

# On the Pathology of the Enthymeme: Accounting for Hidden Visual Premises in Advertising Discourse

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## ABSTRACT

One of the key reasons that have been put forward for justifying the superior argumentative force of visuals over verbal arguments in advertising discourse is their immediacy. The immediate resonance of visuals and their forceful appeal bear considerable resemblance to the argumentative force of enthymemes as hidden premises in informal rhetorical argumentation. In this article an attempt is made at bridging the logical and pathemic appeals of enthymemes under the aegis of what may be called the pathology of the enthymeme, while demonstrating that what has been pejoratively tagged, since Freudian psychoanalytic discourse, as “the psychopathology of everyday life” in fact constitutes the very underpinning of enthymematic structures and a system of topoi of which such structures constitute an integral part. By assuming as the point of departure of this genealogico-pathological tracing Heidegger’s opening up of the meaning of *logos* and as destination Heidegger’s ontological reading of everydayness, the enthymematic embeddedness of cultural topoi is depathologized, while being reinserted in its “proper” pathological dimension. The exemplification of how visual enthymemes function and may be translated as hidden premises in advertising discourse seeks to demonstrate the pathology of the enthymeme as “unquestionable” major premises that underpin visual arguments.

The enthymeme maintains a prominent place in rhetorical history throughout classical antiquity, and is used in numerous contexts. It never attains a single agreed upon ‘definition’” (Poster 1992, 17; also see Braet 1999). According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971, 230), “the terms *enthymeme* and *epicheireme* correspond roughly to quasi-logical argu-

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ments presented in syllogistic form. The syllogism of rhetoric is called *epicheirema* by Quintillian and *enthymeme* by Aristotle.” The peculiar syllogistic form of the enthymeme has also been highlighted by Poster (1992, 1): “In most contemporary rhetorical discussions, the enthymeme is usually described as either a syllogism with one part unstated or as a syllogism, the premises of which are probable rather than certain statements, or some variant on these two.” The definitional polyphony of the enthymeme is reflected in the following: “(a) abbreviated syllogism (one premise omitted) (b) syllogism of which at least one premise is probable (c) abbreviated syllogism of which one premise is probable (d) informal deductive reasoning (e) syllogism of which at least one premise is a sign (f) syllogism of which at least one term is a maxim (g) syllogism from premises in accord with audience’s world view” (Poster 1992, 17).

Among the various definitions cited by the aforementioned authors which span both ancient and modern rhetorical analyses on the structure of the enthymeme, the recurring components comprise the following, which are of direct pertinence to our analysis: enthymemes are not necessarily explicit premises; enthymemes constitute either explicit or implicit conditionals that are reflective of cultural *topoi* and which may be cited as either necessary or probable premises for the construction of argumentative schemes. Whether or not the concept of enthymeme involves missing premises is disputable, as amply shown by Poster. Hitchcock (1985, 83), even though not fully endorsing the inclusion of the missing premises point of view in the definitional scope of enthymemes, acknowledges its relevance.

What is of particular importance for the argumentation at hand is the inextricable relation between enthymemes and widely held cultural values or *topoi* (*loci communes*). The evocation of such *topoi* in enthymematic premises constitutes an essential counterpart in multimodal advertising discourse and especially so when such enthymemes are evoked implicitly in visuals or explicitly in the form of a narrator’s employment of cultural values as ground for legitimating inferential claims that are put forward in the course of an advertising narrative.<sup>1</sup> “It is the cultural context, the socially held matrix of a given

1. “A genuinely plausible argument gives a good reason for its conclusion, which may nevertheless be false. To make this distinction clearer, he [Aristotle] devotes two chapters of his *Rhetoric* to examples of each. Book II, chapter 23 is a list of twenty-eight kinds of ‘genuine’ enthymemes; that is, lines of argument that a rhetorician should use (when appropriate), because one of them may well be the strongest argument available in the Circumstances. For example: analogy to a similar case (#10); the prior decision of an authority (#11); good or bad consequences of the proposed action (#13); if two results are the same their antecedents must have been the same (#17); the motives people might have for doing the action in question (#20); if the cause is present, the effect must be present (#24). These are plausible as commonsense assumptions we all make in everyday life” (Burke 1984, 18–19).

field, from which we derive the standards of argument” (Gilbert 2004, 259). It is precisely this cultural context as topical system that furnishes the truth conditionals of enthymematic syllogisms or, as argued by Hitchcock (1985, 89), “an enthymematic argument, we have seen, assumes at least the truth of the argument’s associated conditional.” “Enthymemes are the type of *sullogismoi* whereby we refer to *topoi*” (Braet 1999, 104). By definition, as remarked by Scenters-Zapico (1994), enthymemes as discursive constructions that are reflective of *topoi* are of an intertextual nature. The relationship between enthymemes and *topoi* may be summarized as follows: “I call the same thing element and *topos*; for an element or a *topos* is a heading under which many enthymemes fall” (*Rhetoric* 1403a18–19). By “element” Aristotle does not mean a proper part of the enthymeme, but a general form under which many concrete enthymemes of the same type can be subsumed. According to this definition, the *topos* is a general argumentative form or pattern, and the concrete arguments are instantiations of the general *topos* (Rapp 2010).

This inextricable relationship between *topoi* and enthymemes has been described lucidly by Scenters-Zapico (1994, 71) as follows: “The enthymeme is a discursive structure that inscribes consensus, for the elided assumptions of an enthymeme are supplied by the intertextual network of experiences and associations shared by readers, writers, speakers and hearers.” It is by virtue of their inherently intertextual nature that enthymemes surface in multimodal discourse as “slice-of-life” representations, or visual segments that evoke semantically invested aspects of ordinary life, as will be exemplified in due course. Essentially, visual enthymemes evoke and constantly revoke the “givenness” of what is in its mode of givenness, to use Heideggerian ontological terminology, thus perpetuating and legitimating in the structure of silent and non-dialogic visual enthymemes a cultural order and a nexus of values that partakes thereof.

