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Metaphor and Persuasion at Work with Emotions and Identity in Interaction

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1. Metaphor, Healing and Change

Following the revolutionary path inaugurated by Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) view of metaphor as a conceptual device, wandering through the various subsequent insights emerging from inside and outside cognitive linguistics borders, metaphor has been further defined as integrated, strategic and transformational: it can change and promote change. This is also what renders and defines it as strategic for persuasion (Ferrari 2018), in political as well as in therapeutic settings, where it conveys an enormous transformative potential for healing (Ferrari 2020a, 2020b).

In this sense, Lawley and Tomskin (2013) talk about the "magic" of metaphor: "[h]aving facilitated hundreds of clients to explore their metaphors, we know that metaphor can heal, transform and enrich lives. [...] because metaphors [...] give form to the inexpressible [carrying therefore] a great deal of information in a compact and memorable package" And yet, due to their constrained transpositional functioning from one domain of experience to another, "they can be a tool for creativity or a self-imposed limit" (Lawley, Tomkins 2013, pp. 9-10).

The essence of metaphor is responsible for both its transformational power and its danger, also depending on how we make use of it. This must be traced back to its connection with emotions within the interactive process of persuasion. Starting from the theoretical underpinnings of previous studies on metaphor and persuasion (Ferrari 2018), two basic "interactional identity framings" will be introduced, their psychological and metaphorical grounding hypothesized, together with their interactional dynamics at

an individual, collective/societal and political dimension. Examples will be traced to provide evidence of how such interactional identity framings can operate at the three dimensions. Discussion follows on how metaphor in a persuasion perspective can intersect with emotion so as to become such an interactional mode ("interactional identity framing") at the disposal of the individual minds in interaction, which can be both intrapersonal, when construing their own identity, and interpersonal, when interacting with each other. The healing potential of such an account of metaphor and persuasion is also blurred on the horizon[1].

2. Persuasion, Interaction, and Sustainability

No persuasive process can be entirely fulfilled without a truly interactional dimension. Persuasion is indeed primarily an interactive process, in addition to being inevitable and goal-oriented:

> persuasion may be defined as an inevitable and commonplace, dynamic, interactive or intersubjective process, involving at least two interlocutors, actors, or parties: the persuader and the persuaded, or the addresser and the addressee. Persuasion is a process, and a dynamic one, in which participants aim to influence or produce an action, broadly intended as a change in beliefs system or behavior. [It is this] change, which – be it in thought, opinions, attitudes, behavior or action – determines persuasion's level of success (Ferrari 2018, p. 8).

Persuasion is indeed related to the more general process of communication, which is itself an inevitable intersubjective phenomenon. In this sense, the teaching of Paul Watzlawick is still valid: "one cannot not communicate" (1967, p. 32). Every behaviour is in fact a kind of communication. Persuasion is dynamic, as opposed to static, and implies movement: an interchange between participants (cf. interactive feature) and development in time (dynamicity).

More specifically, the very interactional nature of persuasion implies a move, or propensity, toward the structuring of others' positions, beliefs,

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1. For an in-depth account on recent perspectives dealing with metaphor in (mental) healthcare see Tay (ed.) (2020). All the contributors (Mathieson, Jennifer and Stubbe, Torneke, Knapton, Yu and Tay, Tay, Ferrari, Carissimo) address applications of metaphor for healing taking different perspectives.

thoughts, emotions, actions. This may be more or less openly conscious or intentional, and work or not to yield successful results. Persuasion is an interactive negotiation of 'liking' and 'being liked' (I tend to use "liking" in a very general sense and articulate the "liking effect" in a rather complex way, as it further emerges from Ferrari 2018, pp. 8-9, 16). In this sense, we could say that persuasion is successful when a sufficiently balanced measure between the other's acceptance and/or appreciation as a foreseen effect (liking) and our own self confirmation (being liked) is obtained, so as to produce action. The notion of 'liking' is here meant in an extensive way, so as to embrace all kinds of phenomena implying some sort of interpersonal agreement, not necessarily explicit, but at least behavioural, in order for their process to continue further. Moreover, the notion is also meant in all its complexity, not to dismiss those cases in which even contrary to rational expectations some sort of consent is, whether consciously or subconsciously/unconsciously, however behaviourally produced (e.g. tyrant fascination). In fact, "no tyrant can survive for long, with her/his force alone. Being liked is also necessary" (Ferrari 2018, p. 16). This balanced measure can also be obtained by means of an interchange of active and passive roles in time. Persuasion also implies shared responsibility. In fact, no persuasion can be fulfilled without a truly interactional dimension: just relying on the 'being liked' (passive) response. Some sort of (active) 'liking' response on the part of the persuaded must also be performed, in order for the process to produce an action.

