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Weapons, fire and dangerous men: multimodal argumentation of magazine covers featuring president Donald J. Trump

Broń, ogień i niebezpieczni mężczyźni: argumentacja multimodalna na okładkach czasopism przedstawiających prezydenta Donalda J. Trumpa

Abstract

The paper deals with the visual and verbal modes as well as interrelations between them employed in dominant argumentation on the British and German magazine covers devoted to president Donald J. Trump. Following the concept of multimodality and the notion of enthymemes the author discusses analogy and causality as predominant types of argumentation occurring on the covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL and illustrates the contribution of the visual image to the (re-)construction of the tacit components of the argumentation.

Artykuł poświęcony jest kodowi wizualnemu i werbalnemu oraz ich wzajemnym relacjom w argumentacji dominującej na brytyjskich i niemieckich okładkach czasopism poświęconych prezydentowi Donaldowi J. Trumpowi. W oparciu o koncepcję multimodalności i pojęcie entymematu autorka omawia analogię i kausalność jako podstawowe typy argumentacji pojawiające się na okładkach tygodników THE ECONOMIST i DER SPIEGEL oraz ilustruje wkład komponentu wizualnego w (re-)konstrukcję pominiętych elementów argumentacji.

Key words

multimodality, newspaper covers, visual/multimodal argumentation, Donald J. Trump, media discourse
multimodalność, okładki czasopism, argumentacja wizualna/multimodalna, Donald J. Trump, dyskurs medialny

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Weapons, fire and dangerous men: multimodal argumentation of magazine covers featuring president Donald J. Trump

1. Introduction

In the age of infotainment and sensory overload, magazine covers are of particular importance, as they influence the decision to purchase and read an issue of the magazine in question. Following this, the proposed analysis concentrates on the front pages of British and German opinion-forming weekly magazines *THE ECONOMIST* and *DER SPIEGEL* published between November 2016 (United States presidential general election won by Donald J. Trump) and November 2020 (United States presidential general election won by Joseph R. Biden), addressing Trump's presidency. The paper focuses on the interplay between the language and image, its goal, however, is not a comprehensive typology of such interrelations but rather pinpointing the predominant ways of multimodal, i.e. verbal-visual argumentation permeating the press coverage of Trump.

2. Argumentation

According to Deanna Kuhn (1991) and considering our everyday experiences, human thinking is strongly correlated with the argumentation ability. The latter is, in fact, a ubiquitous mental and linguistic activity of human beings and aims at changing the beliefs of the audience or, to put it differently, making them accept the views represented by the arguer(s):

Argumentation is any discursive activity in which one or more participants, the arguers, put forward a series of arguments, premises or reasons as an attempt to affect the reasonable acceptance of a standpoint – or claim – which is not yet accepted, or it is doubted, by the other participants to the interaction (Rocci and Pollaroli 2018, 1).

A classic example of such an activity is a syllogism that is traditionally broken down into conclusion and premise(s). Its components are variable in their order

and can be partly left unstated. In such a case the suppressed parts are to be (re-) produced and interpreted by the recipients on the basis of the existing components and/or their world and contextual knowledge (Wengeler 2003, 62). This incomplete, abbreviated argumentation procedure, traditionally referred to as enthymeme, can be explained as follows:

[...] some components of the argument can be found as explicit premises or conclusions stated by its proponent, but some other statements need to be filled in as premises or conclusions before it can be determined precisely what the argument is. In many cases, the missing assumption is a premise. But in other cases, it can be a conclusion that needs to be added to the premises before a precise account of the argument can be given (Walton 2008, 362).

According to Andrea Rocci and Chiara Pollaroli (2018, 7), the suppressed premises can remain unstated “[...] because they are shared opinions, values and pieces of knowledge that already belong to the common ground”. Importantly, images can function as enthymemes precisely because they rely on common opinions shared by the audience, i.e. opinions that the audience agrees with or is required and able to retrieve (Smith 2007). Because of their “potential for semantic condensation”, visual images “offer a rhetorical enthymematic process in which something is condensed or omitted, and, as a consequence, it is up to the spectator to provide the unspoken premises” (Kjeldsen 2012, 241).

In multimodal discourses, images together with language provide directions for a correct completion and interpretation of enthymematic arguments. Their thickness and condensation (Kjeldsen 2015, 113) allow them to unify many ideas into one that can be grasped in a flash, what Werner Kroeber-Riel (1993, 53) describes in a metaphoric and somewhat dramatic way as “quick shots into the brain” (“schnelle Schüsse ins Gehirn”). According to Jens E. Kjeldsen (2015, 115), such condensation can be both emotional and rational. It is emotional because it tends to activate the same emotions as similar events in real life. It is also rational because it corresponds to an enthymeme, which must be processed and filled in by the audience in a given situation. Either way, it requires the active participation of the audience in the (re-)construction of enthymematic arguments.

Apart from the variable order and reducibility, another important feature of the enthymeme is its truth value: in contrast to the so-called logical syllogism, which aims at truth in the strict sense of the word, such a reduced argumentation procedure is employed to justify discussed issues, without claiming the truth of the argument and the premise(s) (Wengeler 2003, 60). Enthymemes may be based on fallacies or false premises and their lack of logical validity is a feature that they have in common with the overwhelming majority of everyday arguments since informal arguments typically involve uncertain inference.

