Bending Opinion

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14.1 Introduction
The business benefits that can be accrued through association with and actual sound environmental practices cannot be understated (Bortree 2009; Grant 2007). Indeed, stakeholder support for organizations is increasingly dependent on evidence of a commitment to the growing political and public interest in social and environmental responsibility (Livesey and Kearins 2002). Moreover, automotive and energy companies typically considered responsible for detrimental environmental effects can especially benefit from associating themselves with pro-environmental activities through sponsorship of social and environmental organizations and especially by advertising the positive environmental impacts of their products and production processes (Fombrun and Rindova 2000; Beder 2002; Coupland 2004).

These kinds of environmental claims in advertisements, however, do not go without scrutiny. uk governmental bodies (DEFRA 2006) and industry watchdogs (ISBA 2007) offer guidelines for sound practice and, in the uk, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is charged with investigating and adjudicating on any complaints made about the legitimacy of environmental claims. In recent years objections to the environmental benefits asserted in corporate advertisements in the UK have risen substantially (ASA 2008).
This chapter examines how corporations generate green capital by exploiting the difference in truth claims attributed to visual modality in advertisements. Analysis of a corpus of UK advertisements produced by automotive and energy companies finds that adjudications about the truth values attributed to images or visual argument are treated differently to similar linguistic claims.

Firstly, the chapter summarizes the relationship between ancient ethos and modern corporate image maintenance by making apparent the shared need to demonstrate strength of character, virtuousness and an appreciation of an audience’s values and concerns. Following the explanation of modality as a means of distinguishing truth claims in text and image, the chapter turns its attention to the adjudications regarding environmental claims in text and image. This piece concludes with a call for greater visual literacy and a more consistent consideration of the impact of images in environmental claims that are used to add to a corporation’s reputation.

14.2 Ancient ethos and modern corporate image: Rhetorical connections
For Aristotle (1991, p. 38) “the controlling factor in persuasion” is the development of ethos or a credible and trustworthy character. Constructing and maintaining credibility relies on three complementary constituents: using practical wisdom (phronesis), displaying virtue (arête) or moral character and demonstrating goodwill (euonia) towards the audience (Waerass and Ihlen 2009):

Practical wisdom means using knowledge accurately to impress an audience. This can be accomplished by using reliable evidence of sound provenance in, for example, the form of logical and well-founded argument, the accurate use of statistics or in the convincing application of technical expressions. (Ihlen 2009)

The display of virtue refers to the “all-round personal excellence … in service of the larger community” (Solomon 2004, p. 1023).

In this respect displaying virtue involves both character and behaviour; that is, virtue is a disposition to act in a morally laudable fashion that serves more than the self but also some common good.

The third factor influencing the development of ethos is the demonstration of goodwill towards the audience. This is less about displaying personal affiliation but rather about demonstrating a shared affective concern for common goals or an appreciation of the audience’s needs or interests. In
other words, the credible persuader should “somehow identify with the audience, by for instance holding some of their basic aspirations [or] speaking their language” (Kinneavy and Warshauer 1994, p. 177). This is likely to rely on sharing an appreciation of similar virtues and, as Ihlen (2009, p. 364) points out, could be “indirectly supported by pathos” or arousing an emotional response.

These ancient principles for constructing credibility have been routinely applied to individual orators but in more recent times the tenets have been deployed as a means of explaining the construction of a credible corporate image or reputation. Whilst applying the bases of individual ethos to organizational credibility is not without its opponents (see for example Gowri 2007 for a critical distinction between human and corporate virtues), contemporary understandings of corporate image construction are indeed being understood through the lens of these ancient rhetorical techniques (Wei 2002; Solomon 2004; Ihlen 2009).

Consequently, it seems wholly appropriate to pay critical attention to the ways that corporations aim to be “thought to be sensible and morally good” or to “look right” (Aristotle 1954, 1356a1-3); that is, to identify the means through which an organization demonstrates strength of corporate character in terms of: phronesis, the judicious reporting of evidence; arête, the display of shared virtues; and euonia an appreciation of “characteristics and qualities that are valued by an audience and community” (Beason 1991, p. 330) which includes internal and “external stakeholders, especially … customers” (Davies, Chun and Da Silva 2001, p. 113).

