Cartoons as Rhetorical Weaponry: A Multimodal Analysis of the Depiction of Corruption in Selected Egyptian and American Editorial Cartoons

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Abstract

Rhetorical argumentation has caught the attention of philosophers and orators since antiquity because of their ability to persuade and impact audiences. While rhetorical argument analysis started with verbal modes of communication, they soon embraced other media, especially images. Multimodal rhetorical arguments provide their audience with multiple platforms of meanings that offer new, complex, powerful messages. Editorial cartoons are instances of rhetorical argumentation, where textual and visual modes of communication present audiences with ideologically charged messages about political events, social figures, and current affairs. This study attempts a multimodal analysis of rhetorical devices traced in selected Egyptian and American editorial cartoons published during the 1980s. It traces rhetorical devices in the compiled cartoons of Ahmed Ragab and Mustafa Hussein that appear in *Camboura at the Parliament* and those of Herbert Block (Herblock) that appear in his *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons* to explore how editorial cartoons are powerful tools of exposing corruption and condemning corrupt figures. The adopted approach borrows verbal rhetorical tropes from McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) and visual rhetorical tropes from Phillips and McQuarrie's (2004) to conduct the analysis. The study concludes that while all examined rhetorical devices are employed by Ragab and Hussein (1991) and by Block (1987), the distribution of devices on both the textual and visual levels varies. Additionally, corruption in Ragab and Hussein's cartoons is portrayed through the fictional character Camboura who strives to win a parliamentary seat so he can benefit from the immunity privileges. On the other hand, Block's editorial cartoons condemn real, social and political figures for the roles they play in plaguing the American society with corruption.

Keywords: Multimodality, Rhetoric, Editorial Cartoons, Ahmed Ragab and Mustafa Hussein, Herbert Block (Herblock)

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1. Introduction

> [T]wo semiotic systems of different types cannot be mutually interchangeable.
>
> (Benveniste, 1986, p. 235)

Editorial cartoons, also referred to as political cartoons, are multimodal messages that rely on textual and visual modes of expression to communicate messages charged with criticism for or against political events. Göçek (1998) argues that "it is the potential of political cartoons to generate change – by freeing the imagination, challenging intellect, and resisting state control . . . [that they] provide a rare public glimpse of the people" (p. 1). Accordingly, she acknowledges the "immense social impact of the political cartoon" derived "from its simultaneous appeal to the intellect, conscience, and emotion" (p. 2). Groarke (2017) defines an editorial cartoon as a means of criticism; he argues that cartoons "may aim to embarrass someone; function as way to criticize an action or a law; and/or serve to remind an audience of some significant past event." (p. 81).

The study looks at satirical editorial cartoons as rhetorical multimodal messages. They are rhetorical in the sense of their effectiveness; Bateman (2014) illustrates that effectiveness "in the sense of rhetoric traditionally meant the power to persuade or convince some audience of the truth of some suggested propositions or of the necessity of carrying out some particular course of action rather than other." (p. 119). In this regard, editorial cartoons not only reflect their producer's stance toward the message entailed, but also invite audience engagement, urging them to adopt a certain attitude.

1.1 Review of Literature

Exploring rhetoric has long been associated with tracing rhetorical devices such as tropes and schemes and gauging how they are used to build strong, persuasive arguments that effectively influence the audience. Early studies of rhetoric date back to classical antiquity, when Plato and Aristotle analyzed persuasive techniques. More recent studies of rhetoric focus on how receivers process rhetorical devices and the impact of interpreting the intended meaning. Barthes (1975) argues that as audience decodes the new meaning delivered through the rhetorical devices, they are rewarded with the 'pleasure of text'. Other studies attempt more systemic classifications of rhetorical figures. Durand (2012) categorizes rhetorical devices into two main criteria: rhetorical operations and the relation between the variable elements. Rhetorical operations explore figures of addition, suppression, substitution, and exchange. On the other hand, relations between the variable elements include identity, similarity, difference, and opposition.

While verbal rhetorical devices have dominated the research arena of rhetoric, recently visual rhetoric is gaining more and more interest, especially with the development of multimedia platforms. Kostlenick and Hasset (2003) compare the role played by verbal and visual rhetoric, stating that "[a]lthough not always explicitly argumentative, and obviously different in the ways their forms are produced and interpreted, visual conventions extend this long-standing rhetorical tradition because they are similarly shaped by the communities that imitate them." (pp.73-74).

Kjeldsen (2015) argues that multimodal rhetorical analysis has been the

focus of many studies across different genres; the "three most dominant genres of visual and multimodal argumentation, however, are arguably advertising, cartoons and scientific communication." (p. 120). Groarke (2017) attempts an ART approach to explore rhetorical multimodal argumentation in editorial cartoons. His ART approach combines "informal logic, rhetoric, and Pragma-Dialectics" to conduct an analysis that begins with acknowledging (A) the multimodal argument, recognizing (R) the main visual blocks of the argument, and testing (T) "the strength of the argument" (p. 82). Groarke examines how the verbal and the visual modes of an editorial cartoon constitute the premise and the conclusion of the argument. In this way, he treats the editorial cartoon as a speech act, where the image provides context to the text, or vice versa.

Al-Momani et al. (2017) attempt another multimodal study of editorial cartoons produced prior to and during the 2013 parliamentary elections in Jordan. While Al-Momani et al. do not link their study to rhetoric, they acknowledge the fact that "cartoons play an important role in manifesting political views and stances and reinforcing ideologies and power relationships" (p. 66). However, unlike Groarke (2017), Al-Momani et al. (2017) do not find pragmatics an adequate tool for editorial cartoon analysis; they argue that the main focus of pragmatics "is the linguistic aspect and its interpretation. What is missing in the pragmatic analysis of multimodal genres is the interpretation of the different modes and the interactions among them that create representations." (p. 68). Accordingly, Al-Momani et al. adopt Barthes' semiotic approach to analyze the linguistic, the non-coded iconic, and the coded iconic messages to explore the representation of the young, the public, and the candidates' practices.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The current study attempts a multimodal analysis that looks at cartoons as a single rhetorical unit of meaning. By tracing textual and visual rhetorical devices, the study aims to explore how text and image constitute a multimodal rhetorical argumentation that condemns corruption in Ragab and Hussein's (1991) *Camboura at the Parliament* and Block's (1987) *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons*.