Enthymematic arguments have been traditionally employed in tandem with the three classical appeal types: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. According to Aristotle, enthymemes are largely manifested in three propositional forms, namely, “necessary signs [*tekmeria*], probabilities [*eikota*], and signs [*sēmeia*] are the propositions of the rhetorician (I,iii,7)” (Poster 1992, 16). Now, what is relevant from a multimodal rhetorical point of view and conducive to the integration of the missing premises point of view to the adopted definition in this article is not so much the literally missing aspect of premises, but the surfacing of missing premises in visual mode. This point will be further explored in the section below that deals with visual argumentation.

### The Patho-logical Structure of the Enthymeme

The classical Greek noun *enthymeme*, according to the *Stanford Online Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, is rooted in the verb *enthumeisthai*, which means “to consider.” However, *enthumeisthai* also means “to remember,” while if we break down this composite word into its components *en* and *thymos*, we derive etymologically the meaning of what resides within (*en*) passion (*thymos*). The etymological structure of the enthymeme is purely pathemic, thus manifesting that at its very root lies passion. The pathemic structure of the enthymeme also underlies the assumption of the passivity of the subject in the face of cultural values, namely, what is handed over to enculturated subjects as a nexus of values.

The enthymeme essentially betrays an a priori and normatively passive attitude of the subject vis-à-vis a cultural network of values, which it is supposed to recognize as deductively valid premises in an argumentative structure, whence stems the deductive role of enthymemes in rhetorical argumentation. This deductive validity of enthymemes is by definition rooted in *pathos*, as against its syllogistic counterpart, which is rooted in *logos*, as disinterested (i.e., devoid of any pathemic dimension) logical premises. At the same time, the meaning of enthymeme as recollection incites us to interpret its meaning in parallel with its thymic component as a recollection of what has been handed over pathemically to subjects of a common culture. This interpretation is reminiscent of the Platonic idealist function of “re-collection” of the Ideas of beauty, goodness, truth and their re-cognition in “faulty” artifacts, such as sculptures and paintings, albeit with an evident turn from Plato’s idealist underpinnings to a pragmatic territory, where enthymemes (either verbal or visual) are responsible for reminding a target audience’s members to recognize themselves in the explicit or missing premises that are put forward in rhetorical arguments. The pragmatic-dialectic dimension of the enthymeme, in this sense, has always been part and parcel of its communicative function within the contours of a recollecting community that is reflected pathemically in orators’ enthymematic arguments.

Thus far, the etymological opening up of the enthymeme has enabled us to highlight *pathos* (as quasi-synonym of *thymos*)<sup>2</sup> and “re-collection” as underpinnings of its semantic structure, which are reflected, from a pragmatic point

2. See Smith (1998, 27–28): “Heidegger radically redirects Aristotle’s line of thought here: the enthymeme, he says, correlates with *enthumeisthai* or ‘taking something to heart [to the *thymos*],’ and it is primarily in this, not in the number of its premises that its *logos* or argument is to be distinguished from the *logos* of a dialectical syllogism. . . . For in a decision of *krisis* it is the *thymos*, the heart, the seat of the *pathe*, that must be changed and not just one’s view of things.”



of view, in its communicative function. A closer look at the etymology of recollection will aid us in bridging *pathos*, as essential semantic component of the enthymeme, with *logos*, and hence show how these two traditionally discrete types of appeal in fact constitute an indivisible unity or, at most, two terms with intersecting semantic boundaries. As noted by Heidegger (1984, 61) in his analysis of Heraclitus's fragment on Logos, *logos* (which was replaced by Ratio with the advent of modernism) originally meant "to collect, to gather." Viewed from this primordial (as Heidegger would have put it) point of view, *logos* essentially invokes a process of collection of fragmentary presentations, an embryonic remark that has been technically articulated in multifarious ways in various philosophical perspectives throughout the millennia. What is important and potentially helpful in elucidating the unitary meaning of *pathos* and *logos* in the structure of the enthymeme is their convergence in terms of "collection," as recollection (in the context of the pathemic component of the enthymeme, namely, qua pathemically recollecting value) and as collection (in the context of the primordial meaning of *logos*). This semantic convergence between *pathos* and *logos*, viewed from within the semantic structure of the enthymeme, incites us to effect a rupture from the rational underpinnings of *logos* and to reinstate it in a pathemic territory. Hence, the enthymeme is the locus where what is handed over pathemically is a collection of cultural values, as the point of intersection between *pathos* and *logos*. In this sense, the argumentative employment of enthymemes is not intended to appeal disjunctively to *logos* or *pathos* but has always already, one might say, a "patho-logical" dimension.

### **The Enthymematic Pathology of Everyday Life:**

#### **Rendezvous with Rendezvous**

What Freud (1901) tagged two millennia later as the "(psycho)pathology of everyday life" simply resonates the enthymematic structure of common discourse, as plenum of topoi that allow a culture to be "collected" and "recollected" by its subjects, to whom it is pathemically handed over from generation to generation. Culture is by definition pathological, while there is nothing *pathological* about this statement. "Consequently, the construction of enthymemes is primarily a matter of deducing from accepted opinions (*endoxa*)" (Rapp 2010), where instead of "accepted" I would argue for the more pertinent term "handed over," in continuation of the preceding analysis, and given that "acceptance" involves reflexive reasoning and hence the mitigation of the pathemic dimension of the enthymeme.

