures, graphs, or pie charts. Keep a few guidelines in mind as you begin to work with images, "writing" visuals into your own argument with at least as much care as you would read them in others:

- Consider the needs and attitudes of your audience, and select the type of visuals—graphs, drawings, photographs—likely to be most persuasive to that audience.
- Consider the effect of color, composition, and placement within your document. Because images are most effective when they appear near the text that supplements them, do not group all of your images at the end of the paper.

Remember especially that images are almost never self-supporting or self-explanatory. They may be evidence for your argument (Ut's photograph of napalm victims is very compelling evidence of suffering), but they are not arguments themselves. Be sure to explain each image that you use, integrating it into the verbal text that provides the logic and principal support of our thesis.

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