2. Data

The ninth decade of the twentieth century acts as a pivotal period transitioning between the military conflicts dominating the first half of the century and the cultural and technological revolutions marking the advent of the twenty-first century. In Egypt, the 1980s marks an open-door policy in economics and a shift from the Arab-Israeli wars, signaling the Egyptian press to focus on social and economic issues and attack corruption plaguing the Egyptian society. In this regard, the satirist Ahmed Ragab and the cartoonist Mustafa Hussein collaborate to produce a series of editorial cartoons featuring many fictional characters to discuss many aspects of corruption. These editorial cartoons were published in Al-Akhbar (The News) and Akhbar el-Yom (Today's News) during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Ragab and Hussein's (1991), *Camboura at the Parliament*, a compiled collection of 127 cartoons featuring the fictional character Camboura, is chosen to explore how Egyptian editorial cartoons present rhetorical argumentation condemning corruption. In the foreword to *Camboura at the Parliament*, Ibrahim Seada (Former Editor in Chief of Akhbar El-Youm) introduces Camboura's character as one that epitomizes corruption. He argues that it is difficult to meet someone who is as corrupt, for Camboura steals, embezzles, smuggles, and deals in drugs yet escapes criticism and punishment, thanks to his powerful connections.

In parallel, in the United States of America the Reagan Administration, serving from 1981 to 1989, witnessed many

challenges in both the local and the global arenas. The Cold War, the federal and trade deficits, the competition in space and nuclear programs, the apartheid in South Africa, and the political struggles in the Middle East and Latin America not only captured the government's attention, but also the media's. Herbert Block (better known as Herblock) is a multi-award-winner cartoonist, whose works were published in the Washington Post from 1946 to 2001. Block's cartoons criticize political decisions that result in political, environmental, social, and economic problems. The study examines 386 of Blocks' (1987) editorial cartoons compiled in *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons*.

3. Methodology

Bateman (2014) defines multimodality as "the investigation of diverse modes of expression and their combinations" (p. 6). He argues that "distinct modalities of information presentation" invite meaning multiplication (p. 5), where the fusion of different modes results in a new meaning. In this study, the modalities in question are text and image. It is important here to illustrate the difference between the two modalities, for in semiotics a text is generally perceived as any sign that can be analyzed for meaning, so an image is also a text. However, in the current study, a text will be looked at as act of written representation of language. Images, on the other hand, are visual physical representations.

The multimodal analysis poses the challenge of exploring the different modalities from similar perspectives, yet maintaining the characteristics of each modality. That is, the study attempts to conduct an analysis where the same aspects are analyzed, yet the tools employed are aptly applicable to each mode of presentation. The study adopts McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) rhetorical tropes to explore the textual rhetorical devices that appear in the selected editorial cartoons. To inspect the visual rhetorical devices, analytical tools are borrowed from Phillips and McQuarrie's (2004) model where they analyze the visual structure of images.

McQuarrie and Mick (1996) associate rhetoric with persuasive manners and methods that produce effective arguments, and they define rhetorical figures as expressions that artfully deviate from the expected. They argue that deviation is a favorable rhetorical methodology that seeks effective reception from the audience as they try to interpret the new meaning prompted by the deviation. McQuarrie and Mick divide rhetorical tropes into operations of substitution and destabilization. Rhetorical operations of substitution include expressions that prompt the receiver to replace the given expression with another in order to reach the intended meaning. Both metonyms and rhetorical questions require minimal processing efforts to decode the deviation introduced in the text, for the relationship between the deviant and the expected can be easily attained. In metonyms, the relationship directly hints at the adjustment required; similarly, the rhetorical question guides the recipient to the intended meaning. On the other hand, to arrive at the absent text in an ellipsis or the exaggerated, literally impossible claim in a hyperbole, more complex processing is needed for the substitution operation to be conducted successfully.

Unlike rhetorical operations of substitution, rhetorical operations of destabilization are traced in expressions where "multiple meanings are made available", yet none "of which offers a final resolution" (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 433). Thus, receivers are more involved in destabilization processes as they attempt to arrive at meaning. McQuarrie and Mick (1996) argue that in "order to render meaning tenable, destabilization may make use of relationships involving either opposition or similarity." (p. 433). Whereas paradox and irony invoke opposition,

metaphors and puns are built on similarity. Since relations of similarities are easier to develop, puns and metaphors require less complex processing than irony and paradox. To illustrate, metaphors "assert a substantial or fundamental resemblance between two terms that one does not expect to see associated and does so in a way that opens up new implications"; on the other hand, puns rest "on a superficial or accidental similarity: two words that sound the same or one word that happens to have two separate meanings." (p. 433). Consequently, both metaphors and puns narrow down the semantic space required to decipher the intended meaning. In contrast, irony relies on some contextual background for a receiver to be able to infer the aspect of opposition constructed in the text. As for the paradox, it is when "a statement is made that cannot be true as given but that can nonetheless be made true by reinterpretation" (p.433). This proves the higher level of complexity needed to process the meaning in irony and paradox.

On the other hand, Phillips and McQuarrie (2004) focus "on rhetorical figures constructed from visual rather than verbal elements", offering a "unique contribution" to the multimodal analysis of rhetoric (p. 114). They adopt McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) view of rhetoric as 'an artful deviation' and also view rhetorical theory as closely tied to persuasion and the production of a desired outcome. They categorize visual structure – from the least to the most complex – into juxtaposition, fusion, and replacement. Juxtaposition is considered the simplest of the three rhetorical operations since it only involves placing "two image elements side by side" (Phillips and McQuarrie, 2004, p. 117). A higher complex operation is fusion, which suggests the synthesis of two image elements. The complexity results from the demand to "disentangle the two elements and some uncertainty can remain about whether the elements have been correctly broken down and identified" or not (p. 118). Phillips and McQuarrie consider replacement the most complex of the three visual rhetorical operations since the receiver has to call to mind an absent image evoked by the present one. Table 1 summarizes the adopted tools in the eclectic model proposed for the current study.