In order to render this pivotal point more concrete in the light of the evoked paradigm (i.e., Freudian psychoanalysis) and particularly in the context of Freud's (1901) treatise on the (psycho)pathology of everyday life, let us briefly outline how pathology is framed by Freud and what pathological instances are singled out as substantiations of his argumentation for (psycho)pathology. For Freud, psychopathology is framed in a clinical context and from the viewpoint of "received wisdom" within the contours of the (bio)psychological advances of his time. Psychic phenomena, such as neuroses, psychoses, schizophrenia, but also nymphomania, were labeled psychopathological insofar as they deviated from an intuitively accepted definition of normalcy (whence stems the particularly ad hoc nature, at least in Freud's time, of criteria for gauging their likely incidence, as evidenced in Freud's question begging, in terms of sample size and sampling criteria, yet indubitably insightful and artfully crafted exemplifications). What is relevant for our analysis, which is situated primarily within rhetoric, is not the criteria whereby different psychopathological states were determined as such by Freud, but the territory in which such conditionals are grounded. This territory, as will be shown, rests with social normative structures, which also justifies why psychopathological states are time and place dependent or, in other words, why the ground for gauging psychopathological states is by definition topical (from a rhetorical point of view) and, hence, enthymematic. Let it be noted in passing that despite Freud's close attendance to the importance of rhetorical figures in shaping the language of dreams and the language of the unconscious (see Rossolatos 2012), he hardly sought recourse to rhetoric either in the delineation of the meaning of "psychopathology" or in the mode of manifestation of psychopathological phenomena in everyday life (as against the role performed, for example, by metaphor and metonymy in shaping the manifest dream content). Yet, it is hoped that our reconstruction of the meaning of "pathology" by recourse to time-hallowed rhetorical concepts will render apparent that rhetoric is also pertinent in this instance.

By resuming the previous discussion about the structure of the enthymeme as being inherently pathological, we may infer that if a standard of normalcy for gauging the incidence of a psychopathological phenomenon is posited by recourse to "received wisdom" or a set of *endoxa qua loci communes* and hence is of patho-logical nature, then resorting to pathology for the determination of deviations therefrom is a contradiction in terms. In other words, one is attempting to legitimate a deviation by appealing to the very ground rule that is predicated of a deviation. This definitional contradiction, at least as may be

edified in terms of an etymological reading (which may contravene the intuitive employment of the word *pathology*) is also evinced if we attend to the pragmatic use of the term. When one attempts to frame a phenomenon as pathological, in fact one ascribes an inherentist cause (i.e., subject dependent) that is responsible for the manifestation of the phenomenon. What is tacitly implied in this inherentist attribution, yet not manifesting itself as a premise in a dialectical syllogism that seeks to legitimate itself by recourse to a deductively valid proposition about the inner mechanism responsible for producing a pathological phenomenon, is that the pathological constitution of the subject by definition is dependent on the term's derivatives, that is, *pathos* and *logos*. If we attend to this fundamental dependence of the subject's pathology as what is implied as a necessary condition for the determination of pathology and without replicating circularly our earlier analysis of the pathological structure of the enthymeme, we infer effortlessly that the phantasmatic "inner" kernel of a subject that is responsible for the production of a pathological phenomenon is in fact the very nexus of cultural topoi (values) that conditions it. This point will become more concrete later on when we consider Heidegger's deviations from the Cartesian subject and the Husserlian notion of intentionality.

Having established that the "inner" substratum of a pathological condition is by default rhetorically constituted, let us turn to how Freud conceptualized incidences of psychopathology in everyday life. A review of the cited examples from his seminal treatise *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* that appeared in 1901 (that is, one year after *The Interpretation of Dreams*) suggests that the majority of such incidences are attributed to "forgetfulness": for example, forgetfulness of childhood memories (in the form of repression), slips of the tongue (as forgetfulness of correct grammatical articulation), forgetfulness of names and places. What is "pathological" about such incidences of forgetfulness is that the subject does not opt for forgetting, but that it is liable to unconscious mechanisms that are responsible for bringing about forgetfulness.

Let us dwell a bit longer on an indicative and highly relevant for our analysis example of such modes of forgetfulness, namely, the forgetfulness of intentions (Freud 1901, 1218–42). Forgetfulness of intentions is a special case, compared to forgetfulness of impressions received from the external environment and forgetfulness of actions, insofar as the structure of intentionality is in fact more reflective of the subject's "inner" workings as against impressions, which may be retraced by playing back, for example, a recorded film,

and the same holds for undertaken actions. What is particularly appealing as regards the forgetfulness of intentions is their origin. As will be argued, it is precisely the lack of an intrasubjective kernel of intentionality as “originary place” that renders intentions prone to forgetfulness and, moreover, that attests to their driving force as implicit enthymemes. In short, a plausible reason for the power of forgetfulness as *raison d’être* of intentions qua latent enthymematic structure manifests itself in the very unreflective manner whereby what is intentioned is the outcome of having been subject to the givenness of culturally sanctioned topoi. Freud (1901, 1233) reasons that “an intention is an impulse to perform an action; an impulse which has already found approval but whose execution is postponed to a suitable occasion.” The attribution of impulsiveness to intentions by Freud points, on the one hand, to the unconscious nature of intentionality and, on the other hand, to a lack of control on behalf of the subject. Additionally, in the same passage, Freud draws an implicit distinction between motives and intentions, by ascribing to the former a calculative character that is not encountered in the latter, thus confirming the impulsive nature of intentions. A further qualification of intentions in the light of motives is offered a few paragraphs later in the form of unavowed motives. Freud illustrates this phenomenon of unavowed motivation as forgetfulness of an intention by citing two examples, that of forgetting a rendezvous and that of forgetting a military order. For the sake of brevity, I shall dwell only on the first example.

A lover who has failed to keep a rendezvous will find it useless to make excuses for himself by telling the lady that unfortunately he completely forgot about it. She will not fail to reply: “A year ago you wouldn’t have forgotten. You evidently don’t care for me any longer” (Freud 1901, 1234).

