Informal Logic

Picturing a Thousand Unspoken Words
Visual Arguments and Controlling Force
Représenter Mille Mots non Prononcés
Arguments Visuels et Force de Contrôle

Harmony Peach

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Résumé de l'article

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Picturing a Thousand Unspoken Words: Visual Arguments and Controlling Force

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Abstract: I explore how empathetic visual argument may be the mode best suited for eliciting appropriate force to the reasons given by arguers who face systematic identity prejudices. In the verbal mode, this force is often skewed through epistemic injustice (Fricker 2007), argumentative injustice (Bondy 2010), and discursive injustice (Kukla 2010). Highlighting their reliance on the Aristotelian sense of enthymeme, I show how visual arguments are highly context specific. Using Ian Dove's Visual Scheming (2016) and the theory of the Retort collective (2004) via case study, I demonstrate how the visual mode can leave the appropriate force in the arguer's control.

Résumé: J'explore comment l'argument visuel empathique peut être le mode le mieux adapté pour susciter une force appropriée aux raisons de ceux qui font face à des préjugés d'identité systématiques. Dans le mode verbal, cette force est souvent faussée par l'injustice épistémique (Fricker 2007), l'injustice argumentative (Bondy 2010) et l'injustice discursive (Kukla 2010). En soulignant leur dépendance sur le sens aristotélicien de l'enthymème, je montre comment les arguments visuels sont très spécifiques au contexte. En utilisant «Visual Scheming» de Ian Dove (2016), et la théorie de «Retort Collective» (2004), via une étude de cas, je montre comment le mode visuel peut laisser la force appropriée sous le contrôle de ceux qui avancent des arguments.

Keywords: argumentative injustice, controlling force, discursive injustice, epistemic injustice, inflecting empathy, political arguments, social justice, social movements, visual arguments

1. Introduction

Given the human proclivity toward unconscious bias, and certainly the conscious variety, visual argumentation may offer a better opportunity in certain social justice pursuits than the verbal mode to control the correct and necessary force lost verbally by arguers facing identity prejudices and, therefore, permit them to more justly convey their arguments. In the verbal mode, this force is often problematically skewed by these prejudices. For example, as an analogue to Miranda Fricker's (2007) "epistemic injustice," where people who face systematic identity prejudices are harmed through testimonial and/or hermeneutical injustice, Patrick Bondy (2010) explains that identity prejudices can skew the "force of reasons," in the verbal mode, for different arguers depending on their level of social (dis)advantage, which results in an "argumentative injustice." On Fricker's account, people who face systematic identity prejudices, which track them through various aspects of their lives (e.g., economically, socially, etc.), are harmed as knowers both when they try to testify to their personal experiences of disadvantage and are not believed and when society does not yet have critical concepts to either explain or render intelligible the experiences of the disadvantaged. She gives an example of testimonial injustice in which a police officer does not believe a man because he is Black; an identity prejudice is then levelled against him because of the colour of his skin. Her example of hermeneutical injustice, is a "woman who suffers sexual harassment prior to the time when we had this critical concept, so that she cannot properly comprehend her own experience, let alone render it communicatively intelligible to others" (Fricker 2007, p. 6). Mapping these ideas onto his own, Bondy says the resulting harm for arguers who are socially disadvantaged is that they often experience too little force given to their reasons, while those with social advantage often experience too much force given to theirs. Bondy takes up the view of arguments as manifest rationality. Therefore, "harm to people in their capacity as arguers is harm to them in their capacity as people capable of employing and criticizing reasons in order to persuade each other of truths" (Bondy 2010, p. 266).

For Bondy, the harm to arguers happens in three ways: first, "it undermines the rationality of the endeavour, so that the force of reasons does not determine the outcome, and the arguers are de-prived of" the rational outcome they are trying to achieve (Bondy 2010, p. 266). "Second, it can distort an arguer's status in the community of arguers, if the prejudice is such that people take [the arguer] to be unable to argue well" (Bondy 2010, p. 266). There-fore, the arguer would not be permitted by others to engage in arguments. Finally, "if repeated enough, credibility deficits can" become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy by "undermining the way that [the arguer] thinks of [them]self as an arguer" (Bondy 2010, p. 266). The idea is that if one is treated often enough as an inferior arguer, they come to believe it and may therefore not bother to offer arguments even when it is appropriate to do so. A credibility excess is also harmful in relation to the same three reasons. First, the force of the better reasons may not be deter-mined rationally; second, an arguer's self-perception may be skewed to believe they are a better arguer than others, and they may not seek out or grant credibility to others' arguments; and finally, the excess can distort other people's perceptions "by plac-ing [the arguer] on a pedestal in their eyes and preventing them from seeking to engage [them] in arguments" (Bondy 2010, p. 267).