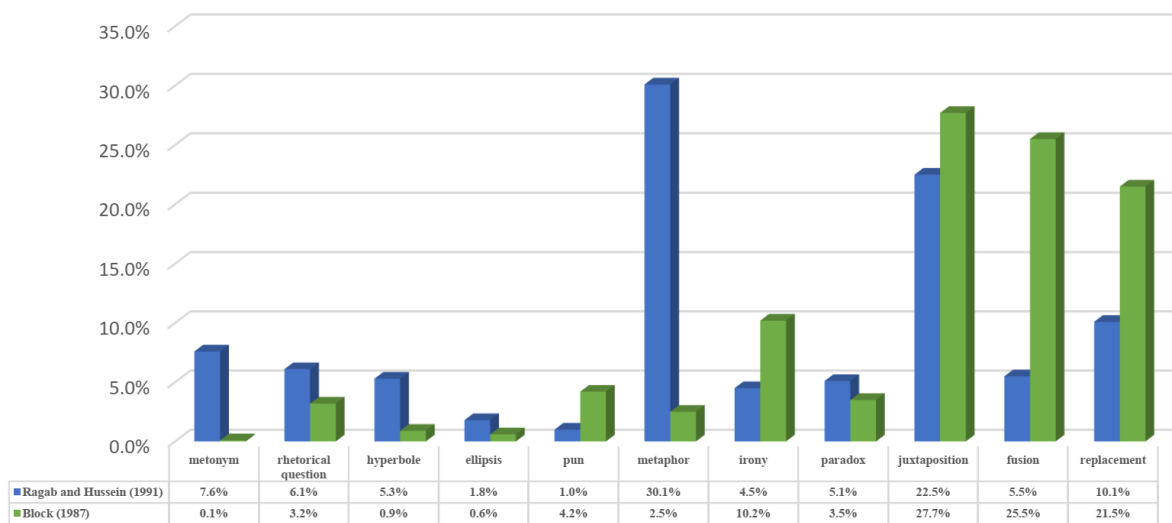*Table 1: Textual and Visual Rhetorical Tropes*

Complexity	Textual Tropes		Visual Tropes
	Substitution	**Destabilization**	
high ↕ **low**	ellipsis hyperbole rhetorical question metonym	paradox irony metaphor pun	replacement fusion juxtaposition

4. Analysis

In both collections of cartoons, all eleven tropes are evident. Figure 1 presents an approximate distribution of the employed rhetorical tropes.

Figure 1:Approximate Distribution of Rhetorical Tropes in Ragab and Hussein's (1991) and Block's (1987) Collections

	metonym	rhetorical question	hyperbole	ellipsis	pun	metaphor	irony	paradox	juxtaposition	fusion	replacement
■ Ragab and Hussein (1991)	7.6%	6.1%	5.3%	1.8%	1.0%	30.1%	4.5%	5.1%	22.5%	5.5%	10.1%
■ Block (1987)	0.1%	3.2%	0.9%	0.6%	4.2%	2.5%	10.2%	3.5%	27.7%	25.5%	21.5%

4.1 Textual Rhetorical Tropes

Substitution Operations: Metonym

Metonyms mark the simplest of the substitution operations. Ragab and Hussein (1991) employ metonymy to draw relations between Camboura and other people and places. For example, in "العين علينا" (the eyes are on us), the 'eye' stands for authorities spying on Camboura's illegal actions (p. 100). "القبة" (the dome) is used twice to hint at the People Assembly's Building (p. 32 & p. 54). One metonym that accentuates Camboura's desire to be an MP is 'metro'; Camboura ends his conversations with the catchphrase "وسلم لي على المترو" (send my greetings to the metro) around 16 times throughout the cartoons. The metonym is realized through the link between the metro as a means of transportation and the means needed to reach his destination (the Parliament). It is worth noting here that the catchphrase has become part of the Egyptian slang and is pregnant with the same connotations evoked by Camboura's character.

On the other hand, Block (1987) only resorts to metonymy twice, which could be attributed to the more straightforward approach adopted by Block in his cartoons. In the first cartoon of his collection, an interviewer asks ''YOU REMEMBER TAKING THE OATH OF OFFICE?''[1] (p. 10), where 'office' refers to Ronald Reagan's position as President of the United States of America. The other metonym is also of place, as 'WASHINGTON' is used to refer to the U.S. government (p. 80).

Substitution Operations: Rhetorical Question

Ragab and Hussein (1991) employ rhetorical questions to shed light on Camboura's character and his corrupt pursuit of money and power. Rhetorical questions are sometimes posed humorously to hint at Camboura's lack of education. For example, he wonders "كلمة الشورى دي يعني إيه؟" (What does the word 'advisory' mean?) (p. 34) in his conversation with his assistant, which shows his ignorance of such a basic word in the world of politics, especially for someone who is running for Parliament. Camboura raises other rhetorical questions to express his confidence. For instance, in one of his speeches, he asks "حد قدر يثبت عليّا حاجة؟" (Has anyone managed to prove anything against me?) (p. 96). This is to be contrasted with rhetorical questions employed to reflect how Camboura is troubled by his inability to win a seat at the People's Assembly. He asks "ليه" (why) (p. 87), "هو مفيش في البلد غيري؟" (Am I the only one in the

country [to be attacked by the media]?) (p. 88), and "يا هلترى أنا بطل ولا كرودياً؟" (I wonder: am I a hero or an idiot?) (p. 122). These rhetorical questions echo throughout the cartoons to prove that opportunist criminals such as Camboura will never make it thanks to the media campaigns (Ragab and Hussein's cartoons) that attack and expose him to the public.

Block (1987) employs rhetorical questions to criticize different problems that face the American society under the Reagan Administration. The rhetorical question "HOW DOES HE DO THAT?" (p. 31) is raised to criticize the unexplained rise in the stock market. A direct attack on Reagan is traced in his asking "HELP THE POOR? WHAT KIND OF OBLIGATION IS THAT?" (p. 72). As American citizens begin to realize the many mistakes committed by the Reagan staff, the satirical question "WHO IN THE WORLD HIRED THOSE PEOPLE?" is raised (p. 93). During the judicial nomination of 1986, 4 questions are raised twice: "YOU GOT SOME TICKETS YOU WANT FIXED?", "YOU HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THE HEALTH INSPECTOR?", "YOU GOT A SISTER IN TROUBLE?", and "YOU NEED DOUGH?" (p. 66 & p. 144). The questions seem to be asked by a Reagan-Meese[2] Precinct Politics representative. The advertising tone of the questions carries the satirical, ironic insinuations that condemn the corruption of candidates, who like Ragab and Hussein's (1991) fictional Camboura, are ready to do whatever it takes to win the elections.

Substitution Operations: Hyperbole

More complex substitution operations are present in the use of hyperboles. Most of Ragab and Hussein's (1991) hyperboles are in fact repeated slogans found on banners and posters. For example, Camboura's rival, Aziz Bey El-Aleet (Aziz, the Finicky Lord), promises "فيلا وسيارة لكل مواطن" (a house and a car to each citizen) (p. 24, p. 25, p. 28, p. 114 & p. 119). In return, on Camboura's posters, hyperboles are traced in "عطاء بلا حدود"

(unconditional giving) (p. 21, p. 109 & p. 114), and "رجل الساعة وكل دقيقة" (the man of the hour and every minute) (p. 28). The use of hyperbole criticizes the false promises and the exaggerated statements candidates make during the election.