As Ihlen (2009) acknowledges, the virtues and characteristics valued by modern audiences will differ to ancient audiences. Indeed, recent research reveals that \( \frac{4}{5} \) of UK consumers are likely to use a product because of its association with a good and especially an environmentally oriented cause (Theaker 2004; Bortree 2009). Whilst there are principles that connect between ancient and modern rhetoricians the specific means available to persuaders are greatly extended. The contemporary corporate communicator has innumerable media outlets and platforms through which to meet these “greener” goals.

\subsection{14.2 Greening the corporate image: Claims and concerns}
Companies “will not shy away from spending millions on environmental improvements if there is reputational capital in it” (Beder 2002). These im-
provements may be actual investment in changes to production and manufacturing but often this level of investment includes self-promotion in the form of internal strategy documents (Pedersen and Neergaard 2009), annual reports (Neu, Warsame and Pedwell 1998), corporate social responsibility reports (Ihlen 2009; Ocler 2009), corporate websites (Adams and Frost 2006; Coupland 2006) and advertorials (Livesey 2002). Whilst these practices are often for restricted stakeholders the vehicle through which corporations assert their good environmental citizenship is nowhere more publicly apparent than brand and product promotion in mass media advertising.

The rise in environmental claims in advertising has also seen a sharp rise in concerns that these claims may be overstated (bt, 2007). As Ashforth and Gibbs (1990, p. 180) appreciate, an organization may “espous[e] socially acceptable goals while actually pursuing less acceptable ones”. Indeed, corporations have been advised to ensure that any advertising claims should make accurate reference to legitimate environmental action (Grant 2007) in order to avoid allegations of “green spin” (Magee 2008), “greenwashing” or, in its extreme, “ecopornography” (cipr 2007).

Despite this laudable counsel, complaints to the UK’s Advertising Standards Authority (asa) about environmental claims in advertising rose from 117 objections to 83 advertizements in 2006 to 561 complaints about 410 advertizements in 2007 and beyond.

Contemporary advertising affords the corporate communicator a near open-ended set of multimodal resources from which to craft messages designed to persuade. As a result, the potential to combine text, image and sound means that especially close attention to complaints made about any or all these semiotic resources is required. This brings me to the analytic and interpretative issues central to this chapter: the truth-values attributed to text and image or linguistic and visual argument and especially to the resulting adjudications based on these values.

14.3 Visual argument and linguistic argument: Modality and truth-values

Following Barthes (1972) it is widely acknowledged that texts and images have differing meaning-making capacities or “individual functions and strengths” (Lemke 1998, p. 38). For Lemke this means that language is adept at encapsulating typological meaning by categorizing whereas the visual can make meanings topologically or by degree. As a result, language is interpreted as
having more fixed, or closed, meanings whereas images are deemed to be more polysemous, open to interpretation and often (although not exclusively) subordinate to the text (Van Leeuwen 2006).

That said, there is also much competing evidence to support the equal treatment of text and image. Mitchell (1994, p. 161) maintains that “semantically speaking there is no essential difference between texts and images”. Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 179) similarly argues that just as other semiotic resources operate in collaboration to generate implicatures, visual analysis should focus “not only the image as representation but also on the image as an ‘inter’act”; that is, analysis should address how the reader/viewer interprets and deduces meanings from the collage of signs present in, for example, an advertisement. There is also some support to move beyond this perceptual equity. Blair (1994, p. 54) emphasizes the “power of visual imagery to evoke involuntary reactions” and exceed linguistic argument. Further research suggests that the visual (in, but not limited to, metaphor) can be more influential than linguistic (either literal or figurative) arguments (Blair 2004). McQuarrie and Philips (2005) argue that the juxtaposition, replacement or fusion of images to exploit figurative interpretations can generate a range of meanings that require complex processing. This increased effort in the comprehension process can result in an enhanced memory trace of the message and more permanent impact (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). This scope for multiple interpretations means that it is also true that “not all assumptions in a message can be taken as communicated with equal force, nor with the same degree of strength to different people” (Forceville 1996, p. 177). Such a position is important when understanding which aspects of an advertisement attract complaints and how these complaints are upheld or rejected by the ASA.