A rendezvous is undoubtedly a cultural topos in the context of intersubjective mating processes. In the interpretation of this phenomenon of forgetfulness Freud assumes the standpoint of a female involved in the hypothetical rendezvous example and attributes this forgetfulness equi-probably to an unintentional act and to a conscious act of evasion. The latter is equivalent to a motive, insofar as the involved male party has deliberately opted for skipping an arranged rendezvous. However, the former, given that in this example it is more reflective of what is forgotten in the context of the structure of intentionality (and not motivation), the subject has not opted for missing the rendezvous, but the cultural topos of rendezvous (one year down the relationship timeline) is no longer as salient as it might have been (and would be culturally expected as being) one year ago. In other words, this particular topos, which

suggests that one should be very careful in not missing a rendezvous obligation, constitutes a facet of a topical system, that of interpersonal relations, which has distinctive phases that are, in part, determined by the longevity of a relationship. The subject has been enculturated in this topical system but has not opted in or out of it. As will be shown more lucidly by recourse to Heidegger's existential phenomenology in the next section, the subject has been "thrown" (Heidegger 2001, 210) into this cultural predicament. The fact that the subject became oblivious to the rendezvous simply resonates that within the foregrounded temporal structure of an interpersonal relationship (that is, one year down the line) a subject may become oblivious to an arranged rendezvous. Hence, the male subject did not "forget" to attend a rendezvous. On the contrary, it became reminiscent of the nonsalience of a topos in a topical system that allows for such forgetfulness. It is by remembering what is culturally prescribed that the subject forgets in this particular temporal instance to skip a rendezvous.

This "unavowed" recollection, returning to the earlier part of our etymological analysis of the enthymeme, is part and parcel of *enthumeisthai*, as the programmed mnemotechnics inherent in the enthymeme, in which a subject is enculturated. In other words, a subject that is subjected to the cultural order of rendezvous is programmed to forget; and this forgetfulness in fact demonstrates that it remembers. Now, is this perhaps oxymoronically unavowed instance of forgetfulness pathological in the psychoanalytical sense or just an instance of a "cultural software" (to use a popular metaphor by Hofstede and Hofstede [2005]) that runs "within" the subject who has not made an "avowal" to its propagation? If the latter looms like a more plausible explanation, then we are already situated within the territory of the enthymeme and hence legitimized to lay claim to an enthymematic pathology, rather than psychopathology of everyday life. Presaging what is to follow, if forgetfulness is tantamount to not being mindful of what lies in concealment (but in an instance that does not concern the question of Being *simpliciter*, but various "whats" that constitute the topics of intentional acts, as topoi that are always already mediated by a given cultural lens), then not being mindful or being forgetful of a topos as silent ground of an intentional act does not mitigate the validity of the topos but merely affirms that it is already there, waiting to be engrafted in a subject's intentionality. The subject, literally speaking, is subject to a plenum of cultural values that condition its intentionality. It does not bring them forth reflectively, as against the actions involved in realizing a value. Values (or topoi), as always already being there, are brought forth alongside the actions that

must be undertaken for their realization. Hence, a subject's intentionality is foregrounded by the horizon of values that await their realization in concrete actions, and it is this structure of their having been forgotten (by definition), as lying in concealment or as not being reflectively brought forth, that they condition the subject's actions. Thus, forgetfulness of the condition of intentionality qua concrete value/topos is not psychopathological, in the negative sense as a subject's not being mindful of what conditions an action, but merely indicative of the prereflective ontological structure of the "thereness" (or the *Da-* of *Dasein*; cf. Heidegger 2001, 26) of a value nexus to which a subject is a priori subjected.

### **Being-With Enthymematically as Condition for "Intentional Acts"**

Pursuant to this hopefully constructive "rendezvous" with Freudian psychoanalysis, and before becoming prey to criticisms of radical determinism, let us continue by providing a more nuanced elaboration of the structure of subjectivity as conditioned by a system of topics that is reflected in enthymemes, by attending to the ontological structure of this system. This analysis will aid us in further elucidating why forgetfulness was so important in Freud's account of the (psycho)pathology of everyday life, by situating the "whatness" of forgetfulness at a social ontological level (that assumes, as backdrop for the question of Being, the "socius" and, concomitantly, a value nexus/topical system that is engraved in this socius, rather than an asocial unitary backdrop qua Being—even though it might be counterargued that Being, in this sense, is presupposed in the employment of qua). To this end, Heidegger's ontological (cum pragmatic) criticisms against the Cartesian subject and the Husserlian notion of intentionality will be recruited. Heidegger's views on the level and degree of autonomy of a subject vary throughout his writings. As Dreyfus (1994) notes: "In Heidegger's early work the subject is reinterpreted as *Dasein*—a nonautonomous, culturally bound (or thrown) way of being, that can yet change the field of possibilities in which it acts. In middle Heidegger, thinkers alone have the power to disclose a new world, while in later Heidegger, anyone is free to step back from the current world, to enter one of a plurality of worlds, and, thereby, facilitate a change in the practices of one's society."

Despite the different points of departure as assumptions that are posited for reaching such different conclusions on the issue of the subject's autonomy in the light of a culture's givenness in discrete modes, it is unavoidable that a subject will have to subscribe at some point or another to a set of common topoi, endorsed by a given cultural community. Insofar as our focus lies in

elucidating the ways whereby a pathological enthymematic structure conditions subjectivity, Heidegger's early period insights are of particular pertinence. The crux of Heidegger's non-subject-dependent (in which context subject should be seen as an omnipresent Cartesian "knowing subject" on which the world depends for its existence) view of intentionality is summarized in the premise "we shall in the future no longer speak of a subject, of a subjective sphere, but shall understand the being to whom intentional comportments belong as *Dasein*" (cited in Dreyfus 1994).

First and foremost, Heidegger employs being instead of subject, obviously as part of his wider rhetorical stratagem that rests with the relationship between Being and beings. Second, by qualifying being as *Da-sein* (or "being there") he identifies the center of subjectivity, so to speak, with something that lies outside the subject yet that engulfs the subject and "volatilizes" it (Heidegger 2001, 153). The thereness that is constitutive of subjectivity points to the subject's dependence on a culturally preconstituted world. "Being-in-the-world," for a subject that is by definition "there," is equivalent to "being-with-others" in everydayness. In Heidegger's terms, *Mitsein* (or "being with") is preconstituted in the form of *Mitdasein* ("being there among others" or in the anonymity of the "They"). Now, what is this anonymity of the They? To cut a long story short (while avoiding the pitfalls that are endemic in the discussion between authenticity and inauthenticity, which is the ultimate reason for Heidegger's preparatory recourse to the *Mitdasein*, which may be viewed as an ontological rendition of an argument from popular opinion), the anonymity of the They is indicative of the *prereflective* intentional horizon that is inherited by or handed over to a subject as a condition for its being in the world. The subject may reflect on actions, may rectify or undertake completely different courses of action in order to realize an intention; however, an intention is embedded in a horizon where intentions are *preconstituted* qua *topoi* in a cultural value nexus that is constitutive of the anonymity of the They in which the intending subject has been thrown. This condensed argument pretty much sums up a lengthy discussion on the relationship between the preconstituted character of everydayness and what it means for a being (or subject, should this substitution *salva veritate* be allowed) to be in the world among others. Now, if the subject is always already constituted by an anonymous They or by an impersonal web of cultural values that condition its horizon of intentionality, then it is by definition enmeshed in a topical system and, hence, mandated to abide by the structure of its enthymemes.