Block's (1987) use of hyperbole is mainly associated with responsibility, or to be more accurate, the irresponsibility of the Reagan Administration regarding defense, economic, and arms policies. In one cartoon, an American citizen is reading the newspaper reporting news about spies who are ready to sell their country for money; he then comments, "EVERYTHING WRONG IS THE FAULT OF WASHINGTON" (p. 80). The exaggerated blame conveys the distrust citizens have in Washington. The attitude is not unexpected given that in another cartoon, Reagan is depicted saying, "EVERYTHING WRONG IS THE FAULT OF SUBORDINATES" (p. 102). The hyperbole traced in pinning the blame on subordinates and the desire to escape responsibility justifies the lack of trust articulated in the previous utterance.

Substitution Operations: Ellipsis

As for the most complex of the substitution operations, Ragab and Hussein (1991) resort to a few ellipses; while some of them are actually straightforward, others invite readers' involvement. For example, the word "مجلس" /magles/ (assembly) - and its colloquial derivative "مجاليسو" /magaleeso/ – is used three times to refer to the People's Assembly (p. 46, p. 85 & p. 87). The substitution operation is not complex at all here, given the context and the narrative line that links the cartoons. Other ellipses are used to hint at illegal acts, without articulating them. For example, when Camboura says "رشينا" (distributed) (p. 83), he is referring to bribery he distributes among constituents before the elections. Similarly, when he says "يستقبل العملا والعمولات والذي منه" (receives clients, commissions, etc.) (p. 124), the reader can fill in the context and infer that Camboura is talking about bribes or illegal agreements.

Block (1987) also makes minimal use of ellipsis, where he presents incomplete sentences for the reader to fill in. For example, the missing clause in "I believe the results that we had in this constructive engagement … justifies our continuing —" invites the reader to speculate about the consequences of America's ongoing support of the apartheid system in South Africa (p. 126). Similarly, the missing clause in "WE COULD RAISE THE MONEY, BUT ..." requires the audience to wonder about what America is ready to do regarding the contra arms deals with Iran and Nicaragua (p. 192). The missing subject in "MAKES YOU THINK, DOESN'T IT?" directly asks readers to think about the relationship between the nuclear projects endorsed by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and the Chernobyl nuclear accident that took place in 1986 (p. 110). In this way, Block's use of ellipsis alleviates his role as the main satirical voice as it gives the audience the chance to contemplate the situation and judge for themselves.

Destabilization Operations: Pun

Destabilization operations are more dominant in both collections. Puns, the simplest of the destabilization devices, are the least employed in Ragab and Hussein's (1991) *Camboura at the Parliament*. In one cartoon, Camboura orders his assistant to spread some rumors claiming that he relates to important figures in the country, he mentions names like Saad Zaghloul, an Egyptian revolutionary and statesman, and Talaat Harb Pacha, a leading Egyptian entrepreneur and founder of Banque Misr. The pun is realized when he relates the rest of his list of names, which are in fact famous street names, like Adly, Bab al-Louq, and Al Falki. Thus, for Camboura, Saad Zghloul and Talaat Harb are not famous figures, but rather famous streets. Camboura also changes the soft 's' in 'بوسة' /boosa/ (kiss) to a strong 's' in 'بوصة' /boosa/ (inch) (p. 82), as he speaks of types of glass with one of his women.

Block (1987) employs puns not only for their humorous effect, but also for the criticality they demand of their readers. For example, the play on the word 'record' in "THE U.S. AIR TRAVEL SAFETY RECORD HAS BEEN VERY GOOD. THE U.S. AIR TRAVEL SAFETY RECORD HAS BEEN VERY GOOD… THIS IS A RECORDING…" (p. 24) criticizes the corruption affecting the reputation of air travel safety; accordingly, the concept of safety can only be attained in a recorded message. The pun in "THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON RADIATING" attacks the nuclear programs that have become the main source of radiation (p. 222); the cartoon portrays a Christmas setting with 'radiating' presents. In this way, some of Block's puns can easily be destabilized via the image. Like Ragab and Hussein (1991), Block (1987) also employs puns where the play on words is produced by some modification to the words. While Ragan and Hussein's alterations are mainly phonetic, Block's are morphological. For example, supporters of the Edwin Meese policies are referred to as "MEESEKETEERS" (p. 64 & p. 74), blending 'Meese' and 'Musketeers'.

Destabilization Operations: Metaphor

The most employed rhetorical device in Ragab and Hussein's (1991) cartoons is the metaphor. Not only do metaphors highlight how Camboura thinks of the world, they also show how others think of him. Camboura's desire to be an Assemblyman is depicted in his description of the Parliament as "الجنة" (heaven) (p. 94), for he will not be harmed there despite all his illegal activities. Metaphors also help sketch Camboura's character for they show how he thinks of himself. Camboura believes he is "وزن" (of weight) (p. 54) and "برلنت ملعطا" (sparkling diamond) (p. 96). This is to be contrasted with how he is viewed by others. His mother-in-law sees him as a "حرباية" (chameleon) (p. 108), which accentuates his hypocritical nature. Employees at the poll place call both

Camboura and Aziz Bey along with their entourage "الوغش" (vermin) (p. 119).

Metaphors are not the dominant rhetorical devices in Block's (1987) cartoons, but they are frequently utilized to paint images of corruption in the 1980s America. Commenting on how mergers and takeovers have resulted in corruption as "billions of dollars change hands quickly. . . often at the cost of employees with modest salaries" (p. 11), the metaphor "INVASION OF CORPORATE BODY SNATCHERS" compares 'greenmail operations' to vultures who feed on smaller corporates (p. 13). Metaphors are also used to condemn the Reagan proposed budget, which is described as "IF-YOU-BELIEVE-IN-FAIRIES BUDGET" (p. 39), the association with fairies hints at Reagan's false promises and the failure to adhere to budget allocations. Block's metaphors clearly accuse political figures of corruption. For example, Donald Regan (Secretary of the Treasury from 1981 to 1985 and the White House Chief of Staff from 1985 to 1987) is labeled as "CHIEF OF CHAOS" (p. 186).

Destabilization Operations: Irony

The complexity of irony relies on the background information needed to understand the intended meaning. Ragab and Hussein (1991) employ irony to highlight Camboura's corruption. This is evident in one of Camboura's posters, which reads "رجل التقوى الذي يصلي السبع ركعات في أوقاتها" (The Man of Piety, who Prays the Seven Prayers on Time) (p. 13). The irony can only be decoded if the reader knows that in Islam there are only 5 obligatory prayers. Thus, the poster is a clear indication that Camboura does not know anything about piety. Another poster hung near an orphanage owned by Camboura reads "رجل الخير والبر" (The Man of Goodness and Righteousness) (p. 125). The irony is retrieved from the words uttered by Camboura's assistant as he reminds his boss that they are suing the orphanage to evacuate the building so they can build a supermarket instead.