Before I go on to discuss the complaints and adjudications in detail, I briefly want to foreground another key aspect of linguistic and visual argumentation: truth claims and modality. Modality refers to the status, authority and reliability of a message, to its ontological status, or to its value as truth or fact (Hodge and Kress 1988, p. 124) and marks out certainty, possibility and necessity. Lexical choice can impose a view of truth that is difficult to challenge or truth claims may be more qualified or weakly asserted. As a result, “truth is … a matter of degree” (Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 162).

Visual expression similarly construes different truth-values by degree often depending on combinations of gradable differences available in terms of saturation, differentiation and modulation (Van Leeuwen 2006). Images
can be produced using fully saturated color, pastel or muted tones, or with the complete absence of color. The communicative potential of saturation is ambiguous: “high saturation may be positive, exuberant, adventurous, but also vulgar or garish. Low saturation may be subtle and tender, but also cold and repressed, or brooding and moody” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2007, p. 233). Whilst there are important distinctions in terms of light and shadow, depth of field and degrees of detail, there are also, as we shall see, competing interpretations regarding color saturation and realism. Differentiation marks out a scale ranging from monochrome to a diverse and complex color palette. Color can also be deployed from a flat to a fully modulated scale. Flat modulation offers a general impression or generic characteristics of an entity and produces a more abstract representation whereas fully modulated color with concomitant grading of nuances realises a stronger perceptual truth or carries greater “epistemic force” (Hill 2004, p. 29). With this in mind, Hill (2004) further argues that realism depends on vivid information using “concrete and imagistic language, personal narratives, pictures, or first-hand experience”. Vivid information draws on representations that are more “realistic”. For example, in table 14.1, a photograph is considered more true to life than a line drawing.

**TABLE 14.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most vivid information</th>
<th>Least vivid information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actual experience</td>
<td>statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moving images with sound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>static photograph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realistic photograph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>line drawing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative, descriptive accounts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstract, impersonal analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relative verisimilitude of an image is based on combinations of these modalities and the viewer’s own judgments. Realism, it seems, is judged on dimensions such as color, degree of contextualization, comprehensiveness of representation, nature of the perspective, sources of illumination and degree of brightness. However, how each of these factors influences the interpretation of an image’s veracity are not insignificant matters. Kress and Hodge
(1988, p. 147) make the importance of modality plain when they assert that “social control rests on control over the representation of reality which is accepted as the basis for judgment and action... whoever controls modality can control which version of reality will be selected out as the valid version in that semiotic process.”

These kinds of judgments about what sorts of images are more representative versions of reality can be explored in the following: a color photograph, a black and white photograph with increased background saturation, a colored pencil sketch and a black pencil line drawing.¹

These images demonstrate the tension between representation, resemblance and reality (Lopes 1996) and how form, communicative function and cultural interpretations influence judgments about which is the more accurate version of reality. The color photograph (figure 14.1) in contrast to the black pencil line drawing (figure 14.4) following Hall’s (2004) criteria is likely (under some conditions) to be judged as more ‘realistic’. The corollary is that the black pencil line drawing could be considered to be “visual ‘opinion’ and less factual than a … photograph which is held to provide reliable documentary information” (Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 167). This overlooks, however, the powerful communicative function of a line drawing or densely saturated cartoon.

People can identify an image more quickly when it is drawn as a cartoon than when they are shown a photograph of a hand (Lopes 1996). Addi-

¹ My thanks go to Suzanne Curran for producing these images.
tionally, such simplified and decontextualized images can, like gesture, acquire symbolic meaning that makes it possible “to form generalised images that reflect the facts of real life correctly and in depth” (Meshcheryakov 1979, p. 189). Moreover, diagrams, line drawings and illustrations also have the potential to be read as images with “high truth-values and not as fictions or fantasies” (Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 167).

There are, of course, far more meaning-making mechanisms at work in print advertising including, not least, the role of semiotic space and how different information values pertain to the different placement of materials on a page. Figure 14.5 demonstrates how the location of image or text also carries different information values.

**FIGURE 14.5**

When a page is spatially polarized, information on the left inhabits the *given* domain: the already known or predictable. Material located on the right, in the *new* domain, displays original, modified or unexpected information which, according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1998, p. 189), can be treated as “problematic, contestable [or] the information at issue”. In the vertical plane, material located in the upper part is presented as the generalized or idealized essence of the information. In the lower part, the information is valued as more specific, more practical or more “down-to-earth” (Van Leeuwen 2006).