Insofar as the enculturation of a subject presupposes the prereflective (or “preconceptual,” properly speaking, in Heidegger’s terms) immersion in a value nexus, where the givenness of what is has always already been semantically invested by the group in which the subject is “thrown” (in line with Heidegger’s term “thrownness”), which group is largely responsible for shaping the entrant’s sociocultural milieu according to its symbolic order, a subject is “handed over” to a group inasmuch as the group’s culture is “handed over” to the subject. Let us call this mutual handing over “enthymematic being-with,” as being subject to a nexus of cultural values. In this manner, Heidegger’s pragmatic turn from the Husserlian subject-dependent conceptualization of intentionality<sup>3</sup> takes place against the background of the recognition of the subject’s fundamental “thrownness” in the world amidst others, who are mutually bound by a common cultural order to which they comport themselves, rather than intending about the value nexus that is part and parcel of this order.<sup>4</sup>

If we now revert to the previous example of the rendezvous to concretize this abstract formulation, we may discern that a *Da-sein* may determine a course of action in the face of a forthcoming rendezvous, but it may not opt out of the rendezvous as topos that is prescribed by a cultural order.<sup>5</sup> The subject has been “thrown” in this cultural predicament, where the cultural code of mating presupposes that one engages with the rendezvous. In other words, the *Da-sein*’s “*Da*” is a plenum of cultural topoi, of which rendezvous is a very common one.

And since individual *Daseins* can act only within this background that determines what can show up as making sense to do, *Dasein* can never be the fully lucid source of its actions postulated by the modern understanding of the subject and of autonomous agency (Dreyfus 1994).

In this sense, the subject is *always already there*, insofar as it is compelled (returning to Freud’s ascription of impulsiveness to intention) to intend that

3. Dreyfus (1993, 18) sums up Heidegger’s nonsubjectivist conceptualization of intentionality in the following three key premises: “(1) that an account of intentionality in terms of mental content presupposes but overlooks a more fundamental sort of intentionality—a kind of intentionality that does not involve mental intentional content at all. (2) That the basic way human beings are in the world does not involve intentionality at all. (3) That this nonintentional being in is the condition of the possible of both kinds of intentionality.”

4. Heidegger’s proclivity for using the term “comportment” rather than “intentionality” is key in understanding this ontologico-pragmatic shift from the subjectivist outlook that dominates in Husserlian phenomenology.

5. As Gurwitsch puts it, “What is imposed on us to do is not determined by us as someone standing outside the situation simply looking on at it; what occurs and is imposed are rather prescribed by the situation and its own structure” (in Dreyfus 1993, 23).



a preconstituted cultural topos be brought forward from its latent being-thereness (as a culturally appropriated proxy of the *lethe* or “oblivion” in which Being resides): “The Being which is an issue for Dasein in its very Being is to be its ‘there’” (Heidegger 2001, 171). In this sense, a subject’s truth is unraveled as a constant “activation” of preconstituted cultural topoi that make up the They among whom the subject is by definition thrown. This standpoint is echoed summarily in Heidegger’s (2001, 150) proposition that “it could be that the ‘who’ of everyday Dasein just is not the ‘I myself’,” in which case Heidegger plays on the dual notion of subjectivity, as the egocentric one inherited from Descartes and the ontological one put forward in *Being and Time*.

### The Challenge of Visual Enthymematic Arguments

Certainly, the process of enculturation described above is not as bleak as it sounds, that is, as precluding any notion of agency. Its portrayal in such an accentuated fashion is intent on laying out the ontological groundwork wherein the function of the enthymeme may be conceptualized. As will be shown in this section, the power of the visual enthymeme stems from its immediacy in advertising discourse or in its instant re-collection as given tacit premise(s). In this respect, the preceding analysis of the ontologically inevitable enmeshment of a subject in the midst of the anonymity of the They as plenum of cultural topoi that are handed over to it and which it is expected to inscribe in its intentionality is empirically reflected in the givenness of visual enthymemes that summon the subject to re-collect them prereflectively. It is precisely this immediate recognition of a subject in the structure of what is handed over tacitly in a visual enthymeme that attests to the silent function of the anonymity of the They as handed over cultural topoi in advertising discourse. Insofar as an enthymematic propositional set may be “recognized”/“recollected” as valid by its recipients, the pathemic dimension of the enthymeme and hence its ability to function as a deductively valid major premise is laid bare. Even more importantly, the pathemic recognition of what is tacitly summoned as a plea for recollection or as an appeal to what resides in the enthymeme’s pathemic kernel that is evoked in an enthymematic argumentative structure enhances the argumentative force of the ability of other-than-verbal modes to function equally and even more effectively as tacit major premises in argumentation, which brings us to the visual counterpart of multimodal enthymematic arguments.

In a visiocentric culture, enthymemes constitute, one might say, unspoken, but not unuttered premises, insofar as they are put forward in the context of

narrative advertising's textual utterances, albeit in the visual mode. "In an argumentative context, images and visual propositions are employed for many reasons. Sometimes they are effective argument flags and can attract an audience to a claim or argument. Sometimes they are used because they convey information much more directly and effectively (and convincingly) than verbal claims. In still other cases, they are used because images have significant rhetorical advantages, such as appealing much more effectively to *pathos*" (Birdsell and Groarke 2007, 108).