Irony is the most frequent textual rhetorical device employed in Block's (1987) cartoons. The complexity of the irony is alleviated through the use of images and/or other guiding texts that appear on items such as newspapers, bags, books, and posters among others. This can be seen in "LAND OF THE PLENTY" (p. 14), where the irony is explained through the newspaper title that reads "HUNGER IN THE U.S." (p. 14). The contrast implied in "RESTORED PRIDE IN AMERICA" is retrievable through the image of Reagan begging for money to help with the contras arms deals with Nicaragua and Iran. Other economic problems, like the deficit, are also implied in the ironic phrase "GREAT DISCOVERIES" (p. 38), which can be interpreted through the images depicting the discovery of the New World and the Pacific Ocean as opposed to the 1984 deficit. Direct criticism of President Reagan's constant change of statement is captured in "I CAN DELIVER THE LINES AS GOOD AS EVER, BUT THEY KEEP CHANGING THE SCRIPTS ON ME" (p. 184), which alludes to Reagan's past as a Hollywood actor.

Destabilization Operations: Paradox

Despite the complexity of the destabilization operations, paradoxes are fairly common in *Camboura at the Parliament*, for they hint at Camboura's corruption. In his election campaigns, Camboura is ready to become anyone to win people's votes. He can be "كمبوره الفلاح، كمبوره رجل البر، كمبوره المربي الفاضل، ودكتور كمبوره رجل الثقافة" (Camboura, the Farmer; Camboura, the man of Piety; Camboura, the Virtuous Educator, and Dr. Camboura, the Man of Intellect), all at the same time (p. 8). When he notices that one of his posters describes him as "رجل اليسار التقدمي" (The Leftist Progressive Man), he asks for another that labels him as "رجل اليمين الرجعي المتعفن" (The Rightest, Radical, Rotten Man) (p. 40). Whereas the new poster creates a paradox, it explains that Camboura has no political ideology, and he just wants what

would agree with everyone. In parallel, Camboura's employees dedicate paradoxical banners announcing their support to Camboura. In one banner, they write "قسم تخزين السلع للسوق السوداء يؤيدون الرجل الشريف أحمد كمبوره" (The Department of Black-Market Merchandise Inventory Support the Honorable Man Ahmed Camboura) (p. 61).

Block (1987) also operates paradox in a way that serves his criticism of corruption. Block adapts Orwell's famous paradoxes in *Animal Farm* to produce posters that read "DISINFORMATION IS TRUTH", "SWAPS OF CAPTIVES ARE NOT SWAPS", "CIA INVOLVEMENT IS NOT US INVOLVEMENT", "DEFICIT POLICIES ARE ANTI-DEFICIT POLICIES", "A SUMMIT IS NOT A SUMMIT", "FAILURE IS SUCCESS", "FALLING FLAT ON THE FACE IS STANDING TALL", "NON-WORKING WEAPONS ARE DEFENSE", "WAR IS NOT WAR", and "CIVIL WRONGS ARE CIVIL RIGHTS" (p. 87). The paradoxes recapitulate Block's view of corruption during the Reagan Administration. In the same vein, Block criticizes the Pentagon's budget allocations, where he attacks "defense spending" on "$7,000 coffeepots or $640 toilet seats" and "untested and non-working weapons" (p. 111). The paradoxical statement "OUT OF EVERY DOLLAR SPENT FOR DEFENSE,

SOME PART OF IT GOES FOR ACTUAL DEFENSE" captures this aspect (p. 16). Another paradox that summarizes Block's view of the reason behind the corruption appears in the paradoxical description of Reagan as an "ELECTED ABSOLUTE MONARCH" (p. 151).

4.2 Visual Rhetorical Tropes

Juxtaposition

Ragab and Hussein's (1991) *Camboura at the Parliament* is built on a juxtaposition of images. While most images are juxtaposed to provide contrasts, some draw similarities. The most evident contrast is between Camboura and his assistant, Abd El-Aziz. Image 1 depicts the contrast in terms of body shape; Camboura is short and has a big round face while Abd El-Aziz is tall and has a long oval face. The juxtaposition is also evident in terms of the roles played; Camboura is the boss who dictates orders whereas Abd El-Aziz is the subordinate who loyally listens and obeys. Image 2 further accentuates this contrast, for it paints Abd El-Aziz as someone who kneels down to satisfy his boss' desires. The contrast may be intended for a humorous effect; nevertheless, it implies how Camboura is a man who wishes to control what is beyond him, hinting at his desire for the Parliament and foreshadowing his failure.

| *Image 1 (p. 14)* | *Image 2 (p. 38)* | *Image 3 (p. 51)* | *Image 4 (p. 82)* |

On the other hand, in images 3 and 4, the similarities between Camboura and Abd El-Aziz are evident. The height difference is lessened in image 4, and it is

almost invisible in image 3. The similarities solidify the configuration of Camboura and Abd El-Aziz as one unit against the other characters in the cartoons. In image 3,

Camboura and Abd El-Aziz are hosting a Colombian man in hopes of finding a lead to the 'Big Head' of the Colombian Drug Cartel. Their unified goals paint Camboura and his assistant in juxtaposition to the Colombian man and his escort. In Image 4 Camboura and Abd El-Aziz are seen wearing similar dark suits, and together they are juxtaposed against the private guarding the area. The similarity here portrays Camboura and Abd El-Aziz's similar destination: prison. In Image 5, juxtaposition is not only seen in the contrast between Camboura and Abd El-Aziz, but also in the posters advertising Camboura. Each poster shows Camboura in a different outfit. The juxtaposition, in this case, proves that Camboura is a 'chameleon' (per his mother-in-law's words) who is ready to do whatever it takes to win the elections.

*Image 5 (p. 40)*   *Image 6 (p. 45)*   *Image 7 (p. 23)*   *Image 8 11 (p. 17)*

Other cartoons also display more than one level of juxtaposition. In Image 6, there is a juxtaposition between Camboura and his assistant and between the prayer beads in Camboura's left hand and the wine glass in his right, which emphasizes Camboura's hypocritical nature. In images 7 and 8, the multiple juxtapositions help set the stage. In Image 7, there is a juxtaposition between Camboura and his assistant and then there is the scene from the window that hints at multiple industrial activities. The multiple juxtapositions provide the audience with a more visualized setting that helps decode the textual rhetorical devices. Similarly, in Image 8, there is a contrast between Camboura who sits comfortably in his loungewear and Abd El-Aziz who sits on the floor in his jalabiya, and there is also the flashback-like image that draws Camboura as a child in front of a reformatory. The flashback image plays a crucial role, for it refutes Camboura's claims of a patriotic past.