Enthymemes thus appear as plausible, convincing, but not necessarily logically “true” rules of inference on the basis of which a conclusion is drawn from the argument and with which opinions, decisions, actions are justified e.g. in public and political debates (Wengeler 2003, 60). As can be seen from the above, enthymemes are a valuable tool for delivering argumentative justification(s) of the positions *for* or *against* certain actions within a discourse community, especially in controversial issues (Wengeler 2003, 59).

Out of many types of argumentation that cannot be discussed in more detail two deserve particular attention due to their omnipresence in everyday argumentation: analogy and causality. Bart J. Garssen (2001) enumerates three top-level argumentation schemes (‘symptomatic argumentation’, ‘argumentation by analogy’, and ‘causal argumentation’), and argues that all other schemes found in everyday informal argumentation are reducible to these three, possibly overlapping schemes.

Analogical reasoning is a universal feature of human thinking and one of the most common methods employed in communicating to comprehend, explain, justify, and finally make judgements and/or decisions. It involves noting the shared properties of two or more entities and inferring similarities in some further respect. The structure of analogical argumentation may be generalized in the following, simplified way (Walton 2014, 23):

Similarity Premise: Generally, case C1 is similar to case C2.

Base Premise: A is true (false) in case C1.

Conclusion: A is true (false) in case C2.

Assuming that certain similarities hold between two objects in question the conclusion can be drawn that some further similarity between them exists.

Causal argumentation, on the other hand, can be generalized as follows (Hahn, Bluhm and Zenker 2017):

Generally, if A occurs then B will (might) occur.

In this case, A occurs (might occur).

Therefore, in this case, B will (might) occur.

According to Uwe Oestermeier and Friedrich W. Hesse (2000, 68), there are three basic types of premises involved in causal arguments: “[...] observational (i.e. spatial, temporal or episodic), explanatory (i.e. intentional or causal), and abstract knowledge (i.e. conceptual knowledge about criteria for causation) [...] [along with] the inference patterns which are needed to come up with a causal conclusion, namely, inferences from observations, generalizations, comparisons,

mental simulations and causal explanations”. As will be shown below inferences from comparisons seem to be particularly fruitful in the analysed material.

3. Multimodality

The fashionable term ‘multimodality’ undermines the idea of the priority of the verbal mode(s) as the sole means of making meaning (Kress 2011, 46). Language is no longer seen as providing a full account of meaning. Instead, a holistic approach is proposed, where different modes of expression available in a culture are viewed as “one coherent, integral field, of – nevertheless distinct – resources for making meaning” (Kress 2011, 38). The particular modes with their different potentials¹ are involved in what is called ‘multimodal’ discourses (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, Stöckl 2004, Kress 2011, Klug and Stöckl 2014) which not only “provide versions of who does what, when and where” but also “add evaluations, interpretations and arguments to these versions” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001, 15).

In the 21st century, our semiotic daily routine is above all dominated and influenced by pictures. The popular term ‘pictorial turn’ coined almost three decades ago by Thomas W. J. Mitchell (1994) signals not only the excessive use of visual elements in public and/or media discourse but also a growing interest of disciplines such as media studies, text linguistics, discourse analysis and rhetoric² in multimodal and especially visual communication. The images prevailing in the current communicative landscape (particularly in the public and mass media discourse) are certainly not only illustrative. When skilfully applied they evoke emotions, frame, shape, and structure knowledge, and – most importantly – can serve as arguments (Kampka 2014, 177, 180). That is undoubtedly the case in the press coverage of Trump’s presidency where photographs, photomontages, cartoons, and headlines that accompany them on the front pages of the weekly magazines *THE ECONOMIST* and *DER SPIEGEL* are closely intertwined and equally involved in the process of meaning-making and argumentation.

The affordances of visual images and language cannot be discussed here in detail. However, it is important to point out that pictorial perception is both simultaneous and holistic and therefore much quicker than in the case of language³ (Stöckl 2004, 17). Moreover, it is directly linked to emotions and hence often employed in argumentation and persuasion activities: This ‘strength’ of pictures comes from “[...] their immediacy of understanding, potential instantaneous

1. For more discussion on modes and their affordances see for example Bateman (2014), Stöckl (2014), Schmitz (2005).

2. The possible redefinition of ‘rhetoric’ and the proposal to analyse non-linguistic signs within the framework of the relatively new area of study called ‘visual rhetoric’ are discussed in Foss (2004).

3. For a more detailed discussion of the semiotic, cognitive, and semantic differences between the language and image and the resulting different ways of creating meaning by means of language and image, see for example Stöckl (2004).

reception, possibility to cue and evoke thoughts and feelings, semiotic richness, and simultaneous coding” (Rocci and Pollaroli 2018, 11). Visual arguments (see Section 4) are convincing, attractive, and open up new lines of argumentation (Kampka 2014, 190). However, they require an adequate level of visual competence of the audience in terms of interpreting the visual image itself along with its structure, shape and composition as well as recognizing the broader intertextual, cultural, socio-political etc. context (Kampka 2014, 180-181).

4. Multimodal and visual argumentation

Current observations on multimodality as a permeating characteristic of modern (media) discourse as well as the specific features of visual images lead to the fact that visual and/or multimodal argumentation has recently gained interest. All the more so because argumentation is delivered not only with verbal but often with visual means or, to be more specific, various interrelations between the two modes in argumentative discourses: “[...] the visual and the verbal may present parallel and redundant argument, the visual and the verbal construct jointly the argument, the argument is constructed through an opposition of the verbal and the visual” (Rocci and Pollaroli 2018, 7).