Writing as Rebecca Kukla, Quill Kukla's *discursive injustice* adds a finer point to these concerns with the verbal mode by ad-dressing a queering in the force of speech acts generally, owed to identity prejudice, but certainly applicable to argumentative con-texts specifically. Essentially, they say, "a speech act can, in virtue of its uptake, become a different speech act than it would typically be" based on the enacted rituals and conventions that provide the frame for any speech act's performative force: those that occur before and after the act or the *context* in which the act is situated (Kukla 2014, p. 442). In their account, it is not only the explicit component of a speech act that helps us to interpret its force, but a "wide array of explicit and implicit conventions governing con-text, tone, gesture, etiquette, conversational flow and more" (Kukla 2014, p. 440-441). On the one hand, Kukla says sometimes the deployment of the utterance can be so clear that the force of

the act is interpreted as easily as the context, as in the case of uttering "Please pass the salt" while at a casual dinner among friends (Kukla 2014). Other times, however, like when someone says "I'll call you soon" after a first date, it may be a struggle to interpret the force of the speech act "amid the web of conventions, rituals, and circumstantial clues that make up this context. Without such conventions and rituals, speech acts would have no force at all" (Kukla 2014, p. 441). I suggest this consideration can be extrapolated to verbal argumentative force, as Bondy is seeking to address, in that social conventions surrounding verbal arguments can directly affect their force.

Kukla clarifies "that sometimes a speaker's membership in an already disadvantaged social group makes it difficult or impossible for her to deploy discursive conventions in the normal way, with the result that the performative force of her utterances is distorted in ways that enhance disadvantage" (2014, p. 441).

I highlight this next passage in its entirety so as not to lose any of its meaning. Using the female pronoun Kukla identified with at the time of writing, they offered the example that as a woman who intends to perform a speech act of type A,

> I might have the entitlement to perform it according to standard discursive and social conventions; I might use the conventionally appropriate words, tone, and gestures to produce it in my current context; and yet—*because of my gender*—my performance may not receive uptake as a speech act of type A. And its alternative uptake can in fact *constitute* it as some other kind of speech act of type B, with an unconventional output, given its input—a different kind of act than a male would have produced using the same words, in the same context, and with the same conventional entitlements to speak. In this way, the force of my words may be distinctly *out of my control*. I have become, as it were, the victim of a kind of pragmatic breakdown, from my point of view; I cannot marshal standard conventions in the standard way, in order to act autonomously as a discursive agent. A speech act can be infelicitous because it is unentitled, or because it is performed in the wrong context in the wrong way. But in the case at hand, there is a different kind of breakdown—a queering of the path between performance and uptake. Furthermore…the speech act of type B that I end up performing, despite my intentions and the standing con-

ventions, enhances already existing disadvantages and disenfran-
chisements that attach to my gender identity. In such cases, not
only have I lost control of my words, but I have also become a
victim of discursive injustice. Victims of discursive injustice are,
in virtue of their disadvantaged social identities, less able to skill-
fully negotiate and deploy discursive conventions as tools for
communication and action than others (Kukla, 2014, p. 445).

While Kukla's example speaks of gender identity specifically,
it can easily be mapped onto other socially disadvantaged identi-
ties and their obtaining prejudices, such as in the case of Fricker's
example where a Black man loses control of his speech act when
he is not believed by the police officer because of the colour of his
skin. The implication in Fricker's example is that were the man
white, he would be believed.

Certainly, some prejudice is conscious. However, the injustices
outlined here are more confounded by *unconscious* biases or those
formed outside the awareness of the people who hold them. Re-
searchers have concluded that people indeed hold "unconscious
beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases
stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categoriz-
ing"; they are "far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and
often incompatible with one's conscious values" (Navarro 2019, p.
2-3). Thus, we may consciously think we are being "reasonable"
when unconscious biases are actually preventing us from being so.