Block (1987) also relies on juxtaposition of similarity and contrast in his cartoons to expose different aspects of corruption. In Image 9, the contrast between the big man saved by the safety net and the small people falling off the net illustrates Block's criticism of how "[e]xecutives heap huge incomes on themselves—often at the cost of employees with modest salaries" (p. 11). Image 10 presents economic corruption, where the deficit is represented by a manhole juxtaposed against a sunny, spring atmosphere. Block also employs juxtaposing images to criticize President Ronald Reagan. For example, in Image 11, the image of Reagan on an armchair with iced lemonade on the side table is to be contrasted with the blazing hot kitchen. The juxtaposition helps illustrate the word-play on the word 'heat', portraying Reagan as an irresponsible president who leaves the blame to others.

Image 9 (p. 18)   *Image 10 (p. 30)*   *Image 11 (p. 32)*   *Image 12 (p. 132)*
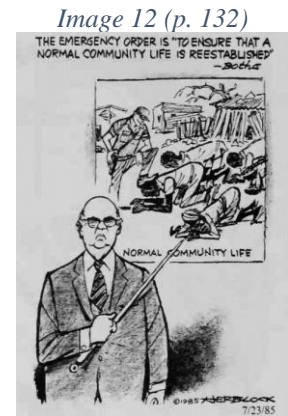
Similar to Ragab and Hussein (1991), Block (1987) employs multiple juxtapositions in a number of his editorial cartoons. In Image 12, Block condemns the American policy toward the apartheid. This is clear in the juxtaposition between Botha (President of South Africa from 1984 to 1989) and the photo behind, on the one hand, and the contrast between the white officer and the South Africans, on the other. The juxtapositions help decode the irony traced in Botha's words "THE EMERGENCY ORDER IS TO 'ENSURE THAT A NORMAL COMMUNITY LIFE IS REESTABLISHED'" (p. 132).

Fusion

At a more complex level, fusion invites the audience to identify the fused images and to defuse them. Ragab and Hussein (1991) employ fusion to send some decoded messages that complement the satirical attitude conveyed through the cartoons. It is important first to note how fusion sometimes replaces juxtaposition; for example, whereas Camboura and Abd El-Aziz usually appear in juxtaposed images, in Image 13, they are fused together as they are surrounded by Camboura's children. In this scene, Camboura wonders what to do with his sons: raise them as future voters or as future star football players; it seems that Abd El-Aziz shares his boss' deliberations. In a similar vein, banners in most cartoons are displayed in juxtaposition to the characters; however, in Image 14, Camboura's head intersects with the banner. Interestingly, the banner would have read "رجل المبادئ والأخلاق" (The Man of Principles and Ethics) if it was not for Camboura's head. This is significant, for Camboura's speech is about how he spends his money on wine, drugs, and gambling.

Image 13 (p. 105)   *Image 14 (p. 110)*

Other instances of fusion play an important role in the delivery of meaning. For example, in Image 15, the newspaper placed in Camboura's hands helps relate the cartoon to current affairs; in this case, it is Naguib Mahfouz winning the Nobel Prize in literature. Fused symbols are also of importance. In Image 16, election symbols

are fused within posters. While Aziz Bey has a small portrait to represent his symbol (the Monalisa), the symbol of a traditional squat toilet is drawn on Camboura's posters. It is worth noting that the word "زغلول" is a

pun, for it can mean 'a pigeon' and in colloquial Egyptian it may refer to 'a kind of dates' and to 'the squat toilet', so the fused image helps identify which meaning is intended.

Image 15 (p. 18)   *Image 16 (p. 25)*

Fusion also appears in Block's (1987) editorial cartoons for different purposes. One main role fused images play is identifying the characters making up the cartoons. For example, in Image 17, Yasser Arafat (Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from 1969 to 2004) can be identified from the label 'PLO' on the bag he is holding. Fusion plays another important role in the interpretation of textual rhetorical devices.

In Image 18, the pun traced in 'Rosy Scenario' is clarified through the dying flowers in the man's hand. In addition, the contrast between Theodore Roosevelt's foreign policy "speak softly and carry a big stick" and the fused small stick in Reagan's hand in Image 19 explains the irony intended (p. 44). In Image 20, the fusion appears in the act of the fish catching the CIA agent, which illustrates the irony in "PRIZE CATCH – KGB AGENT" (p. 84).

Image 17 (p. 50)   *Image 18 (p. 37)*   *Image 19(p. 44)*   *Image 20 (p. 84)*

Fused images may also carry the main satirical message of the cartoon. In Image 21, the image of the plane fused through the window of the main plane highlights criticism of air travel safety. In Image 22, the fusion of the Grim Reaper's sickle and the famished children convey Block's (1987) view of the U.S. foreign

policy that led to starvation in Africa. Shepherd (1985) explains that "death from starvation is a daily occurrence in 12 of Ethiopia's 14 provinces" (p. 5). He further argues that while the 1981 U.S. foreign policy promised food aid campaigns, "its unstated policy was to . . . send food aid only to nations that were strategically

attractive to the United States and that shared this Administration's political ideology" (p. 5). As for fusion of the bag on the eagle's head dominating the presidential

seal in Image 23, it conveys Block's (1987) criticism of the Reagan's Administration foreign policy with Iran and the adopted methods to release the American hostages.

Image 21 (p. 24)	*Image 22 (p. 101)*	*Image 23 (p. 177)*

Replacement

Ragab and Hussein (1991) and Block (1987) frequently resort to replacement, despite the complexity involved, to highlight different contexts and complement the satirical messages conveyed. In many of Ragab and Hussein's cartoons, replacements are employed to hint at the setting. In Image 24, the building at the back with its dome suggests the

People Assembly's Building. The camera in Image 25 suggests that the cartoon takes place at a studio. Replacements are also used as symbols that hint at famous characters or professions. In Image 26, Camboura's pose is a reenactment of Mustafa Kamel's statue; Camboura wishes to benefit from Mustafa Kamel's popular association with patriotism for his election campaign. In Image 27, the camera around Gangah's neck signals his job as a reporter.

Image 24 (p. 5)	*Image 25 (p. 16)*	*Image 26 (p. 101)*	*Image 27 (p. 73)*

Camboura's acts of bribery are also depicted through replacements. In Image 28, the bag of money is introduced to the head of the political party that Camboura hopes to join in order to meet the winner-take-all party lists system requirements. In Image 29, the boxes behind Abd El-Aziz hint at the kind of presents/ bribes Camboura offers his constituents to win their votes. In

Image 30, the act of bribery is seen in Camboura offering the gofer a cigarette, perhaps in return for bringing a group of pregnant women to meet Camboura. The replacements invite the audience engagement to further decode the character of Camboura and his corrupt methods to reach the Parliament.