Thickness and condensation as important characteristics of predominantly visual argumentation provide “[...] a full sense of the situation, making an integrated, simultaneous appeal to both the emotional and the rational” (Kjeldsen 2015, 115). This twofold power of the nonverbal in argumentation causes what can be roughly described as a transition from verbal to visual or multimodal argumentation. This shift is, however, still in process: Arguments are traditionally associated with speech because, as Anthony J. Blair (2004, 47) argues, the essential components of arguments. i.e. propositions are mostly expressed by means of language. According to Blair (2004, 47), propositions can hardly be conveyed solely visually⁴ since visual images cannot be true or false and are thus frequently supported by verbal means. Following this, Blair (2004, 49) defines visual arguments as combinations of verbal and visual communication contrasting them with exclusively verbal arguments, containing no visual elements. Similarly, Leo Groarke (2007, 135) defines a visual argument as “an argument conveyed or communicated in images – drawings, diagrams, photographs, paintings, actions, film and so on. In many cases, such arguments incorporate visual and verbal cues, combining images and words”. As Blair (2004, 51) further observes, the visual element in visual arguments has a clearly *rhetorical* dimension, rather than *logical* or *dialectical*. The visual has,

4. For further discussion on the possibilities and limitations of visual arguments, see for example Tseronis (2018b) and Kjeldsen (2018).

admittedly, an immediacy and persuasiveness that are not available to the verbal. On the other hand, in terms of their logical and dialectical dimension, visual arguments seem to supply rather simple, minimalist support (Blair 2004, 52) and cannot be refuted or answered in any way because they are neither true nor false (Blair 2004, 59).

Kjeldsen (2018), on the other hand, argues that pictures can perform argumentation independently because argumentation is a communicative act and cannot be as such limited to verbal texts. He stresses the need to differentiate between “argumentation as a cognitive phenomenon, which is not tied to certain forms of expression, and the specific, material manifestations used to forward an argument” (Kjeldsen 2018, 84). His conclusion reads as follows:

Visual argumentation is possible because making arguments is a communicative act performed in interactions and because the communication of an argument [...] as a cognitive instance of premises and conclusions is not tied to the verbal form of expression. The same argument can be prompted by different manifestations, as long as the audience understands it in the proper argumentative context (Kjeldsen 2018, 85).

A rhetorical argument, be it verbal or visual or a combination of both, can be adequately reconstructed and interpreted based on the particular argumentative action along with its “contextual, situational and procedural circumstances” (Kjeldsen 2018, 88). A (visual) argument does not exist in a vacuum but is to be viewed as part of communicative interaction between people: “Argumentation is a cognitive phenomenon and arguments are not to be found in texts, but in people” who are “cognitively involved in interpreting the meaning of pictures and actively reconstruct the arguments” (Kjeldsen 2018, 89).

What it all amounts to is that the advantage of visual arguments over verbal arguments lies in the evocative power of the former (Blair 2004, 51). However, in order to be effective, “the visual properties of a visual argument must resonate with the audience on the occasion and in the circumstances” (Blair 2004, 52). Once again the participatory engagement and the presupposed background knowledge of the audience are thus acknowledged: the recipient plays an active role in recovering the meaning of the message communicated and is seen as the final instance of meaning-making (Kampka 2011, 11) which closely corresponds with Umberto Eco’s notion of openness and the concept of interpretative semiotics (Eco 1996, 1989).

As Assimakis Tseronis (2015) rightly observes, besides paying due attention to the affordances of the various modes and their interrelationships, a multimodal argumentative analysis needs to consider the situational context of the particular argumentative activity (see Section 7), and the communicative genre as such. An appropriate genre allocation narrows down the possible predictions concerning

the structure, function, and other properties of a text in question and therefore guides the interpretation. This step is relevant both for analysing purely textual and multimodal artefacts (Bateman 2014, 60). Following this, a brief description of covers as multimodal messages (Section 5) precedes information concerning the underlying corpus (Section 6).

5. Covers as a multimodal and argumentative text genre

Covers seem to be an excellent research material for analysing visual and/or multimodal argumentation for at least two reasons. Firstly, they provide real-life argumentations employed in current public and/or media discourses; secondly, they are multimodal *par excellence*. According to Gudrun Held (2005a, b), covers deploy three types of codes, namely pictures, typography, and language, the interaction of which contributes to the meaning-making process.

Magazine covers are aimed at announcing or summarising selected contents of the issue as attractively as possible in order to involve the reader in an active process of interpretation (Held 2005a, 326). Contrary to the proverb “Don’t judge a book by its cover”, newspapers are judged precisely by their cover and identified as (not) worth reading. Due to space restrictions, the information to be conveyed must be delivered in a compact, attractive (often humorous-playful), creative, and innovative way to attract the potential reader. Their verbal part usually consists of only one (key-)word or phrase. The linguistic brevity is compensated by visual elements ranging from realistic photography, illustration, schematic drawings to alienated picture-montage, (political) cartoon, and caricature (Held 2005a, b) that significantly expand the scope of possible interpretations. The visual part usually plays a dominant role and the verbal often fulfils a supporting and explicative function (Held 2005a, 328). Moreover, both on the verbal and visual levels, intertextual references to pre-existing texts and/or images occur, whereby additional meanings are re-activated.