To interpret meanings and attribute truth-values, Chandler (2002) explains, readers must draw on all their “knowledge of the world and of the medium. For instance, they assign it to fact or fiction, actuality or acting, live
or recorded, and they assess the possibility or plausibility of the events depicted or the claims made in it. These issues of realism, the credibility of the image and the legitimacy of linguistic claims are at the heart of the data under discussion to which our attention now turns. The data consists of the complaints and adjudications about five advertisements produced by car manufacturers and energy companies during 2007-2008 in the UK.

14.4 The complaints and adjudications: Textual claims versus image representation

The first text is a UK magazine advertisement and poster campaign (May 2007) for a Lexus RX 400h hybrid fuel car. Its headline states “High performance. Low emissions. Zero guilt”. Visually the advertisement presents a highly decontextualized, intensely lit, minimally differentiated photograph containing a richly refracted reflection of the car. Accompanying the image the body copy states: “RX 400h. The world’s first high performance hybrid SUV ... category-leading low CO₂ emissions. A combination without equal. Or compromise”.

The complaints addressed the accuracy of the headline claims “low emissions” and “zero guilt” suggesting that they misrepresented the environmental impact of the sports utility vehicle. The ASA concluded that the complaints about the unqualified use of the ambiguous category term ‘low’ implied the vehicle’s emission rate was negligible and readers would infer that it had less detrimental emissions in comparison with all cars. The attempt to use the technique of phronesis and boost ethos using albeit unqualified evidence was deemed to be unsubstantiated and misleading.

In terms of absolute truth claims, the ASA additionally decided that the term ‘zero’ (unsubstantiated by the body copy and additional evidence submitted) would (mis)lead readers to infer that the car caused little or no harm to the environment which, the ASA concluded, was not the case. Of note, however, is that no complaints made by members of the public or comments by the ASA questioned the highly stylized, decontextualized, pristine setting and unrealistic representation of the vehicle. The lack of attention to the image in meaning-making is also evident in the next text.

A UK national press advertisement (January 2007) for the Golf GT TSI uses a triptych. It shows a centrally-positioned image of the car on a split background. The left hand side of the advertisement pictures a dimly lit forest with wolves and the text “High performance”. The right hand side of the
advertizement shows a brightly lit meadow with a deer and the text “Low emissions”. The body copy states: “It also does over 38 mpg, and emits just 175g of CO₂ per kilometre. More power, less pollution. Better to drive. Better for the planet”. The text at the bottom of advertizement states: “CO₂ emissions for the Golf GT TSI are lower than other engines with similar power outputs”. The complainants challenged the assertion “low emissions”.

The ASA, in line with the previous adjudication, maintained that readers would be likely to understand the weak modality of the linguistic claim “low emissions” to mean the car had less damaging emissions than all cars and upheld the complaint. What is of interest, again, is the lack of mention of the content or modality of the images.

The image on the left, in the given semiotic space, is more fully saturated and the lighting adds to its near photographic quality. The image on the right, presenting new information, uses low saturation, pastel shades, graininess and an evaporating perspective along with more fanciful sources of illumination resulting in a more visibly cartoon or sketch-like resonance. The reader should take the lupine performance of the car as given, as “commonsense and self-evident and as established” (Kress and Van Leeuwen 1998, p. 189). The new material, a deer grazing in a tranquil meadow, should be treated analytically; “problematic, contestable, the information at issue” (ibid.). Apart from not being scrutinized as contestable, the lack of reference also ignores the potential implicatures generated by the low modality of the sketch. That is, of an inescapable intertextual reference to Disney’s Bambi grazing in idyllic rural pastures. This image is undoubtedly being used to underscore and extend the textual claim that has been deemed to be inaccurate and misrepresentative. However, the evocative pastoral associations of the image available to a viewer along with their location in a contestable space are allowed to stand without scrutiny or critical evaluation. The car company has evoked pastoral virtues and has produced a form of identification with an uncomplaining audience by representing basic aspirations without criticism. As a result, this particular form of image has allowed the company enhance its image through association with environmental capital.

The third text, a national print advertizement (March 2008) for the Renault Twingo Dynamique uses a photographic image of the car against a pale green background and presents illustrations or sketches of differently sized drawings of oversized leaves apparently emanating from the car’s exhaust.