The level of success of persuasion thus relies on an interactively defined choice emerging from the balance between liking and being liked, where the participants ultimately agree on their will. This consistency of will has to be meant both intra and interpersonally. Interpersonal consistency has to do with the match between the participants' goals, so as to promote the desired action. When no agreement is reached, the persuasive process may remain as an unaccomplished persuasive attempt, notwithstanding the change it might, however, have provoked in the participants in the process.

Nonetheless, in the long run, the level of success of persuasion further relies on a more 'internal' intrapersonal agreement. This is also defined dynamically, and may be interpersonally constructed, but consists in self-integration. In other words, to convince the persuaded, the persuader must have, or find through interaction, a sufficient level of self-awareness and clarity of goals to be convinced for him/herself, i.e. believe that his/her message, idea, project, action, contribution, agenda is valid, useful, great, irreplaceable, so to create trust. For example, Ronald Reagan, who was known

as 'the' great communicator, was used to saying in his memoires that he even considered picking up worms when he was cleaning his garden to be an important thing (Cannon 1982, p. 60). Idiosyncratic features of the character aside, this describes how a good leader can become a good leader just by starting from himself and believing in himself as an important human being even in the small things of his basic daily activities. In this sense, we could also say that internal and external trust is at the core of a persuasion process aimed at enduring success, which can be further related to the concept of sustainability in the following paragraphs. At the same time, a sufficient degree of communication awareness and expertise is of course needed on the part of the persuader to manage this message delivery to the persuadee. It is therefore the match between internal and external communication in the persuader and between persuader and persuadee, to create the conditions for persuasion to succeed. "Persuader and persuadee may interchange their roles, while mutually defining their will correspondence and agreement of their wills" (Ferrari 2018, p. 9).

The goal-oriented feature of persuasion renders it a very controversial phenomenon, particularly in those domains which are typically characterized by persuasion: those ascribable to "strategic" vs. "everyday communication" (Ferrari 2018, p. 10). More specifically, a highly debatable yet crucial matter when approaching persuasion in the political process and/or discourse is certainly that of manipulation. According to van Dijk, manipulation can be defined as "a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests", with its natural implication of "power abuse": manipulation "not only involves power, but especially abuse of power" (2006, p. 360). This aspect of "power abuse" presides over the distinction van Dijk establishes between the concepts of "manipulation" and "persuasion".

What would typically characterize manipulation with respect to persuasion in van Dijk's terms is in fact that in persuasion, the interlocutors are "free" to react whereas in manipulation they are instead "victims" (2006, p. 361). However, in reality, what determines this difference has not to do with the linguistic features of the persuasive vs. manipulative processes but rather on societal and contextual pre-conditions regarding the interlocutors and determining their different psychological positioning or 'intentions' with respect to the persuasive attempts, which in turn preside over their reactions to such attempts. For this reason, and more specifically for the theoretical criticality and practical difficulty of scientifically reasoning over

matters of individual psychological positioning and 'intentions' bearing a linguistic perspective, I address the problem of persuasion and intentionality in strategic discourse from a pragmatic perspective.

More specifically, a distinction can and must be drawn at a theoretical, or 'intentional' level, to make the difference between what is commonly meant as 'positive' and 'negative' persuasion. I prefer to develop this distinction in the terms of sustainability:

> Persuasion sustainability can be defined as the capability to reach foreseen sustainable goals with the major degree of satisfaction obtained, for persuader, persuaded, and the contextual 'environment' (Ferrari 2018, p. 14).

In a discoursal perspective, that is, with a focus on the way persuasion develops in the discourse, its sustainability depends upon 1. the kind of relationship (including the social situation and context) between the participants in the process, 2. the way the persuader aims at convincing the persuadee. Lastly, it depends on the aims of the persuasive action, that is, the foreseen change: 3. what specific kind of change does the persuader try to foster in the persuadee? Might this change be an improvement with respect to the individual, or to society's wellbeing? Such questions are to be answered "in a relativistic and systemic perspective" (Ferrari 2018, p. 14), which means that a singular factor per se cannot determine sustainability. Through the complex evaluation of the previously mentioned three factors, the sustainability of a persuasion instance can be evaluated in intentional terms ('on paper') against in practice. "On paper", it can be collocated along a continuum between two extremes: sustainable persuasion ('other'-oriented or 'good') and non-sustainable persuasion (self-oriented or 'bad'). Besides, such an account of persuasion along sustainability also implies a redefinition of the notion of "power". The two extremes in the continuum also correspond to two idealized power positions such as "White (Queen) Power" (WQP) and "Red (Queen) Power" (RQP). The two stereotypical queens, the Red and the White, symbolize the two extremes in the continuum of power: WQP and RQP. respectively correspond to the extremes of non-sustainable (self-oriented) and sustainable ('other' –oriented) persuasion. Despite the fact that, ideally, WQP is potentially stronger than RQP, in practice the "liking effect" is the real game-changer. "Charisma is indeed what unifies Red and White queen till when capable of getting and maintaining power" (Ferrari 2018, p. 16).