2. Visual arguments

Given the faults above within the verbal argumentative mode, I set
out to explore whether visual modes may have a better hope for
placing the control of the force back with the socially disadvan-
taged source of the argument, particularly on matters that relate to
social criticism (social justice) and political arguments that are at
the root of social movements.

In their more general analysis of visuals in social movements,
Nicole Doerr and Simon Teune note that

[t]he visual can be understood as a space in which challengers
confront the establishment and provoke reactions. These interac-

tions produce specific, contingent visualizations of power. As part of their social and political engagement, social movement actors shape the visual to promote their cause and gain leverage. The production of images and the development of visual codes is thus one of the battlefields for social movements and their environments. Allies, countermovements, authorities, and mass media transform or challenge these visual codes according to their agenda (Doerr and Teune 2013, p. 43-44).

The image, then, works both ways in an argumentative context. The theory of the Retort Collective suggests that governing states use images rooted in spectacle to maneuver the masses. Spectacular images are contrived and function as propaganda. Public exposure to the state's spectacular image machine creates "[w]eak citizenship [which] is crucial to maintenance of social control" (Retort 2004, p. 101). "The spectacle…is not merely a realm of images; it is a social process—a complex of enforcements and exclusions—devoted to the suppression of social energies, with the imaging and distancing of those energies being one (among many) of its techniques" (Retort 2004, p. 131). But this means the state is also vulnerable to images for which it does not control the constructed meaning because visual challenges can occur by other actors. This can be both positive, like in the sense of social movements, and negative. For example, Retort (2004) uses 9-11 to argue that at the level of the image, the attacks committed on September 11, 2001 won an image victory over the US. "At the level of the image … the state is vulnerable; and that level is now fully part of, necessary to, the state's apparatus of self-reproduction. Terror can take over the image-machinery for a moment—and a moment, in the timeless echo chamber of the spectacle, may now be all there is—and use it to amplify, reiterate, accumulate the sheer visible happening of defeat" (Retort 2004, p. 27-28). The authors suggest the 9-11 image victory, that is, the images of terror diffused throughout various media, "ma[de] us turn back and back to a moving target of capitalism screaming and exploding" (Retort 2004, p. 29). The "martyr-pilots" made a demand for violent retaliation (Retort 2004). Doerr and Teune (2013) note how this effect can also be maneuvered to operate as a kind of visual dog whistle:

> Media analyses have shown that by using electronic media as channels of diffusion, radical religious groups, media entrepreneurs, and right-wing political parties have great potential to create deep and long-lasting rifts. They may do this by employing certain images and texts that disgust some ethnic, religious, or social groups while remaining distant or indecipherable to others, as in the case of the Muhammad cartoon controversy emanating from Denmark in 2006 (p. 48).

But this same mechanism works in reverse when those who seek to disrupt or interrupt the propaganda machine use visual arguments to protest politically for social justice gains. However, it should be noted that even though images generally have this argumentative power, they are still open to interpretation and bias, depending on the creator, the audience, and the argument. While the main point of this paper is that inflecting or capturing empathy in certain visual arguments can interrupt the bias that taints our verbal arguments long enough to correctly control their force, I also suggest it can help to direct visual arguments that have the potential to go awry as well. Not all visual arguments are created equally. Some of them are simply poorly constructed. As discussed above, some of them are infused with bias purposefully to dog whistle, persuade acceptance, or provoke biases. Indeed, people who hold unconscious biases can also unconsciously inflect those into visual arguments either in their creation or interpretation. These are not the visuals I engage with here. Instead, I am addressing a very specifically crafted visual in order to establish how socially disadvantaged groups can regain control of the force of arguments that biases in the verbal mode skew. However, any well-crafted visual generally has the potential to instantly connect contextually with an audience in a way that verbal arguments may be too cumbersome to achieve. How arguers use this effect is susceptible to all the usual suspects of human behaviour. Figure 1 may prove helpful as an example of the instant connection visual arguments generally have the potential to achieve. I suggest looking at the image now before reading any further.

Figure 1: Street art by NemOs (Meamar 2017).

Many street artists, like NemOs, who created the image here, use their visuals for social commentary or to make political arguments. This image offers an argument about human development and its negative impact on the natural world, though is it unlikely that the viewer needed me to fill in verbally what the image claims. I will not evaluate this argument. I use this image only to demonstrate that, as well-crafted visual arguments ask the audience to do, it is likely that the viewer is able to supply the intended premises and conclusion. I offer further discussion about the enthymematic nature of visual arguments below. The point here is that a verbal argument claiming what the above image presents may not con-nect instantly with an audience the way this well-crafted visual can. This power of visual argumentation coupled with inflecting empathy in certain instances is where I spend my effort below.