As Held (2005 a, b) rightly observes, covers fulfil three types of functions: inform, evaluate, and entertain. The aim is reached through creating surprise and tension, mostly by violating well-established conventions. The information is delivered in an entertaining way and expected to be decoded by the audience and to provide intellectual pleasure (Held 2005a, b). Moreover, covers share characteristics with advertisements (Held 2005a, b) as well as political cartoons (Page 2020) in that they provide a social and political commentary on the news (Page 2020). Not only do they inform or entertain the reader but first and foremost let them accept the opinion conveyed on the cover of the magazine. As an argumentative genre (Tseronis 2018a), covers display two interrelated levels

of argumentation: the primary level i.e. promoting the magazine in general and/or inviting the audience to buy a certain issue and the secondary level i.e. reflecting the magazine's stance on the cover story (Tseronis 2021, 378-379). The focus of the following analysis is the last-mentioned level of argumentation concentrating around questions such as: What visual, verbal or verbal-visual arguments are put forward in support of the represented opinion? How can visual images combined with linguistic means operate rhetorically as arguments in favour of the magazine's stance on the cover story?

6. Research material and focus

The analysed covers dedicated to Trump were published between November 2016 (the presidential general elections won by Trump) and November 2020 (the presidential general elections won by Biden) and indicate comparable media attention paid by both magazines to his presidency within the four years between the subsequent presidential general elections. The table below illustrates the number of the analysed issues of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL.

	THE ECONOMIST	DER SPIEGEL
November – December 2016	3	3
January – December 2017	7	7
January – December 2018	4	5
January – December 2019	4	2
January – November 2020	1	7
In total	22	24
	46	

Table 1: The analysed Trump-related covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL

The analysed weekly magazines represent quality print media devoted to the world's business and current (political) affairs. They are comparable with respect to the following criteria:

- A. Circulation: THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL enjoy Europe's biggest print and digital circulations among magazines dealing with global politics and business. Their average circulation per issue amounts to approx. 909, 000⁵ and 690, 000⁶, respectively (2019).

5. <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/148816/the-economist> (accessed 14 June 2021).

6. <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/148789/der-spiegel> (accessed 14 June 2021).

- B. Profile: THE ECONOMIST focuses on current affairs, international business, politics, and technology presented in separate, slightly differing editions for Britain, North America, continental Europe and the Asia-Pacific region⁷. The topics dealt with in DER SPIEGEL range from politics through business, science, medicine, technology, culture, entertainment, media, society to sports⁸.
- C. Political orientation: THE ECONOMIST, known for its social-libertarian slant and praise of a free market economy⁹, describes its public agenda as a blend of left and right, or “liberal in the classical sense”¹⁰. The articles are published anonymously maintaining a historical tradition and allowing many writers to speak with a collective voice¹¹. DER SPIEGEL, famous for its investigative journalism, i.e. revealing political scandals, is mostly viewed as centre-left¹².
- D. Target audience: THE ECONOMIST is aimed at well-off, well-educated populations¹³: “Its extensive use of wordplay, high subscription prices, and depth of coverage has linked the paper with a high-income and educated readership”¹⁴. Similarly, DER SPIEGEL is a magazine title with the widest reach among upscale target groups¹⁵ with high socioeconomic status. In summary, DER SPIEGEL’s readership is “very male [...] very well educated and high income”¹⁶.

A cursory glance at the covers in question reveals a similar attitude towards Trump and his administration: The overall tone of the coverage in THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL is overwhelmingly negative (see examples below). Worth mentioning is also the fact that the very focus of topics that both magazines covered in the above-mentioned timespan is highly selective. Most of the analysed Trump coverage is related to few topics, including the Russia investigation and US-Russia relations, North Korea, the 2017 Unite the Right rally, the 2020 presidential general election, the deteriorating US-EU relationship and, last but not least, the COVID pandemic.

7. <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/148816/the-economist> (accessed 14 June 2021).

8. <https://www.spiegel.de/international/frequently-asked-questions-everything-you-need-to-know-about-der-spiegel-a-789851.html> (accessed 14 June 2021).

9. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Economist> (accessed 14 June 2021).

10. <https://www.economist.com/news/2020/06/19/frequently-asked-questions> (accessed 10 June 2021).

11. <https://www.economist.com/news/2020/06/19/frequently-asked-questions> (accessed 14 June 2021).

12. <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/148789/der-spiegel> (accessed 14 June 2021).

13. <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/09/business/media/09economist.html> (accessed 14 June 2021).

14. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Economist (accessed 14 June 2021).

15. <https://www.spiegelgruppe.de/news/pressemitteilungen/detail/awa-2019-der-spiegel-mit-hoechster-reichweite-im-segment-der-magazine-zum-zeitgeschehen> (accessed 14 June 2021).

16. <https://meedia.de/2013/01/15/print-analyse-der-typische-spiegel-leser/> (accessed 14 July 2021, translation – mine).

Interestingly enough, the employed images of Trump are predominantly drawings, cartoons, heavily photoshopped pictures or photomontages depicting Trump in a schematic, caricatured or exaggerated way. The computer-aided or artistic intervention and possibly extensive processing of the original pictures seem to prove that the visual image is not primarily aimed at illustration or reference but rather at profiling, providing strong and convincing arguments *for* or rather *against* Trump's actions as the president of the United States.