Whereas Ragab and Hussein (1991) expose corruption through fictional characters, Block (1987) employs replacements to criticize actual figures and refer to current problems. Accordingly, President Reagan appears in around 40% of the *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons*. While other political figures are usually identified through attached badges and/or labels, sometimes these figures are presented as replacements for the audience to identify. For example, in Image 31, Block presents the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, wearing a toilet seat and holding approval stamps. Block explains that this depiction, which is repeated in "a number of cartoons[,] . . . is symbolic of the billions of dollars that have been flushed down the drain in the name of defense." (p.

111). As for Image 32, Reagan appears with Uncle Sam in a ragged state to hint at the poor economic and political conditions America suffers from. Like Ragab and Hussein (1991), Block (1987) utilizes replacements to refer to settings. For example, in Image 33, the oval office is represented and from its window the U.S. Capitol building appears. The replacements help in the interpretation of the irony "THE BUCK STOPS THERE" (p. 90). Originally, President Truman had the sign "The buck stops here." on his desk in the Whitehouse. The sign means that Truman is ready to bear responsibility. On the other hand, the sign in Reagan's office, pointing at the Capitol building, says the opposite. This proves how Block condemns Reagan for evading responsibility.

Furthermore, Block (1987) employs replacements to convey symbolic acts. In

Image 34, the act of hypnosis hints at the governmental behavior toward American

citizens who are shocked by Reagan's reactions to the Iran Arms Deals scandals. The trash coming out of the screen in Image 35 symbolizes Block's views toward the candidate statements and promises to win the congressional elections. Block also employs replacements to recreate fairytale scenes, through which he passes his satirical comments. In Images 36 and 37, Block adapts scenes from "The Princess and the Frog" and "Cinderella" to criticize the transformations promised by the Tax Reform Act (1986).

Image 34 (p. 190)	Image 35 (p. 151)	Image 36 (p. 40)	Image 37 (p. 41)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The 1980s was a transitional decade in both Egypt and the United States of America. After the 1973 war and the return of Taba, the focus of Egyptian current news shifted to economic and social affairs, especially with the open-door policy in economy. On the other hand, President Reagan started his term with the release of 52 American hostages in Iran. The challenge posed many threats in terms of foreign policy, defense and economy, especially that the Cold War was at its height during the 1980s. Since editorial cartoons discuss current affairs, they are bound to capture the eventful decade, encoding the cartoonist's ideology. In this way, Ragab and Hussein's (1991) *Camboura at the Parliament* and Block's (1987) *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons* introduce rhetorical messages that address corrupt operations that disseminated the Egyptian and American social arenas, respectively.

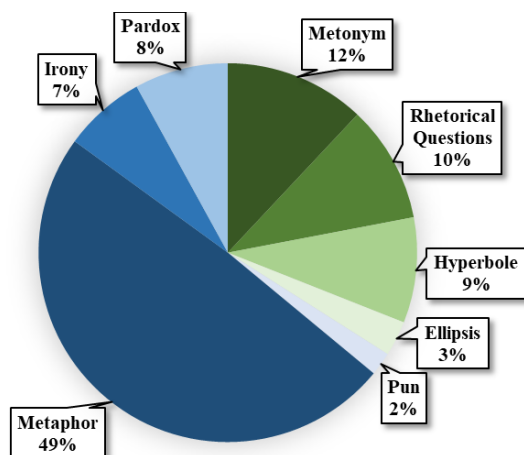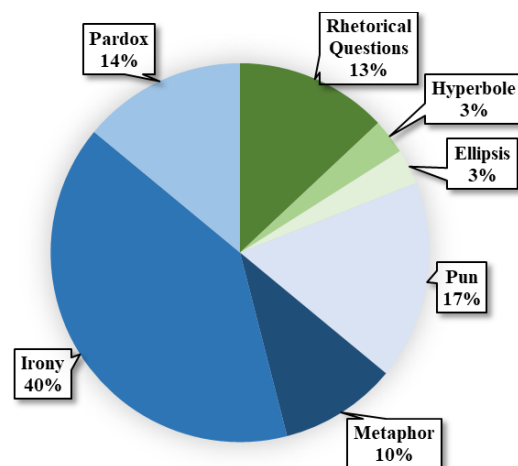Figure 2: Approximate Distribution of Textual Rhetorical Tropes in Camboura at the Parliament

Figure 3: Approximate Distribution of Textual Rhetorical Tropes in Herblock at Large

In both collections, destabilization operations dominate the rhetorical tropes. Figures 2 and 3 show how Ragab and Hussein (1991) rely on destabilization operations of similarity the most, for metaphors account for 49% of all textual tropes. Thus, along with puns (2%) destabilization tropes of similarity make up 51% of the texts introduced in *Camboura at the Parliament*. Ragab and Hussein use metaphors to paint verbal images of Camboura's world – how he views himself and the world, and how is viewed by the world around him. Puns are mostly used for humor, yet they also show Camboura's lack of education. Block (1987) also utilizes destabilization operations of similarity as they amount to 27% of textual tropes. He employs metaphors to illustrate the impact of corruption. Puns are more frequent, for they serve as sharp tools of both criticism and humor.

On the other hand, Block (1987) depends more on destabilization operations of contrast. Irony (40%) and paradox (14%) constitute 54% of the texts introduced in *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons*. Block uses irony and paradox as a defamiliarization tool that reminds the audience to critically reconsider media reports. To reduce the

intensity of complexity required in the interpretation of irony and paradox, Block resorts to images. While Ragab and Hussein (1991) do not use paradox and irony as often, they are fairly evident in *Camboura at the Parliament*, for they shed light on Camboura's hypocritical nature.

Substitution operations constitute 34% and 19% in *Camboura at the Parliament* and *Herblock at Large: Let's Go Back a Little...and Other Cartoons*, respectively. Both collections rely on substitution operations of similarity since they are easier to decode. Consequently, ellipsis is the least frequent trope in both collections, since it is the most complex of substitution operations. Ragab and Hussein (1991) employ metonyms, which represent 12% of textual rhetorical tropes, as most are fairly common in the Egyptian colloquial language. In contrast, Block (1987) only uses metonyms of place twice. As for rhetorical questions, they share similar distributions in both collections (10% and 13%). Ragab and Hussein associate rhetorical questions with Camboura's style of talking to express confidence or uncertainties. This is different from Block's rhetorical questions, which are posed to cast doubt on political decisions and official reports. Despite the higher degree of

complexity involved in hyperboles, they are frequently found in *Camboura at the Parliament* (9%) as they play a crucial role in the depiction of Camboura as a flat caricature representing corruption. In contrast, Block employs hyperboles less

frequently (3%) mainly because his cartoons are more realistic in nature, and an exaggerated account would not be very favorable, given the already desperate situation.