Quoting Leo Groarke's definition of visual argument, Ian Dove reiterates: "One can find visual arguments that contain no verbal elements, but most combine the visual and the verbal. In some

cases, a visual argument makes the same claims both visually and verbally, reinforcing the verbal with the visual (or the visual with the verbal). More frequently, the visual and the verbal contribute different elements that combine to create an argument" (Dove 2016, para. 14). Even though the multimodality of visual arguments is acknowledged here, Dove points out that it is usually the addition of the visual that does much of the argumentative work. Again, I contend that well-crafted visual arguments may do a better job of conveying meaning than the same exclusively verbal arguments.

I suggest that because of their reliance on enthymeme (Dove 2016), visual arguments are highly context specific but can also have an emotional appeal and therefore require a deep understanding between audience and arguer or a kind of empathetic commonality (especially when empathy is additionally inflected into the visual). Such understanding is essential for inferences to be correctly translated from creator to audience. Of course, this can be true of verbal arguments as well, but as outlined earlier, bias can get in the way of the translation. In visual arguments, the path between performance and uptake is especially dependent on the framing and crafting of the image by the arguer, or else the meaning will not (cannot even) be decoded by the audience. Conversely, the audience must especially attend to the image to decode what is being shown in the visual, which means they must think carefully about the intended meaning. Yet visual arguments also have a kind of instant recognition when they are crafted exceptionally well or with the intended audience in mind. This kind of contextual understanding along with this instant or quick "getting it" influenced by emotional appeal using empathy may be enough to interrupt our natural tendencies toward bias, at least long enough to establish the necessary and correct force needed to transcend some of the contextual incompatibilities that belie our verbal arguments. That is not to say that visual arguments are closed to interpretation and may result in different meanings for different people. But it is the nexus of the visual argument with having either crafted or captured an empathetic bent that I suggest is where the power of the force can be appropriately, enthymematically translated from arguer to audience.

3. Enthymeme, schemes and visual arguments

In her discussion of enthymeme, Valerie Smith argues that Aristotle's original conception of enthymeme, which goes past what she says has become the standard "procedural" treatment of the term "as a truncated or elided syllogism" whereby missing premises are supplied by the receiver (Smith 2007, p. 115), allows for its usage in visual argumentation. Citing the *Prior Analytics* and later Corbett, Smith notes that

> in the Aristotelean sense, enthymeme is explicitly defined "as a syllogism based on probabilities (*eikoi*) or signs (*semeion*)" (Madden 1952, p. 370). It is thus a 'much more complex mode of reasoning' than the procedural interpretation recognizes: The differences might be summed up in this way: the Aristotelian enthymeme (1) often involved premises that were merely probable, thus leading to conclusions that were only generally or usually true; (2) allowed for the ethical and emotional dimensions of argument as well as for the logical; and (3) depended for its success in persuasion on the consensus that existed or was generated between the speaker and the audience (Corbett 1984, pp. xviii-xix; Smith 2007, p.116).

According to Smith then, "[i]n sum, although enthymemes often are abbreviated syllogisms, they are defined more accurately as syllogisms based on probabilities or signs. More than a procedural rule, Aristotle's conception provides a complete rhetorical approach… involving probabilistic reasoning, ethical and emotional appeals, and audience involvement" (Smith 2007, p. 117). Generally speaking, this account of enthymeme allows for visual argumentation in the sense that the audience is able to supply probable premises and conclusions regarding how it decodes the visual. Smith says "[p]robabilistic visual enthymemes consisting of probable premises and conclusions comport well with our everyday experience. Within our cultural frameworks, we understand visual aspects of nonverbal communication to carry a limited and likely range of meanings. For example, a clenched fist and red face argue that one is probably angry and, further, that one probably will act on this anger" (Smith 2007, p. 120).