To sum up, the analysed periodicals are considered to be Europe's most influential opinion-forming news magazines and leaders in terms of circulation among opinion weeklies in Great Britain and Germany. Their primary focus is world events, socio-political, economic, and financial issues. They also run regular sections on science and technology as well as culture and the arts. Both represent a similar, liberal alignment and pro-European attitude, and, more importantly, are sceptical about Trump's presidency. The editorial stance on Trump's policies represented on the analysed covers is roughly comparable. The fundamental question is how this attitude is argumentatively reflected both on the visual and verbal levels of the analysed front pages.

The analysis aims at reconstructing the argument(s) that the front pages of the two analysed magazines convey concerning the cover story. The main focus of attention is the standpoint of the editorial board and arguments supporting it, which are conveyed multimodally and can be reconstructed on the basis of the verbal and visual modes, their interplay and the situational context. The underlying idea is that the analyst as a competent recipient is involved in similar inference processes that other addressees follow, to reconstruct and understand the meaning communicated on the analysed covers (Tseronis 2018a).

The visual analysis involves two levels: (1) what an image in question depicts (the proposition communicated) and (2) what is suggested by that image (its interpretation). The description focuses on what is directly visually available in terms of form, style, shape, line, colour, spatial arrangement (background vs. foreground, centre vs. periphery etc.), and with reference to background knowledge. The interpretation is based on the conclusion about what the image depicts and broader popular, cultural, encyclopaedic knowledge as well as the situational context (events, actions connected to the message conveyed on the cover). What follows is a brief outline of the verbal context (headline, slogan) as well as the verbal-visual interplay. Roughly speaking, the interrelations between the modes can be described as follows: "Meaning made in one mode may be repeated or paralleled in another, or it may be complemented, negated, contradicted or reinterpreted etc." (Stöckl 2004, 26).

The following analysis is not intended to be a systematic description of the argumentative function and/or structure of verbally and/or visually constructed messages but rather a case study of such multimodal constructions typically occurring on magazines' covers. The aim of the analysis is qualitative, not quantitative: thus, the following sections (8 and 9) focus primarily on revealing overall tendencies concerning multimodal argumentation on the covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL rather than providing statistically valid numerical data.

7. Donald J. Trump on the covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL: brief outline of the socio-political context

Trump's presidency can be roughly outlined as a time of trans-Atlantic trade tensions in particular (one of the signs of which were trade tariffs on European steel and aluminium) and a strained relationship between the US and the EU in general. The transatlantic divide originated from different opinions and actions concerning several fundamental issues focused on the analysed covers: the Iran nuclear deal, the Paris Climate Agreement, financing the World Health Organization, contacts with Kim Jong Un and relationship to Vladimir Putin to name just a few. This has made Trump's administration appear highly unpredictable from the point of view of the EU, a visible proof of which was Chancellor Angela Merkel's unambiguous statement after the G7 summit in 2017 stressing the fact that Europe could no longer count on its historic ally. Trump, on the other hand, being a notorious Eurosceptic, supported Brexit enthusiastically, called the EU America's 'foe' and accused it in a televised interview on CBS¹⁷ of seeking to undermine the US by operating as a single trading bloc: "The European Union was formed in order to take advantage of us on trade, and that's what they've done".

8. Analysis

Both magazines under study are critical of Trump's presidency and their analysis shows many similarities in the way they present the cover story, which, to a large extent, results from similar editorial stance and audience they address. The most striking similarity between the covers of the two magazines is their multi-domain type i.e. their verbal and/or visual reference to an auxiliary domain lying beyond the topical domain, representing the topic in question (van den Hoven and Schilperoord 2017). The choice of the covers discussed below results

17. <https://www.dw.com/en/donald-trump-nobody-treats-us-much-worse-than-the-eu/a-45888402> (accessed 14 July 2021).

from the pattern that emerges from the underlying research material itself: the initial screening of the front pages of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL reveals some repeatedly occurring source domains such as weapons and/or fire, natural disasters as well as individuals and/or groups of people considered to be dangerous and evoking decidedly negative associations. The three predominant categories that the analysed covers employ in their argumentation (see Table 2) can thus be briefly described as weapons, fire, and dangerous men which is an explicit intertextual reference to George Lakoff's (1987) seminal discussion on the omnipresence of metaphors and the importance of mental categorization entitled "Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things. What Categories Reveal About the Mind".

	THE ECONOMIST	DER SPIEGEL
weapons	5	3
fire and/or natural disasters	1	6
individuals and/or groups of people considered to be dangerous	5	6
In total	11 (50%)	15 (approx. 62%)
	26 (approx. 56, 5%)	

Table 2: Weapons, fire, and dangerous men on the covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL

DER SPIEGEL and THE ECONOMIST tend to rely on the above-mentioned argument from analogy, where the omitted premise(s) is/are expressed through the visual image directly evoking (negative) emotions of the audience. The analogy functions in the following way:

Because Trump is like fire, a tsunami wave, a flood, an asteroid approaching the earth etc., his presidency poses danger to the USA and the world.

Premise 1: Fire, tsunami waves, floods, asteroids hitting the earth etc. are dangerous and result in destruction and death.