Issues of sustainability become particularly crucial in consideration of the relationship between persuasion and identity. This relationship is artic-

ulated through metaphors (Lakoff, Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1993) and frames (Chilton 2004) and conveyed through emotions, and it is through such heuristics that it also becomes particularly evident.

3. Persuasion and Identity 'via' Metaphor and Frames: "Interactional Identity Framings"

Persuasion, as a mechanism, functions on the basis of the capability of having a grip on somebody's attention and being capable of holding their interest so to have influence and produce a change in their psychological, interactional, societal and political positioning. Among the fundamental existential needs of people, apart from their basic survival essentials, is the need to be somebody and of possibly belonging to something. This translates into the capability of mentally defining, or "framing" their own self conceptually, which, in an integrated way, means cognitively, emotionally and bodily (Ferrari 2018, pp. 42, 49; 2020b, p. 295; Fauconnier, Turner 1998, 2002; Semino *et al.* 2018; Forceville 2008). In a contextual environment, which is the norm if we exclude hermitage, this also implies framing their own self interactionally, that is with respect to others. This also envisages how persuasion and identity are related by means of metaphors and frames.

As regards framing, the simplest kind of frames, and the more easily exploitable in terms of persuasion, are conflictual frames. If we reflect on it, the easiest way to define 'myself' is against another: <I am what remains from what I am not>. This also recalls the basic mechanism of social systems of defining their 'shape' by means of their difference (Luhmann 1995). Inclusive frames instead, which is to say those presiding over integration, are conceptually and operatively more complex, both in terms of psychological articulation, and of persuasion applicability. Using an inclusive frame, I can define 'myself' as the result of my interaction with the other: <I am the result of my (past) experiences with others>. An example of strategic discoursal use of conflictual vs. inclusive frames in political discourse is offered by Conflict vs. Inclusive Rhetoric in Bush vs. Obama argumentational attitudes, styles and strategies (Ferrari 2018).

Psychologically, at an individual level, these frames can be used also diachronically by people in order to frame their identity at the present time with respect to their past and their future projections and also with respect to others. This can interest activities of internal storytelling reconstruction but also affect choice making and action in everyday life. They manifest as

two opposed structures of conceptually framing your own identity with respect to others and in time: or, as I say, two structurally different "interactional identity framings", the one based on a conflict structure, the other on inclusion and integration.

4. Two Basic "Interactional Identity Framings": Psychological and Metaphorical Grounding

Life is an object in perpetual motion and individuals are so often in need of making sense of their own present situation, defining themselves, re-collocating their identity in ever changing contexts, justifying their actions, finding alternative ways of accepting themselves, clarifying their goals as well as finding directions to project their future. In doing so, there are people whose tendency and ultimate need is to 'cut', break with their past (be it corresponding with personal experiences and/or other people who have been participating in such experiences: personal and others' self roles, identification positioning). Others, on the contrary, manifest an existential tendency and preference to integrating their past experiences (again accounting for both self roles and other people). Both behavioural tendencies manifest, are and take place simply to satisfy the same objective for people: defining and accepting themselves with respect to their present state and future choices and actions.

The results of these two mental (conceptual) structures and behavioural tendencies in terms of "interactional identity framing" are diametrically opposite: the first is individualistic and security-driven, the second is integrationist and connection-driven. In the first case, the other represents a menace for the identity of the self. Therefore 'eliminating' the other is what best guarantees identity protection and 'survival', whereas keeping the other as 'present' would represent a compromise solution which of course does not correspond to the desired ideal. Metaphorically, the other is what 'limits' the self space of action. In the second case instead, the other represents a resource, an enrichment. For this reason, eliminating the other is not even considered a potential choice. In this second kind of "interactional identity framing" the imaginary projection of the other's absence is in fact conceived in terms of 'losing' the other. In this other structure, in fact, the persistence of the other, be it in terms of past experience recognition, or acknowledgment of as well as maintenance of a connection with people who have participated in the self-construction, is considered the desired

scenario: the optimal conditions for the self to develop and move towards their own subsequent life articulations and identity definitions.