I go a step further, however, to suggest that when *empathy* is invoked in a visual argument, it may lead different audiences

within different cultural frameworks to fill in very similar information, thus reducing the probabilistic nature of what needs to be supplied or understood. Doerr and Tuene (2013) suggest that visual expression already has the capacity to reach a transnational audience in "protest events and processes, where actors cannot necessarily rely on a shared verbal language" (p. 47). I push further and suggest that reducing the probability that audiences will get the intended premises and conclusions wrong by inflecting something that can transcend culture, like empathy, can help to further transcend language codes. This coupled with the theory of the Retort Collective, which notes the current media reality of the recirculation of images constructed for their meaning and the power that results from this wide recirculation by reinforcing their meaning, may carry the appropriate force from arguer to audience before bias has an opportunity to interrupt the force of the intended meaning. It may be that bias follows, but I am interested in the nuance of interrupting or pausing the bias, which leaves an opening, however brief, for persuasion.

Where emotion is concerned, there has long been a divide between rationality and emotionality in argumentation, a debate in which I will not engage here. Instead, I agree with Leo Groarke, who suggests that

> When arguing for a particular social policy or initiative, for example, empathy for others has a legitimate role to play in our considerations. Compassion for those in distress properly supports conclusions about the right way to behave and it is difficult to separate love and affection from attendant moral sensibilities which support some conclusions and mitigate against others (Groarke 2010, p. 2).

This is not to say that attempts at a "dispassionate assessment of evidence" do not sometimes point us in the right direction, but

> there are many circumstances in which the idea that we should remove emotion from reasoning is wrong headed. Whatever one makes of philosophical attempts to ground morality on purely rational grounds (attempts that are, at best, controversial), the suggestion that emotions have no proper role in moral, social, political, and aesthetic

arguments seems peculiar. It seems entirely appropriate to invoke the pity we feel for the victims of an earthquake or tsunami when deciding how we should respond to it. A studied lack of empathy is not a positive trait in thinking, but the characteristic feature of psychopathy, which we recognize as a mental disorder (Groarke 2010, p. 3).

Thus, Groarke calls for the distinction between proper and improper appeals to emotion, which argumentation schemes allow for. On the one hand, fallacies are errors in reasoning, but on the other, they are often acceptable schemes of argument. Walton and Godden define argumentation schemes as "common types of defeasible argument evaluated with critical questions" (Walton and Godden 2005, p. 475) and further elaborate that they "are stereotypical patterns of defeasible reasoning that typically occur in common, everyday arguments …" (Walton and Godden 2005, p. 476).

Catherine Hundleby notes that in this approach, a fallacy is defined as "a serious misuse of an argument scheme. Argument schemes are presumptive forms of reasoning that go awry when the burden of proof is not fulfilled, leaving the presumption without the necessary qualification. Presumptive reasoning employs generalizations that admit of exceptions (Walton 2006a, p.3)—so, it can be cogent or fallacious" (Hundleby 2010, p. 282). Hundleby further clarifies that on Walton's account, various schemes, in certain circumstances, "provide good reasoning" such as, for example, "emotional appeals, which can be fallacious, also can be crucial to catch the interest of one's audience and demonstrate the significance of one's claims" (Hundleby 2010, p. 282).

While argumentation schemes have typically been used to evaluate dialectical (verbal) arguments, Ian Dove (2016) suggests they can be employed for visual argument evaluation, and in some instances, new schemes and critical questions can and should be created where necessary for this purpose.

4. The case study and controlling force

A demonstration of the kind of political visual argument that uses empathy toward a social justice end will be helpful here. The case study image I have selected is particularly important as there were

many verbal arguments related to the same issues this visual represents, but they did not have the same force due to social biases that this one image had.

In March 2011, the civil war erupted in Syria. As a result, many civilians began fleeing the violence and seeking asylum and safety as refugees by making a mortally dangerous journey to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe and then making their way to various countries, including Canada. Many of them did not survive. On September 2, 2015, a three-year-old boy, Alan Kurdi, was among 12 others who died that day attempting the journey across the Mediterranean. His body washed up, face down on shore, and several images were captured of his body by Turkish photojournalist Nilüfer Demir, which quickly spread around the world, prompting international responses. One of the images, that of Kurdi lying face down alone on the beach at the break between the water and sand, became an icon. While other images of Kurdi and an emergency responder either standing near him or carrying him were selected for publication by various news outlets, the image that reached viral recirculation was that of Kurdi lying on his own. I have chosen to show a blurred photo of the iconic image in Figure 2 (see p. 70) due to its voyeuristic nature as well as the generally traumatizing experience of viewing it. However, when it was released, the image was in focus.