Premise 2: Trump resembles fire, a tsunami wave, a flood, an asteroid on a collision course with the earth.

Conclusion: Therefore, his presidency brings about danger and destruction.

Fire and/or natural disasters such as flood and asteroid impact seem to prevail in the multimodal argumentation on the covers of the analysed magazines, especially in the magazine DER SPIEGEL. They are conceptualised on the visual and/or verbal levels.

On the cover of DER SPIEGEL¹⁸ published on 12 November 2016 (No. 46/2016), directly after Trump's victory in the presidential general election, the head of the newly elected US president occurs as an asteroid-like fireball approaching the earth at high speed and threatening to collide with it. His blonde hair resembles a fiery comet tail, his mouth is open, either screaming or preparing to swallow the small earth ball. Worth mentioning is the black, pessimistic background and the striking size difference: the asteroid is notably and not coincidentally much bigger than the earth. The headline placed below the image reads as follows: "Das Ende der Welt (wie wir sie kennen)" which translates as "The end of the world (as we know it)". The conclusion (i.e. the approaching political volatility and turmoil) is thus communicated by means of language, whereas the premise referring to the similarity between Trump and the giant asteroid is to be reproduced with the help of the visual image.

A similarly apocalyptic message is conveyed on the cover of DER SPIEGEL published on 4 November 2017 (No. 45/2017): a giant, tsunami-like wave accompanied by the slogan: "Washington, ein Jahr danach" ("Washington, one year on"). The image utilises the same colours as the afore-mentioned cover: black background, white landmarks of Washington (White House, Ford's Theatre, Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial) corresponding to the name of the city occurring in the headline, Trump's easily recognizable blonde hair as the crest of the wave and, last but not least, his brown complexion. Trump's face takes the shape of a rapidly rising tidal wave with disastrous consequences for the capital city metonymically standing for the whole country and its population. Two details are worth mentioning, both of which occur on the afore-mentioned cover as well: firstly, Trump's mouth is wide open as if screaming or intending to inundate the city and secondly, there are no eyes visible in the face what might evoke the following associations: blind and inevitable as fate. Here again, the argument is conveyed visually (flood wave), whereas the slogan merely adds the temporal dimension (the first anniversary of Trump's election win and the disastrous repercussions of his previous decisions) to the visually communicated information.

The front page of DER SPIEGEL published on 21 April 2018 (No. 17/2018) is also based on the already mentioned argument from analogy with the missing premise conveyed on the visual level. Angela Merkel (in a gesture of horror) and Emmanuel Macron (holding a fire extinguisher) occur in the foreground metonymically representing Germany and France or, possibly, the European Union in general. They act as inexperienced or amateur firefighters forced to extinguish a fireball approaching them from the back. Interestingly, the fire blast threatening

18. The discussed covers of the weekly magazine DER SPIEGEL are available under: <https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/index-1947.html> or: <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/photo-gallery-der-spiegel-s-trump-covers-a-95076ff3-d67c-4373-ae39-c03b79435ed2> (both accessed 10 April 2021).

to kill them takes the shape of Trump's face, with his mouth wide open. The surprisingly extensive headline reads as follows: "Wer rettet den Westen? Es geht um Freiheit und Demokratie. Macron braucht Hilfe, doch Deutschland versagt" ("Who will/can save the West? It's about freedom and democracy. Macron needs help, but Germany is failing"). The viewers are led to assume that a potential shift in power relations among the EU states has taken place: Germany is facing the rising influence of Macron's France in defending Europe's sovereignty against the United States.

Likewise, fire dominates the cover of DER SPIEGEL issued on 6 June 2020 (No. 24/2020). This time, however, a cause-and-effect relationship is conveyed by the two intertwined modes: The headline explicitly states the causality: "Der Feuerteufel. Ein Präsident setzt sein Land in Brand" ("The firestarter: A president sets his country on fire"). Remarkably, the German headline includes the word 'Teufel' ('devil') connoting a hostile and destructive force. To support this statement Trump is shown sitting behind the desk in the Oval Office holding or rather demonstrating a burning match which can be viewed as circumstantial evidence for starting the fire and causing protests visible in the background. Trump's surprisingly tranquil features are contrasted with extreme emotions of people taking part in anti-racism demonstrations (visible behind the windows of the Oval Office) following the murder of African American George Floyd and Trump's somewhat ambiguous and controversial follow-up comments on Twitter.

When elaborating on the semiotic, cognitive and semantic differences between the language and the image Stöckl argues that "[...] some meaning relations like causality cannot be expressed by means of images but they are particularly suited to represent objects in space and their characteristics" (2004, 18). Similarly, Kjeldsen (2015, 111) suggests that "[...] because of their lack of syntax and grammar, images are incapable of evoking conjunctions that connect premises in an argument to create the necessary causal movements for an argument to be established". However, in this particular case, the causality is first and foremost expressed with the visual image and additionally sustained by the language.