The text on the largest leaf reads “eco₂ economical ecological”. One
complaint challenged whether the textual claim “ultra low” in the body copy was misleading. Another complaint argued that the claims “ecological” and “eco$_2$” were misleading because the terms exaggerated, without evidence, the environmental credentials of the car. The ASA concluded that the unqualified use of the terms “ecological” and the “eco$_2$” logo could lead readers to infer that the vehicle caused relatively little harm to the environment and had low emissions compared with other similar cars. Whilst the ASA noted the use of large (certainly not to scale) illustrations of leaves in place of exhaust emissions. However, they did not ask for them to be removed in any amended advertisements. The presence of oversized environmental “goods” metaphorically replacing an environmental “bad” clearly warranted but did not receive adequate critical attention.

Having foregrounded the lack of attention being paid to the visual in complaints to the ASA, the next two advertisements have images at the centre of both the complaint and the subsequent adjudications.

Example 4 is a direct mailing circular (February 2008) produced by an energy company. It has a black print headline “Wind Power News” and shows a monochrome photograph of four wind turbines in the mid and background. Alongside hedge-bounded fields there are four horses grazing in the foreground. There is a web link to an update about the proposed Nun Wood wind farm.

The complaints addressed the veracity of the image suggesting it gave a misleading impression of the visual impact of the wind turbines for the proposed Nun Wood wind farm. The photograph uses perspective, articulation of background, saturated color and tonal shades to produce a relatively highly modulated realization. The ASA (2007a) concluded that, given the nature of the image, readers were “likely to believe the photograph represented” how the Nun Wood wind farm would look if it were to be built. The ASA noted the image was of an already operational wind farm where the turbines appeared to be smaller than those proposed for the Nun Wood site. The photograph is treated as presenting “more vivid information” (Hall 2004) and thus is attributed greater “plausibility of the events depicted or the claims made in it” (Chandler 2002). The company was asked to withdraw the flyer.

In the fifth example, the data example, the complaints addressed both the environmental claims in the image and in the text. A national press advertisement (November 2007) for an energy company was headlined “Don’t
throw anything away there is no away” and shows a generic silhouette of an oil refinery which has four chimneys producing clouds of colorful flower heads. The body copy states:

If only we had a magic bin that we could throw stuff in and make it disappear forever. What we can do is find creative ways to recycle. We use our waste CO$_2$ to grow flowers, and our waste sulphur to make super-strong concrete. Real energy solutions for the real world.

The complainants maintained that the image of industrial chimneys emitting flowers misrepresented the environmental impact of company’s refineries. The objections also addressed the textual assertion “We use our waste CO$_2$ to grow flowers” suggesting it implied that the company used all of its waste CO$_2$ to grow flowers. The complainants offered evidence that less than 0.5% of carbon dioxide emissions were used by local greenhouse growers to produce plants. In its adjudication, The asa upheld the complaints regarding the unqualified assertion of waste carbon dioxide use that invited the inference that the company used all, or at least the majority, of their waste carbon dioxide to grow flowers. However, the asa did not uphold the complaint about the potential inferences prompted by the incongruent metaphorical image that suggests that one direct consequence of the industrial oil refining process is the immediate production of flowers. In drawing up its decision, the asa concluded that the image was “conceptual and fanciful” (asa 2007b) and that “most readers were unlikely to interpret it as a depiction of reality.” It seems that because the image is a flatly modulated, impressionistic or generic silhouette with a highly simplified visual metaphor using images akin to a child’s rudimentary drawing of flowers and not a photograph that it is not considered to constitute a direct or vivid reference to reality (Hall 2004). Its influence on viewers is deemed to be minimal. Analytically, the judgement overlooks the powerful effect of “generalised images” that can “reflect the facts of real life correctly and in depth” (Meshcheryakov 1979) and, as Van Leeuwen (2006, p.167) maintains, can carry “high truth values” and not be treated as “fictions or fantasies”.