Prior to this day, the BBC (2016) reported that some 2,500 refugees had died making the same journey that Kurdi had. In fact, several news agencies had ongoing reports outlining the carnage in war-torn Syria, the innocence of those fleeing, and their desperation along with pleas and calls for help. Many verbally argued that the sheer number of deaths (in addition to the violence for those who remained in the warzone) meant more needed to be done to help people escape the violence. However, there was also a populist message, which regularly referenced the refugees as migrants, and the verbal arguments surrounding that messaging offered reasons why they should be turned away at various borders. The migrant language was, before Kurdi's image appeared, surpassing the refugee language on social media (Devichand 2016). While news coverage, protests, and political arguments continued, until

Figure 2: Blurred image of Alan Kurdi originally captured in focus by Turkish photojournalist Nilüfer Demir. Blurred photo credit here (Stephens, 2019).

the image of Kurdi was circulated, none of the arguments had the kind of force that this one image did. The BBC reported that after the image of Kurdi went viral, what they called the "Alan Kurdi affect" happened: "A study from the University of Sheffield… noted a change in the language being used about Syrians entering Europe. The vexed debate, including at the BBC, about whether the word 'migrant' or 'refugee' should be applied to Syrians, seemed to have shifted on social media—with the word 'refugee' surging ahead in common use" at the time (Devichand 2016, para. 6). Quoting the researchers, the BBC noted the "'shift in language [had shifted] the sense of people's responsibility,'… Frank Duvell of Oxford University's Centre on Migration, Policy and Society [said] 'Talking about refugees means acknowledging some responsibility for international protection which the word 'migrant' doesn't entail'" (Devichand 2016, para. 8). Duvell said "[w]ith the change in language came the mobilization of ordinary people—who saw the Alan Kurdi image and volunteered to help" (Devichand 2016, para. 9). Duvell even went so far as to establish a direct causal relationship between the photo and reactions from the public previously unseen in the refugee crisis: "We saw, because of the rise of attention, also a rise in the mobilization of people

who started rushing to the scene to Turkish beaches, to Greek islands to the Balkan route … Previously people [refugees] would arrive on deserted beaches [and] they would walk for hours day and night soaked in water to the nearest villages and suddenly there were volunteers on the beach helping them out of the boats helping them with dry clothing." (Devichand 2016, para. 10).

I go a step further in this paper and suggest this image was taken to make the deliberate argument for a call to action through the use of appropriate appeal to emotion, namely empathy. I also suggest this image can fit with the argumentation scheme for argument from negative consequences. According to Walton (1996), the scheme is as follows:

If **A** is brought about, bad consequences will plausibly occur. Thus, the conclusion: **A** should not be brought about.

The three critical questions that match the scheme are:

1. How strong is the probability or plausibility that these cited consequences will (may, might, must) occur?

2. What evidence, if any, supported the claim that these consequences will (may, might, must) occur if **A** is brought about?

3. Are there consequences of the opposite value that ought to be taken into account?

The following fills in the scheme for the visual of Alan Kurdi's death: If you continue to do nothing to help, more innocent people (children) will die. Thus, conclusion: You should not continue to do nothing.

And the critical question responses are as follows:

1. The probability is very strong, given the nature of the death of this child, that more will die if you do nothing. Look, this child is dead.

2. The picture is worth a thousand words here. The dead baby is evidence that innocent people will die.

3. The consequences of doing something may be that someone can be saved.

The evidence for the argument in the photograph can be confirmed as it was described in a news interview by the reporter who captured the image and therefore created the framing of which elements were shown and left out. The day after the photo was captured, she told the interviewer, "Three-year-old Aylan [Alan] Kurdi was lying lifeless face down in the surf, in his red t-shirt and dark blue shorts folded to his waist. The only thing I could do was to make his outcry heard [adding that was the moment she took the shot]" (Dogan News Agency 2015, para. 3) "Demir then explained how she noticed another toddler … Kurdi's brother Galip on the ground, without a lifejacket, just like the other migrants" (Dogan News Agency 2015, para. 4), as well as another lifeless 11-year-old. None of these images was captured, however. Instead, she said the single image of Alan Kurdi "shows how dramatic the incident was" (Dogan News Agency 2015, para. 5). When asked about her reaction to snapping the picture, Demir said, "Pain and sorrow … I have photographed and witnessed many migrant incidents since 2003 in this region … Their deaths, their drama. I hope from today, this will change. Hundreds, even thousands of migrants have flocked to Bodrum, because the Island of Kos is only 4 miles [away]. Migrants attempt to cross into Greece and then other European countries by boats, usually inflatable" (Dogan News Agency 2015, para. 8). As an aside, notice here, even in her sorrow and clear empathy for the refugee plight and call for action, Demir is still using the language of "migrant" which again demonstrates how pervasive unconscious bias can be even when it conflicts with our stated values, as it does here with the reporter. But despite her bias, the reporter was still able to create a visual argument that excluded her unconscious verbal leanings. The empathy captured in Demir's image of Kurdi comes from the innocence of the baby, and the basic human understanding, and need even (bar-