The challenge with which we are confronted at this juncture is the same faced by rhetoricians in cases of reconstructing hidden premises, albeit not concerning hidden verbal premises, but the interpretation of overt visuals that feature implicit premises. The employment of the modifier "implicit," rather than unstated, as Hitchcock (1985, 89) remarks, is more appropriate. According to Scenters-Zapico (1994, 72), "a tacit set of shared associations and assumptions must exist for an enthymeme to work." In order to proceed with the reconstruction of an argumentative scheme and the requisite classification of a manifest text under an argumentative rubric, we must account for the interaction between modes in bringing forth arguments as a necessary condition for the translation of visual enthymemes into verbal premises. Given this, and insofar as one of the basic propositional forms, so to speak, whereby enthymemes are manifested, according to the original Aristotelian definition, is the "sign" (*sêmeion*), we are immediately situated in the discipline of semiotics. This means that unless we are capable of translating visual signs into premises, then the propositions of an enthymeme that constitute the ground of an argumentative scheme may not be adequately reconstructed.

Despite the fact that, as Blair (2004, 47) notes, "visual communication does not have truth values, and so cannot convey propositions, whereas argument requires propositions in order to perform its role," and in a similar vein contended by McQuarrie and Mick (2003, 216), "figures are not the sort of direct assertions that stimulate counterargument" (see Rossolatos 2013), the explanatory preponderance of the argument as the "what" is put forth in a visiocentric message is not mitigated. We are simply summoned to address the differences in "how" visiocentric messages are brought forward in the context of a different rhetorical predicament than the one on which traditional rhetorical treatises were predicated, by taking into account the evocative powers of the visual modality, namely, "immediacy, verisimilitude, and concreteness that help influence acceptance in ways not available to the verbal" (Foss 2004, 314). In this sense, I agree with Birdsell and Groarke's (2007, 103) contention that

visual arguments “can be understood and analyzed through the standard components of arguments.” Where visual argumentation is concerned, the discernment of types of arguments rests with a reconstructive endeavor on behalf of the analyst. As Blair (2004, 49) contends:

To be an argument, what is communicated by one party to another or others, whatever the medium of communication might be, must constitute some factor that can be considered a reason for accepting or believing some proposition, for taking some other attitude for performing some action. A test of whether such a factor is present is whether it would be possible to construct from what is communicated visually a verbal argument that is consistent with the visual presentation. This verbal construction would in no way be the equivalent of the visual argument, precisely because it could never adequately capture the evocative power of the visual element in the original presentation of the argument.

In practice, just like in every text, more than one argument is likely to be operative in a single ad film. They are in constant interaction at more than one level: interaction between various arguments put forward, interaction between the arguments and the overall argumentative situation, between the arguments and their conclusion, and, finally, between the arguments occurring in the discourse and those that are about the discourse (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971, 460).

Complementary to the irreducibly multilayered function of arguments, and from a multimodal point of view, as argued by Birdsell and Groarke (2007, 108), “images that function as argument flags may themselves convey propositions but may be used, more simply, to attract our attention to verbal arguments.” Furthermore, “visual arguments are typically enthymemes—arguments with gaps left to be filled in by the participation of the audience” (Blair 2004, 52).

The emotional appeals in ads function in exactly the same way as assumptions about value do in written arguments.<sup>6</sup> They supply the unstated major

6. According to Aristotle, the following types of appeals to pathos aid in the construction of enthymemes, that is quasi-rational (rather pragmatic) syllogisms or *loci communes*: “the progression among the *pathê* reflects these physiological and psychological distinctions: 1a. anger / pain at the appearance of undeserved slight to oneself; 1b. mildness / absence of the pain of anger; 2a. friendliness / pleasure at the appearance of procuring benefits for another; 2b. hatred / absence of the pleasure of friendliness; 3a. fear / pain at the appearance of imminent evil to oneself; 3b. confidence / absence of the pain of fear; 4a. shame / pain at the appearance of dishonor; 4b. shamelessness / absence of the pain of shame; 5a. gratitude / pleasure at the appearance of favors received; 5b. ingratitude / absence of the pleasure of gratitude; 6a. pity / pain at the appearance of another

premise that supplies a rationale to persuade an audience that a particular product will meet one or another of several different kinds of needs (Hirschberg 2006, 293).

Of particular interpretive aid in both understanding how multimodal enthymemes function in the argumentative structure of ad filmic discourse and, concomitantly, in translating visual arguments into the verbal mode and hence reconstructing a multimodal argument in purely verbal terms, is Aristotle's original conception of propositional forms, whereby enthymemes are employed in argumentative discourse (as laid out in the opening section of this article) and particularly in signs. Insofar as signs constitute an indispensable propositional form in the context of the stipulated structural aspects of the enthymeme (even though with a question mark, insofar as a language of signs is not necessarily tantamount to a propositional calculus), and given that the visual expressive units employed in multimodal ad discourse quite often consist of juxtaposed visual signs that make sense by virtue of their syntagmatic proximity, then semiotics is particularly useful for decoding the argumentative function of visual signs, as a propositional form in the context of an enthymematic argumentative structure.

The remainder of this article will be dedicated to the translation of visual into verbal propositions, with a view to laying bare how visual signs function as tacit major premises in enthymematic arguments by drawing on Birdsell's (Birdsell and Groarke 2007) typology of visual arguments.<sup>7</sup> This reconstructive process of visual messages must be complemented by the pragmatic-dialectic criterion of "sensitivity to context" as postulated by Groarke (Birdsell and Groarke 2007, 104). Finally, given that the employment of visual signs in television advertising discourse essentially corresponds to Aristotle's above-mentioned propositional form based on signs (while also corresponding to the argumentative scheme/strategy of argumentation from signs, as shown by

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person's undeserved bad fortune; 6b. indignation / pain at the appearance of another person's undeserved good fortune; 7a. satisfaction / pleasure at the appearance of another person's deserved bad fortune; 7b. envy / pain at the appearance of another person's deserved good fortune; 8a. rivalry / pain at our lack of rewards to which we and peers aspire; 8b. disdain / absence of the pain of rivalry" (Green 2006, 577). "Appeals follow a triadic path. They are directed from an author to an audience by way of an established position of value. The aim is to align the three positions—author, audience and values" (Killingsworth 2005, 261).