A corresponding cover of THE ECONOMIST¹⁹ issued on 4 February 2017 carries the headline: "An insurgent in the White House". This time, Trump is depicted as a rebel or revolutionary throwing a burning Molotov cocktail at the White House, presumably. Surprisingly, he is wearing a suit and his famous red cap with the slogan: "Make America Great Again". The picture looks graffiti-like which additionally confirms the impression of anarchy evoked by the word 'insurgent'. Both the verbal and visual codes convey the same message: Trump seems

19. The analysed covers of THE ECONOMIST can be found on the website: <https://www.economist.com/weeklyedition/archive> (accessed 10 April 2021).

to be fighting against his own country and its citizens. The cause-effect relationship between the current situation in the US and Trump's political actions is evident. Trump is being made responsible for the situation which can be illustrated with the following quotation from the same-titled article in this issue: "Quitting the Trans-Pacific Partnership, demanding a renegotiation of NAFTA and a wall with Mexico, overhauling immigration, warming to Brexit-bound Britain and Russia, cooling to the European Union, defending torture, attacking the press: onward he and his people charged, leaving the wreckage of received opinion smouldering in their wake".

Another example of causality (Trump contributing to climate change and global warming because of his withdrawal from the Paris agreement) can be found on the cover of DER SPIEGEL published on 3 June 2017 (No. 23/2017). This time, however, the word 'fire' is deliberately used ambiguously: Trump is depicted as a golf player, which directly corresponds to the amount of time he spent golfing during his presidency. He is shown hitting a golf ball (which is the earth ball at the same time) aggressively and sending it into the air with enormous speed which causes it to heat up and glow. The ambiguous slogan: "You're fired!" relates to Trump's TV show ("The Apprentice") and/or – indirectly – to global warming.

Apart from the devastating results of natural disasters, further catastrophic visions involving various weapons are based on the argument from analogy. An analogy between weapons and Trump is drawn, his presidency is thus depicted as dangerous, disastrous, and destructive and the dominating emotion evoked on the visual level is fear.

Fear and destruction are leitmotifs on the cover of DER SPIEGEL issued on 22 April 2017 (No. 17/2017) with a nuclear bomb in the very centre. Donald J. Trump and Kim Jong Un are depicted as (unpredictable) nappy children playing with an atomic bomb as a piece of playground equipment: they are bouncing back and forth on a spring bouncer in the shape of a bomb. The image of a nuclear bomb as a toy and the headline warning that Trump and Jong Un risk nuclear war are aimed at evoking fear. Additionally, they allow for moving between the literal and metaphorical meaning of the phrase "to play with something". The image of two toddlers in a playground rocking on a bomb-like springer promotes the literal reading of the phrase. The headline: "Todesspiel. Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un riskieren den Atomkrieg", however, favours the figurative interpretation as performing a risky, dangerous activity with fatal outcome, i.e. nuclear war.

The argumentation that the cover employs can be formulated as follows:

Because Trump is like a weapon (of mass destruction) e.g. nuclear bomb, grenade etc. his presidency and/or policies pose danger to the US and the world.

Premise 1: Weapons are dangerous and their use results in destruction and death.

Premise 2: Trump resembles weapons.

Conclusion: Therefore, his presidency brings about danger and destruction.

A nuclear bomb with the American flag and Trump's head occurring instead of the bomb's nose (THE ECONOMIST, 8 June 2019) or a hand grenade bearing Trump's face with the fuse recalling Trump's famous haircut (THE ECONOMIST, 10 March 2018) can be also viewed as examples of argument from analogy. The aforementioned images are sustained by the headlines referring to the fatal consequences of both using weapons and Trump's decisions as the US president: "Weapons of mass disruption" and "The threat to world trade". The former cover additionally enumerates Trump's 'faults' by placing them on the side of the atomic bomb: 'tariffs', 'tech blacklists', 'financial isolation', and 'sanctions'.

Similarly, a nuclear bomb or rather a nuclear explosion is placed in the centre of the front page of THE ECONOMIST issued on 5 August 2017: the mushroom cloud indicating nuclear war occurs in the shape of Trump's and Jong Un's head supported by the headline "It could happen". The message is more than evident: tensions with North Korea growing under the Trump administration may end in a nuclear confrontation.

The culminating point of the SPIEGEL coverage of Trump's presidency is the front page of the 4 February 2017 issue (No. 6/2017) with the headline "America First", Trump's slogan from the 2016 presidential general election campaign and his 2017 Inaugural Address in. This motto, originally summarizing his new vision of governing the US and his patriotism, is turned into horror in one move: the Statue of Liberty as the symbol of the United States and democratic values is beheaded by Trump, who is holding a knife covered in blood. The seemingly discrepant visual and verbal layer can be integrated in the following way: the adverb 'first' does not mean 'the most important' in this context but seems to be indicating that America will be destroyed in the first place and only then the rest of the world will be annihilated. Incidentally, this cover published shortly after Trump's inauguration as the US president is directly linked to one of the last covers of DER SPIEGEL (issued on 7 November 2020 (No. 46/2020)), where the newly elected President Biden restores the monument by putting its head on the right place.

Apart from natural disasters and weapons, Trump is frequently linked to specific politicians or organisations arousing decidedly negative associations: Vladimir Putin (DER SPIEGEL issued on 4 March 2017 (No. 10/2017) and 9 June 2018

(No. 24/2018)), Kim Jong Un (DER SPIEGEL issued on 22 April 2017 (No. 17/2017) and THE ECONOMIST issued on 5 August 2017), Xi Jinping and Recep Erdoğan (DER SPIEGEL issued on 9 June 2018 (No. 24/2018)) or the Ku Klux Klan (see below), to name just a few. In this case, the argumentation based on analogy reads as follows:

Because Trump behaves similarly to X, his presidency/policies pose danger to the USA and the world.