ring pathology), that we must protect our young. His innocence represented here in the visual transcends the racial inequities that upheld many of the populists' claims that the refugees should not be supported. The biases that undergirded the notion of "migrants" were brought to a majority consciousness when faced with the recirculation of the image of the tiny body of innocence. Sharing and resharing the image was a political act and an argument for change. The image itself made an argument with appropriate force, which in that moment and in that context in time transcended the biases that had belied the same verbal arguments. Twenty-five hundred people (some of them children) had already died, and the verbal reports of this fact did not have the same force of a single image of one individual. When asked by the BBC about why the image had the impact it did, a representative of Save the Children offered that it was because it was interpreted from a near universal standpoint: "He looks like he could be any of our children" (Gunter 2015, para. 19). Moreover, because Kurdi's family had reportedly been eventually trying to reach Canada, his death and the wider refugee crisis immediately became an issue in the 2015 Canadian federal election, which later resulted in Canada implementing additional policies to help support Syrian refugees. This supports Nicole Doerr's argument that "images trigger novel verbal arguments and rational deliberation about collective identity inside transnational and local social movements" (Doerr and Teune 2013, p. 46), and there is evidence to support that they also trigger additional novel visual arguments like the images created by various global artists after Alan Kurdi's image went viral. While there is not sufficient time to analyze all of them, I offer some descriptions here of the visual arguments that arose from the original image. In one artist's cartoon, Alan Kurdi appears in the same face-down position lying in a bottle at the surf break with "S.O.S." scrolled across the bottle; another similar cartoon leaves out the S.O.S. and still effectively conveys the same notion of a message in a bottle. In another cartoon, Kurdi's body appears in the same position; only this time it is lying at the gates of heaven with a sealed envelope beside him, and a man in a suit representing the world with an earth for his head is seen fleeing the gates on foot with a guilty expression. The viewer is left to interpret what

the note inside the envelope might say, but given the expression on the earth's face, we expect that shame is the message it contains. And there are dozens more images based on the original that use arguments through analogy and metaphor to convey their political positions on the Syrian crisis. In one such particularly poignant image that also became iconic and went viral, another Syrian boy is pictured after he was shell-shocked during an air attack on his home in 2016. This time, five-year-old Omran Daqneesh, shown in Figure 3 below, was photographed, completely despondent, immediately after surviving the bombing in Aleppo.

Figure 3: "Five-year-old Syrian Omran Daqneesh sits in the seat of an ambulance after an airstrike blew up his family's home in eastern Aleppo, Syria, in a photo taken by activist Mahmoud Raslan" (Hall 2016).

After going viral, his image became the basis for additional visual arguments in the ongoing refugee crisis. Once again, this image invokes empathy by demonstrating another innocent child suffering. And immediately following its recirculation, political cartoonist Khalid Albaih created the image shown in Figure 4 and posted it to his Twitter and Instagram accounts. We can see how this image has added to the original argument depicted in Alan Kurdi's image but also advances the argument further through visual means. The cartoon also appeared in The Telegraph.

Figure 4: Artist credit Khalid Albaih (Boult 2016).

