

Ioana GRANCEA\*  
Romanian Academy, Iași Branch

## **The Acquaintance-Function of Visual Argumentative Devices: The Case of *Visual Blends* in Social Campaigns**

**Abstract:** The strand of research dealing with the place of visuals in argumentation has been recently enriched by philosophical pleas in favour of treating veridical images as legitimate tools in moral deliberation. Sarah McGrath extensively argued that there is no warrant in dismissing the effects of images as irrational or non-rational. From her point of view, veridical images are important in moral deliberation because of their *acquaintance-function*: they can provide viewers with factual details that may influence their opinions regarding the morality of a practice. The present paper purports to extend the current understanding of this *acquaintance-function* of visuals by looking at how this function is performed by other species of visual discourse. I propose an acquaintance-focused analysis of the argumentative action performed by *visual blends* - visual expressions of cognitive hybrid structures formed by mixing elements from different cognitive domains. *Visual blends* may provide another type of acquaintance with the moral significance of the practice that is under scrutiny: by means of the analogies, hyperboles, litotes, metonyms or other rhetorical figures they constitute, *visual blends* may throw a new light on what the practice entails, morally speaking. I situate my research in the realm of social campaigns and look at the function of *visual blends* in advancing moral arguments on behalf of a social cause.

**Keywords:** acquaintance, moral persuasion, visual argumentative devices

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