7. Foss's tripartite schema for reading visual messages is also particularly pertinent for reconstructing the argumentative structure of juxtaposed visual expressive units. "Foss's schema contains three elements or steps. The critic must first determine the function of the text, which is clearly a product of the critic's interpretation of visual data and exists independently from the creator's intent. Second, the critic should scrutinize the composition of the visual artifact, picking apart the ingredients of the text. Finally, Foss says, the critic needs to scrutinize the function of the art, measuring its legitimacy or soundness" (Rice 2004, 65).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca [1971] and Walton [2006, 112–15]), the type of signs involved in each scene/sequence of the ad film on which the ensuing analysis will draw must be further qualified.

To this end, I am drawing on Groarke and Tindale's typology of visual meaning, which distinguishes five ways whereby visual images are used: flags, demonstrations, metaphors, symbols, and archetypes. "An image functions as a *visual flag* when it is used to attract attention to a message conveyed to some audience" (Birdsell and Groarke 2007, 104). "Images that function as argument flags may themselves convey propositions but may be used, more simply, to attract our attention to verbal arguments" (108). "An image is a *visual demonstration* when it is used to convey information which can best be presented visually" (105). "A *visual metaphor* conveys some claim figuratively, by portraying someone or something as some other thing" (105). "*Visual symbols* have strong associations that allow them to stand for something they represent" (105). Finally, "*visual archetypes* as a kind of visual symbol whose meaning derives from popular narratives" (105).

In an argumentative context, images and visual propositions are employed for many reasons. Sometimes they are effective argument flags and can attract an audience to a claim or argument. Sometimes they are used because they convey information much more directly and effectively (and convincingly) than verbal claims. In still other cases, they are used because images have significant rhetorical advantages, such as appealing much more effectively to *pathos* (Birdsell and Groarke 2007, 108).

Now, can all these visual types be translated in verbal proposition form? The transcoding process, as Birdsell and Groarke (2007, 106) remark, is not so neat in all of the above instances.

Visual flags need not be propositional in this sense, but they may be and, even when they are not, they often are used to attract our attention to other images that make statements in this sense. A visual demonstration is inherently propositional because a visual image is used to convey information that is purportedly true.

Visual metaphors, symbols, and archetypes are equally translatable into propositional form. Such visuals are translated by Birdsell and Groarke in the form of implicit statements, in a manner analogous to Grice's (1991, 26) "implicature principle" in conversation, that is, tacit statements that are commonly shared between interlocutors, yet not explicitly stressed in oral discourse (but which may be discerned by a similar to visual signs reconstructive procedure). In this sense, let us call these tacit statements "aspects" of visual

implicature and, concomitantly, render the five types of visual signs, as delineated by Birdsell and Groarke as incidences of visual implicature.

### **Bud . . . “Out of Here”: The “Thereness” of the Hidden Visual Enthymemes in Advertising Discourse**

Based on the above criteria for reconstructing the enthymematic structure of a visual argument, let us proceed with interpreting how enthymemes are employed in the following example of a television commercial for Budweiser beer (see figs. 1–9). This commercial is particularly pertinent for illustrative purposes, as its manifest plot employs visual signs, without any interference either from supers or voice over (against an emotively conditioning musical background with a folktronica theme). The only text in a verbal mode appears at the end of the commercial in the context of two cards that feature the brand claims: (1) “Great times are waiting” and (2) “Grab some Buds.” In addition, this commercial is of particular interest insofar as it was not created by an advertising agency for the marketing department of Budweiser, but from a final consumer, albeit by drawing on the brand’s slogan and by using key visuals that are encountered in standard Budweiser commercials. This



**Figure 1.** Frame 1: Drinking Buds before embarking on a journey to the beach. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJo2jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.





**Figure 2.** Frame 2: Having fun on the beach. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJo2jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.



**Figure 3.** Frame 3: Having even more fun on the beach. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJo2jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.



**Figure 4.** Frame 4: Group of friends driving to the beach. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJo2jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.

consumer-generated video commercial is a direct attestation of how a visual enthymeme speaks directly from the viewpoint of the final consumer and hence may be viewed as a direct reflection of cultural topoi that have been handed over to a subject that is thrown amidst the value nexus of the anonymity of the They.

The ensuing analysis will draw on indicative frames from each major thematic sequence in the manifest plot, as shown in figures 1–9. In terms of argumentation strategy, this commercial may be classified under the type of “argument from signs,” which also coheres with Aristotle’s enthymematic propositional form that consists of signs (visual ones in this case).

Argumentation from signs is a presumptive type of argument based on a premise that, generally, findings, as observed in a case, are characteristic of some type of object, event, or action. The other premise is that these characteristics or signs are present in the given case. The conclusion is that the particular event or object in question will occur or has occurred in this particular case (Walton 2006, 113).

In terms of Birdsell’s typology of visuals, the approach pursued here seems to partake of the demonstration type, insofar as all visuals are familiar exam-





**Figure 5.** Frame 5: Budweiser shot appearing in between sequences. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJo2jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.

ples of what amounts to having a good time with friends on the beach. The imperative speech act “Grab some Buds” that closes off the commercial is legitimized in the context of the interpolated visuals that portray the experience of consuming Bud throughout all phases that make up the selected course of action for attaining the goal of having a good time qua a pleasurable experience on the beach (e.g., drinking Bud before the journey, drinking Bud on the way, drinking Bud on the beach). The argumentative structure of the visuals may also be reconstructed with the employment of a typical *modus ponens*, by drawing on the part/whole argumentative scheme:

- a) Having fun on the beach is a pleasurable experience.
- b) Drinking Bud on the beach is part of having fun on the beach.
- c) Drinking Bud is a pleasurable experience.