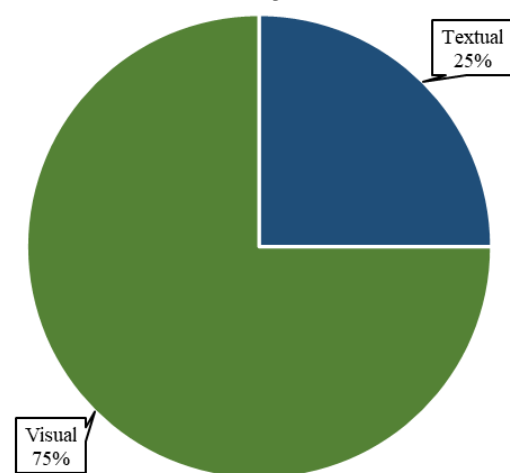*Figure 4: Approximate Distribution of Textual and Visual Rhetorical Tropes in Camboura at the Parliament*
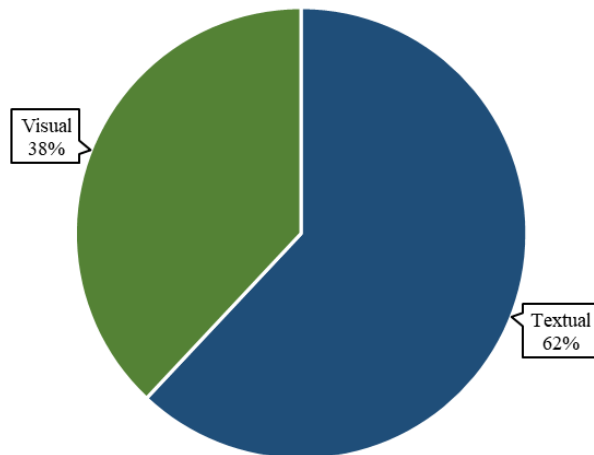
Figure 5: Approximate Distribution of Textual and Visual Rhetorical Tropes in Herblock at Large

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the distribution of textual versus visual tropes in both collections. As seen, Ragab and Hussein (1991) rely on textual tropes more than visual ones. This can be related to the fact that *Camboura at the Parliament* is a collaboration between Ahmed Ragab, the satirist and Mustafa Hussein, the cartoonist. In most cartoons, both texts and images can

be explored independently; however, it is their fusion that conveys the true magic behind the cartoon as a multimodal unit of meaning. On the other hand, Herbert Block is a cartoonist, who mainly depends on the image to deliver his messages. Accordingly, visual imagery makes up 75% of his rhetorical messages.

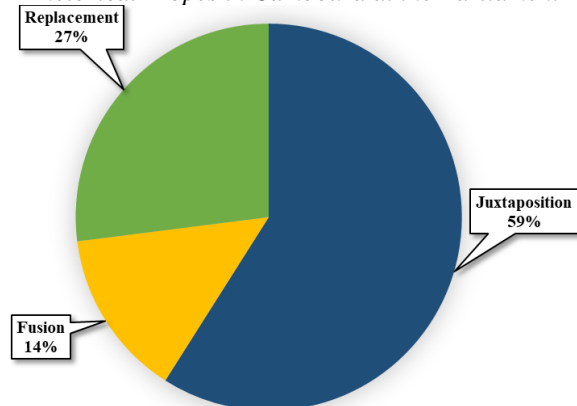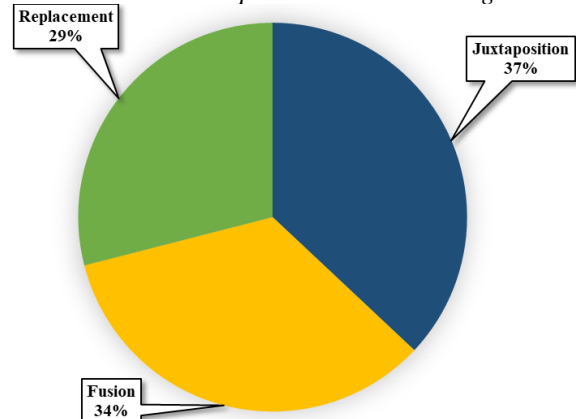*Figure 6: Approximate Distribution of Visual Rhetorical Tropes in Camboura at the Parliament*

Figure 7: Approximate Distribution of Visual Rhetorical Tropes in Herblock at Large

As Figures 6 and 7 illustrate, juxtaposition is the dominant visual trope in both works. Ragab and Hussein's (1991) juxtaposed images paint Camboura against and/or with the people and events he encounters in his pursuit of the Parliament seat. Block's (1987) use of visual tropes is more proportional. Juxtaposition is mainly employed to illustrate relationships between different participants while fused images are mainly used to identify political figures. The complexity of fused images is lessened when they are examined alongside textual tropes, for they complement the meaning by hinting at the needed background to interpret textual tropes such as irony. In *Camboura at the Parliament*, fused images, the least frequent visual trope, are mainly found in posters and banners on the one hand, and in newspapers that display references to current events, on the other. The use of replacement, the most complex of visual rhetorical tropes, is similar in both collections (27% and 29%). Replacement images are used to suggest settings and symbolic acts in both collections. Block also employs replacement to represent political figures, since they are the object of criticism in most cartoons.

To conclude, the selected cartoons are rhetorical since they offer persuasive messages that can be traced through the text and images employed. Both textual and visual tropes offer new meanings driven from the multimodal communication of ideas. By attempting a multimodal analysis of the tropes traced in both collections of cartoons, it was concluded that both collections present a rhetorical multimodal argument attacking corruption. However, Ragab and Hussein's (1991) approach is different from Block's (1987). This can be seen in the distribution of tropes across the cartoons. In addition, while Ragab and Hussein build their cartoons around the fictional character, Camboura, who represents different corrupt characters in the Egyptian society, most figures in Block's cartoons are realistic and represent real authorities; in fact, some figures can be easily recognized and some are even identified. Ragab and Hussein build a virtual world where negative caricatures are sketched to drive the audience away from Camboura, the epitome of corruption, and to persuade them against his undeserving aspirations and his illegal endeavors. Block, on the other hand, builds an actual battle against evident corruption inviting his audience to share his opinions regarding the political and social figures' direct or indirect contribution to the corrupt state of the 1980s United States of America.

Notes

[1] Block (1987) mostly uses uppercase letters in his cartoons. All cited material follows the same format as the original text.

[2] Edwin Meese was White House Chief of Staff from 1985 to 1988.

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