This conclusion neglects recent research exploring the potency of visual metaphor to influence readers/viewers (Lagerwerf and Meijers 2008). It also ignores the powerful connotations encoded in the typeface redolent of 1960s pro-environmental “flower power” drawing on the densely satu-
rated hybrid color palette associated with that period. The combination of image and typeface are used, it seems, to express a commitment to goodwill required to build ethos. The opening line of the body copy also seems to demonstrate an appreciation of and alignment with the concerns of the public. That is, the general wish to find a solution to produce a better world. The connotations available in the image also seem to express respect for a value system desired by some, if not all, potential readers. Certainly, as Kineavy and Warshauer (1994, p. 177) suggest, demonstrating goodwill can mean that persuaders “share or affirm the prejudices of their audience.” By drawing the graphic outline of the emission-producing refinery on the horizon goes someway to show some identification with the audience. The image acknowledges that the refinery does produce waste but not of the order presumed by the audience. That the complaints about the image are rejected allows the company to accrue much green capital and concomitant environmental ethos.

These two adjudications address visual representations and truth-values in important but different ways. The image in the oil company’s advertisement is treated as “visual opinion” (Van Leeuwen 2006, p. 167). The photograph of wind turbines is deemed to provide “reliable documentary information” (ibid.). It seems when images are recognisable because of their geographic, historical or socially specific identity they are treated as arguments and engaged with the same degree of critique as linguistic claims. When they are decreed to be of a fictional or fanciful form they are treated as peripheral and of minimal importance.

Overall, in these five advertisements (despite the perspectives outlined previously that image and text should receive, at least, perceptual equity) it seems that the word is mightier than the image or rather truth claims asserted in linguistic argument are given greater attention and critical treatment. So whilst The asa demonstrates a laudable capacity to tackle low modality linguistic claims about environmental impacts they dismiss the persuasive value in low modality images. So, when assertions are made that use the notion of practical wisdom inaccurately they engage critically with the implicatures arising from the unqualified or unsubstantiated use of such terms yet only high modality images, deemed to represent reality, attract critical re-appraisal. The potential benefits for the production of corporate environmental ethos are profound.
14.5 Building environmental ethos, exploiting visual modality, enhancing corporate image

Regardless of the industry sector a company inhabits, any corporation will have “its virtues – or morally desirable habits, its vices – or morally undesirable habits” (Gowri 2007, p. 391). However, for organizations considered especially responsible for detrimental environmental effects reducing attention to these undesirable practices can reap significant financial benefits. Consequently, many companies are keen to market themselves by aligning themselves with the virtue du jour; currently conceived in terms of environmentally responsible activities.

The data has demonstrated how organizations attempt to develop positive relationships and generate goodwill (eunoia) with a range of stakeholders including their customers. The use of knowledge (phronesis) in the low modality linguistic claims of environmental goods and reduced environmental impacts are identified to be overstated and less than judicious. However, it seems that the use of low modality images, images that are deemed to be “fanciful” and non-realistic, allows corporations to display a commitment to the “service of the larger community” (Solomon 2004, p. 1023) or planet by “wishing good for others” (Ihlen 2009, p. 364) with the aim, undoubtedly of benefiting themselves.

I conclude this chapter using two examples from an IBM (2008) television advertizement from the unashamedly titled Go Green campaign to demonstrate the extent of this strategy. Seated behind a desk, in an office, a male executive is considering an “eco-friendly” plan to reduce energy consumption. He is ultimately convinced of its worth because of its significant reduction in costs. Previously in black and white, letterboxed in corporate blue, following the executive’s decision to accept the plan to cut energy use/save money/increase profit the screen surround turns a vibrant green. The formerly monochrome executive is elevated to full color and his office becomes inhabited by cartoon rabbits, squirrels, birds and plants with accompanying music redolent of a saccharine animated film soundtrack. The environmental consequences or, more accurately, the economic benefits of energy reduction are realized visually and acoustically in the reductive form of a “Disneyfied” (Bauman 2004) version of “real” nature reduced to a highly restricted code of animals and plants.

Whilst it is encouraging that nearly 33% of UK consumers recognize that corporations are exaggerating their environmentally beneficial activities...
(BT, 2008). Corporate image marketing already seems wise to the different
degrees of scrutiny paid to textual claims and visual representations about
environmental goods. Corporate rhetoricians already appreciate that a per-
suader “must disguise his art and give the impression of speaking naturally
and not artificially” (Aristotle 1954, 140.4b 18). However, it seems this is done
by exploiting images of nature itself. Corporations demonstrably eager to
accrue environmental ethos can accomplish this, it seems, with ease by
hoodwinking a visually illiterate public and a rhetorically inconsistent reg-
ulatory body.

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“CONCEPTUAL AND FANCIFUL” OR “A DEPICTION OF REALITY”