What is the missing (yet tacit) major premise in the above reconstruction of the commercial’s visual argumentation structure through insertion in a *modus ponens* scheme? The employment of the enthymeme “Having pleasurable ex-



**Figure 6.** Frame 6: Budweiser close-up foregrounding the fun experience on the beach. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJo2jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.

periences is a goal in life.” It is by virtue of a hedonic pathological topos as a tacit major premise or a pathemically handed over cultural value to a group’s members that Bud derives legitimacy (validity) for the inferential claim that drinking Bud is a pleasurable experience. In other words, it is culturally sanctioned (“warranted,” in Toulmin’s [2003, 92] terms) to seek pleasurable experiences, and Bud is an integral part of this “whole practice.” What is also remarkable is that this commercial resonates the very semantic structure of the enthymeme, as laid out in the opening section of this article, namely, that it portrays a recollection of a consumptive experience as seen through the eyes of a subject who has lived this experience, that is, through the pathemic inscription of a handed-over collection of values to which one is subject as part of a cultural group that forms its identity, against the background of values, of which hedonism is part. By virtue of the immediacy of the employed visuals, their direct reflection (mirroring) of a recollection of what it is like to have a pleasurable experience, the consuming subject recognizes itself immediately in its mirror image. Thus, it does not engage argumentatively with the major premise that functions as a warrant on behalf of the arguer, but it is subject to



**Figure 7.** Frame 7: Driving back home at sunset. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJ02jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.

having being argued for in its being reflected in the visuals that are handed over by an already tacitly legitimized discourse. This is tantamount to the pre-reflective givenness of what is in a recognizable mode of givenness, that is, in a portrayal of a “common recollection” of a pleasurable experience that does not seek legitimacy in terms of its major premise but merely recognition of the validity of the portrayed recollection. Once recognized as such, the recollection of the lived experience unravels from within itself its silent argumentative underpinning and, by implication, associates the brand (Budweiser) with the evoked cultural value (hedonism) in the visual structure of the recollected experience. Now, what is necessary and what is merely probable in this argumentative structure? The tacit premise of hedonism as a cultural topos is a necessary condition for deriving inferences as to the probability of initially having a pleasurable experience on the beach and then of inscribing Bud in this experience.

From a semiotic point of view, the cultural value of hedonism functions on the paradigmatic axis, while the pleasurable experience on the beach and



**Figure 8.** Frame 8: Brand claim no. 1: "Great times are waiting." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJ02jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.

the inscription of Bud in this pleasurable experience functions on the syntagmatic axis. The paradigmatic value is selected from a set of cultural values and allows for the synchronic deployment of an experiential set that is reflective of this value. Hence, a pleasurable experience on the beach is a sufficient condition for enjoying Bud, but not a necessary condition. The necessary condition is hedonism, and it is the recurrence of this underlying topos across product categories in ad filmic discourse that safeguards the maintenance and perpetuation of a cultural symbolic order. Inversely, one may not recognize oneself having had such a pleasurable experience on the beach, but one is not allowed to forget that one is subject to the cultural value of hedonism. What is given must be safeguarded at all costs, even at the expense of mitigating the legitimacy of one of its modes of givenness. Hence, to recognize and to re-collect oneself are complementary facets of an enthymematic argumentative structure, yet they carry variable ontological intensity qua cultural necessity, as to re-collect oneself in what has always already been collected and handed over pathemically is not an option as against recognizing oneself in a mode of givenness of what must have been handed over. The



**Figure 9.** Frame 9: Brand claim no. 2: “Grab some Buds.” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80z2JJ02jAM>, video by Nick Space and Harry Cartwright, published on August 1, 2012.

givenness of the concerned topos as fleshed out through a string of visual enthymemes that make up its structure is also manifested in the first brand claim “Good times are waiting,” which, in line with our earlier analysis, lays claim to the realization on behalf of the subject of a topos that is prescribed in a topical system and that merely awaits to be realized, that is brought forth from its concealment and inscribed in the subjects’ “comportment” (rather than intentionality).

Furthermore, what is portrayed in the visuals that make up the manifest plot is a discrete course of action, but not the latent structure of the evoked topos as a prereflective intentionality that has been handed over to the subjects. The hidden and concise enthymematic major premise “Having pleasurable experiences is a goal in life” is neither reflected upon during the group’s discussion, nor evoked explicitly by the narrator with a view to legitimating the topos that triggers the deployment of the stages for the realization of the intended course of action. It has *always, already* been . . . there, as the silent ground of *Dasein*’s possibility-of-Being in an enthymematically-cum-topically mediated socius.

### Conclusion: Enthymemes as “Silent” Topoi in Multimodal Advertising Discourse

The argumentation that was pursued in this article sought to illustrate how the deductive validity of visual enthymemes may be interpretively reconstructed as major premises underpinning multimodal advertising discourse. In this respect, the argumentation bears directly on visual semiotics by bringing Aristotle's class of argumentation from signs (*sēmeia*) up to date in the context of a largely visiocentric discursive predicament. By opening up the function of visual enthymemes to their ontological dimension, as elements of a topical system that is handed over to subjects, who are conditioned by it in their “throwness,” an attempt is made to demonstrate that the argumentative force of enthymemes is attributable to their inherent pathology.

The unquestionable validity of hidden enthymematic premises that was shown to lie latently (in concealment) as a source of legitimacy (warrant) of a portrayed course of action—in the context of the Bud commercial employed for illustrative purposes—was found to be of key explanatory value in understanding the forceful immediacy of visual enthymemes, by analogy to the argumentative force of enthymemes as hidden premises in oral discourse. The inevitably prescriptive character of the enthymematic “being-with” as being subject to a nexus of cultural values in the context of a subject's throwness in the anonymity of the They is largely responsible for the compulsive nature to re-collect and/or to re-cognize oneself in the immediacy of a visually enthymematic syntagmatic ordering, as normally encountered in ad filmic discourse.

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