5. Interactional Identity Framings Dynamics: Individual Level

How do interactional framings operate at an individual level, in interaction and in time? Issues of fear, need and desire will also be considered in this discussion. Observing interaction from the point of view of interactional identity framings can be revealing of identity construction and functioning (at a 'deeper' level). If we imagine two people with a prevalence of an in-dividualistic vs. integrationist relational tendency, interrelating with each other in time, we can envisage their management of connection and discon-nection as very problematic[2].

The first, from now on *integrationist*, will probably detach with fear and be ready to re-embrace the other from the moment of separation and from then on will always long more and more to reconnect. This is to respond to both their personal affective needs (they are probably affective, empathetic and other-oriented) and to their identity definition (interactional identity framings). <I am the result of my (past) experiences with the others> can turn into <I am (only) with the other>. The other's presence is needed and constitutes an identity reassurance. Connection represents balance vs. dis-connection, which represents imbalance. In other words, the comfort zone is in the presence of the other vs. the locus of fear collocated in the other's absence.

The second, from now on *individualistic/isolationist*, will instead probably detach with relief or at least with no panic and will progressively re-ad-just their identity definition from the external imbalance of an awkward connection with the other back to the reconquered balanced condition of being alone with themselves again. Accordingly, they will probably long less and less to reconnect with the other. Because integrating with the other is exactly where fear lies for them vs. their comfort zone, which is in the oth-er's absence. An identity defined by opposition or subtraction as described in the above-mentioned logic formula <I am what remains from what I am not> may turn into the extreme of <I am (only) without the other>.

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2. The literature on how to deal with connection and disconnection can be traced back to Attach-ment Theory of Bowlby (1973), who began an endless discussion in psychology whose traces are still present even in popularizing literature (see, for instance, Cloud, Townsend 2017 [1992]).

Reconnection between these two people characterized by so many different ways of positioning their identity will therefore probably take place practically on the basis of the needs of the first and of a wary concession of the second. Neither of them would be able to experience a condition of desire. More specifically, the first will probably not find satisfaction from the point of view of recognizing in the other a need to reconnect which is similar to their own, which would have translated into feeling desired. The second would be too taken with the fear of being invaded again, to be able to feel the desire, if present, to reconnect with the other. The result is a frustrating situation where neither of them is satisfied.

How can this dynamic change? The first may have to deal with their needs of re-connection, question their interactional identity framings and eventually deconstruct them ('Do I really need the other to exist and to be there?'). This can help them to free themselves from an identity framing which may not be entirely authentic (probably due to adaptation or trauma) at the same time freeing the other's desire from their needs. The second will in turn be freer to desire, if desire is present. Time will probably be the answer. If desire potential is there, it will probably come out with time. And the first will eventually be open to embrace the other's desire. The change would therefore import more sustainability and balance in the relationship.

Back to interactional identity framings dynamics, another question that their observation in action can raise, in the case of two conflicting interactional identity framings as before is: why is it that if the first has the prevailing tendency and need to integrate they are attracted by the second who have instead the tendency and need to secure their own identity from the other? This is because interactional identity framings do not coincide with our 'real' identity in essence but can come out as our individual response to our life stories, comprising trauma. If an individual is 'really' in essence an integrationist and social-driven person, eventually also characterized by a collectivist approach in terms of personality, they would probably be attracted to another similarly collectivist person. If instead this individual has become like this due to adaptation, but were not necessarily so in the first instance, they would inevitably attract who they really are, or at least exactly those people reflecting those sides of their personality which they are hiding due to unconscious negation and/or their adaptive construction of an integrationist identity framing. Their need of the other is adapted, motivated by fear, not entirely 'real'.

In this case, deconstructing, at least in part, their interactional identity framing can make their individualistic instance eventually emerge and free their desire from need.

The other's desire will be free again and can integrate individualism with the desire (and need) of the other, if this is present. Then 1 (less afraid of loss + concentrated on themselves – negated identity), together with 2 (less afraid of invasion and + concentrated on the other – negated identity) can find alternative ways to interact and manage connection/disconnection such as: a. managing fear and loss, b. managing the emptiness of the other as space of listening to the other's desire, c. becoming ready to welcome desire if present but still happy if not.