Again, the argument here draws on empathy. Smith argues that the probabilistic nature of visual arguments recognizes "the differences that are common in human interactions. They call for judgment, and thus appeal emotionally and ethically as well as logically … [T]heir effectiveness depends on agreement between messenger and audience, discovered in the common opinions shaped by the contexts and culture of the people addressed" (Smith 2007, p. 122). If we can inflect empathy via the making of certain visual arguments, we may be able to better universalize some aspect of the human condition. Then, we can control the necessary force of arguments long enough to have them reach our intended audience and create some wiggle room for transcending the biases associated with the verbal mode's force queering—better targeting and even exacerbating that necessary agreement between messenger and audience. In the Alan Kurdi example, and with the pathological aside, every culture has the human experience of protecting its children. Seeing the framing of a three-year-old baby lying face down drowned, no matter his sex, religion, ethnic heritage, or skin colour, evokes an empathetic response across cultures and the kind of call to action that social movements demand in their political

arguments. Whether or not the image persuades, as it did in this case, may or may not be its goal. The goal that interests me is to interrupt social biases long enough to have the argument reach the audience with the necessary and correct force, which can then open the receiver to the possibility of being persuaded. I think this is something that is lost to, or not permitted by, bias in the verbal argumentative mode. Certainly, once the empathetic visual argument is received, it may be the case that biases again appear, but I am interested in the nuance of the moment where the bias barrier comes down long enough to open reception, as this has the potential to allow room for persuasion. Moreover, I think these kinds of visuals have the ability, to use Goodwin and Innocenti's (2016) terminology, to "make reasons apparent," but instantaneously so, which may reduce the argumentative strain of the heavy burden of proof on those who face identity prejudices when they seek to change the social systems that oppress them.

In their work on "The Pragmatic Force of Making Reasons Apparent," Jean Goodwin and Beth Innocenti (2016) argued that certain arguments in social movements make reasons apparent even if they do not initially persuade. They used case studies of women's suffrage to demonstrate that, early on in the social movement, women had little if any hope of persuading male decision makers of their right to vote, yet the force of their arguments lay with the performance of doing the very thing they were arguing for. In one case, female activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave a speech at the first women's rights convention, which she later repeated over and over again. At the time, it was commonly accepted as natural that women were intellectually inferior, and their preoccupations with homemaking and emotions made them poor candidates for the rational endeavor of weighing the politics of the day:

> The speech Stanton gave … can be seen as an attempt to overturn some of these stereotypes [because she was making the argument] … By standing up and putting argument[s] out there—by making reasons apparent—she was showing that she was the kind of person who could make reasons apparent. She was demonstrating that she had the capacity to participate in public life … (Goodwin and Innocenti 2016, p. 453).

As the authors note, however, it was not so much the arguments themselves, but the witnessing of the audience watching a woman make them over and over again that had the force. This traverses terrain somewhere between verbal and visual arguments in that it was demonstration and performance and repetition that did the argumentative work. Audiences had to see her doing the thing over and over to eventually be persuaded that she could do the thing. Thus, the force was not in her words but in the performance of her actions and the repetition or recirculation of them gnawing away at public bias. Certainly, I am not suggesting that empathy was invoked here, and as one reviewer rightfully pointed out, it is unlikely that critics of the women's movement felt any empathy for Cady Stanton. Instead, what I think is interesting is the notion of making reasons apparent. It may be that visual arguments crafted to invoke empathy, like the Kurdi image, have the potential to make reasons nearly instantaneously, enthymematically apparent because their precise force interrupts bias. Whereas Cady Stanton had to perform the task over and over again to make her reasons apparent, it may be that, as in the case of the Alan Kurdi affect, empathetic visual arguments push through the biases that cause one to have to repeat their case ad nauseam. Thanks to the way we recirculate images, the necessary repetition also now comes from the audience rather than the arguer, which has the potential to create an argumentative army. Cady Stanton had to chip away at the discursive, argumentative, and epistemic injustices she faced. The Kurdi image transcended these biases that Syrian refugees also faced in the verbal mode long enough to open the audience to receive the argument without the intrusion of bias. This nuance is what opens the path for persuasion, and in this case, people were persuaded.

5. Conclusion

I have considered a narrow scope of visual argumentation here that inflects or captures empathy as a means of interrupting bias long enough for the socially disadvantaged (or their supporters) to control appropriate force. The case study I provided offers a stark

and overt example. In subtler cases of bias, however, I think inflecting empathy in a visual argument that can reach a broader audience still has the same potential. However, I suggest that images that show injustice in a way that relates to the audience have the best hope of enthymematically arguing their case. Whether created or captured, the framing of visual arguments to include empathy can result in a more precise force for the arguer than verbal modes of the same arguments.

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