Premise 1: X etc. is/are dangerous, unpredictable, autocratic etc.

Premise 2: Trump resembles X as a politician.

Conclusion: Therefore, his presidency brings about political/economic instability.

On two occasions (DER SPIEGEL issued on 18 August 2017 (No. 34/2017) and THE ECONOMIST issued on 19 August 2017) Trump is associated with the Ku Klux Klan due to the white hood occurring on both front pages. DER SPIEGEL presents a man in a black suit and a red tie (the distinctive visual traits of Trump, frequently employed on covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL) wearing the Ku Klux Klan hood and disambiguates the image by placing the following headline next to it: “Das wahre Gesicht des Donald Trump” (“The true face of Donald Trump”). The slogan obviously contradicts the image of a man with his face covered. This contradiction is to be projected on Trump’s statements and actions suggesting his (hidden) nationalism and racism. A similar message is conveyed by the cover of THE ECONOMIST (19 August 2017) depicting Trump shouting through a megaphone shaped like a Ku Klux Klan hood. In both cases the conclusion is missing, only the premise is signalled visually: Ku Klux Klan is a well-known symbol of nationalism and racism.

Worth mentioning is finally the cover of the magazine DER SPIEGEL issued on 14 December 2019 (No. 51/2019) with the headline: “Yes, He can. Warum Donald Trump einfach mit allem durchkommt“ (“Yes, he Can. Why Trump just gets away with everything”). The audience can presumably re-construct the term ‘dangerous’ from the visual representation of the bare teeth, furry suit, and ape-like silhouette, undoubtedly an intertextual reference to King Kong. The cover image resembles the famous Empire State scene, with King Kong (here greatly resembling Trump with his characteristic black suit, red tie, and easily recognizable haircut) saving himself on the Empire State Building. The image presented on the cover visually evokes characteristics such as ‘dangerous’, ‘wild’, ‘untamed’, ‘unpredictable’ etc. It is what Dirk Hommrich and Guido Isekenmeier (2016, 4) describe as “vivid visualisations”, i.e. “[...] pictures that have been adopted from the communicative and cultural memory which we might refer to as pop (media) culture”.

9. Final remarks

Images play a substantial role in eliciting the argumentative activity of the audience. The proposed analysis has shown that without the visual images the argumentation of the analysed covers could not be (re-)constructed. As already stated, visual arguments are typically enthymemes, i.e. arguments with gaps left to be filled in by the audience (Blair 2004, 52). They can elicit similar arguments in different viewers thanks to “[...] the shared cultural knowledge and common awareness of specific situations or contexts of these viewers” (Kjeldsen 2015, 112). This shared framework guides the viewer towards an interpretation with certain premises that support a particular conclusion (Kjeldsen 2012, 243). This processual character of reading and interpretation corresponds with Eco’s (1989, 1996) fundamental observation that, contrary to the structuralist’s view, the meaning of a text does not exist solely within the text itself. It is, in fact, a temporary product depending on the reader’s active participation. Reading multimodal texts activates *a fortiori* several associations in the course of interpretation due to the interpretative openness of the visual code. Hence, the reader actively co-constructs the cognitive and argumentative structure of the multimodal cover texts.

Meaning conveyed through the covers of THE ECONOMIST and DER SPIEGEL arises from the combination of verbal and visual elements as well as the empirical and/or world knowledge and specifically the situational context (here: the events connected to Trump’s presidency) that are explicitly or implicitly referred to on the analysed covers. Apart from intertextual references, we can observe “[...] the importation and translation of well-known images” (Homrich and Isekenmeier 2016, 4) such as King Kong, the Ku Klux Klan hood, atomic bomb etc. This technique brings to mind the so-called ‘appropriation art’ aimed at creative adopting and recontextualizing recognizable images (Zuschlag 2012) and the idea of ‘conceptual blending’ put forward by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (2003). The latter refers to the process of constructing “[...] a partial match between two input mental spaces, to project selectively from those inputs into a novel ‘blended’ mental space, which then dynamically develops emergent structure” (Fauconnier and Turner 2003, 58). Instances of twisted or paraphrased visual images (as well as verbal texts) are frequently utilised on the analysed magazine covers to highlight arguments against Trump’s presidency.

To sum up, the argumentation related to Trump is mostly based on negative emotions (fear, anxiety) arousing when facing danger. Destructive source domains, such as FIRE, TIDAL WAVES, WEAPONS (OF MASS DESTRUCTION), NATURAL DISASTERS dominate covers of the analysed magazines on the visual and verbal levels and prove both the pervasiveness and persuasive power of metaphors in political discourse. Most importantly, they highlight certain negative

aspects of Trump's presidency such as unpredictability, uncontrollability, and the expected destructive effects.

Trump's political actions are defined in simple alternatives, in terms of black and white, mostly by providing (visual) analogies with weapons, natural disasters, and, last but not least, authoritarian political leaders leaving little doubt about the suggested evaluative perspective. However, contrary to Kjeldsen's (2015) observation, argument forms involving causation are also employed on the visual level of the analysed covers. Both above-mentioned argumentation types not only attract the audience's attention or construct the argument(s) to convince the readers of the acceptability of the opinion conveyed on the cover. Apart from promoting and/or shaping evaluative attitudes, they also mirror prevailing opinions and transport pre-existing beliefs of the target readership about the 45th president of the United States.

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