In the end, individual 1, having rendered their hidden identity traits, will be ready to choose to interact both with a group-oriented/collectivist person (if ready to manage more desire) or with another individualistic kind of personality, depending on their readiness to manage the other's desire and life choices. Individual 2, having explored the identity traits which have been hidden so as to compel them from interfacing constructively with the other, will be free to choose whether to continue with isolation as a preferred choice or to try to interact with gained awareness. Personal exploration and change are however a matter of choice and can be undertaken by the individuals on the basis of their desires and needs.

Interactional identity framings can offer a means of interactional awareness and eventually become a tool for self-exploration which is able to help individuals in their process of self-discovery and personal, as well as interpersonal, development and evolution. This can be traced back to the more general transformational power of metaphor in the practice of talking cures and the healing potential which follows (Ferrari 2020, a,b). In other words, when an individual, thanks to interactional identity framing awareness, should find out that some sides of their own identity have been hidden so to create unbalances in their interaction with the other, they could decide to treat this metaphorically: 'losing communication' with some sides of one's own self can presumably create backlashes in communication, i.e. in the ways one interacts with others. Should the individual then decide to work on themselves to explore the identity traits which need to be unmasked, in order to better their own well-being, self-integration and persuasive potential, even in an interactive dimension, they can opt to work with metaphor as a transformational tool, eventually in a dedicated setting of counselling or therapy, or by means of self-help strategies. Having lost its communicative function, the "symptom" creating problems, contradictions, unbalances in interaction, in this case the hidden side of identity that had been masked due to fear or trauma, "will automatically tend to downsize itself and change towards more awareness and well-being". "Treating

[every symptom] metaphorically, getting a metaphorical understanding of it, and then working it out metaphorically, represents the first steps towards awareness, change and healing" (Ferrari 2020b, p. 315).

Interactional identity framings are not fixed nor definitional but can be constructed and deconstructed. They can change and be re-integrated as well, eventually in the direction of finding more sustainable ways of balancing the interaction between an individual and the other.

6. From Individual to Collective/Societal Level of "Interactional Identity Framings"

Having glanced at the psychological grounding of these two basic "interactional identity framings", it is important to specify that although people tend to have an internal preference or tendency towards one or the other, both of them are potentially available in everybody and therefore can potentially be activated as operating frames to convey emotions, direct thoughts and constrain behaviours. As a matter of fact, both Conflict Rhetoric and Inclusive Rhetoric can be effective, persuasively speaking.

This becomes particularly crucial when shifting from the individual to the societal level of interactional identity framing. At a societal level, it is evident how people move towards a more conflictual identity framing or a more integrating identity framing according to the situation and the communication settings of the specific discoursal case at issue, ideological positioning and personality traits aside. Examples can be easily found in everyday communication practices, like, for example, the condominium discussion I happened to participate in a few years ago regarding the decision to take urgent action against rats. Although it could appear methodologically questionable to use a personal experience as a source, this personal experience is in fact what helped me observe a phenomenon which I could afterwards prove to function quite consistently at a more collective level. Interestingly, the person who raised the issue was not well integrated in the condominium community and as a consequence the request was not welcomed by the majority of the other homeowners. It is also interesting to notice that the provisional rodents control expense was derisory and that signs of the presence of rats were testified. On the other hand, it is also true that the majority of the people against the intervention are pet holders and therefore reasonably afraid of the possible use of poison in the common areas of the building. Being favourable to intervening against the

rats, I delicately tried to promote a compromise solution accounting for taking action by making sure not to use poisons. Even more interestingly, I noticed that nobody was utterly against one choice or the other, but the interlocutors animated together in the discussion in the first place by gathering against the 'outsider', in the second place once again gathering in agreeing altogether on avoiding poisons for the pets' sake in the case of an intervention. On her part, the 'outsider's primary concern after the discussion, was not to insist on the need of the action against rats, but rather to specify her distinctive positioning with respect to the rest of the homeowners in the condominium association. Despite the real need to take action, the choice made regarding the action resulted secondary with respect to the need to articulate their identity with respect to the group. For the majority of the homeowners this need favoured gathering against the outsiders or in favour of a common argument to confirm the collective identity – <I am in the group> – or <I am against the group> in the case of the 'outsider'. This example shows how people move from conflictual to integrating identity framings mainly, once again, to respond to the basic identity needs, that is to frame their identity, this time within or with respect to a collective identity. It is evident how in both cases the main need is that of articulating identity either by feeling together and as belonging to something, or by feeling and positioning differently with respect to that same something (of course differences can be observed depending on the specific situational settings and the prevailing personality traits). In other words, the collective rage against a scapegoat (conflictual framing), or, alternatively, the integrating attitude of gathering together around a common line of argument or accepting the other as belonging to the group, basically respond not that much to 'hate' or 'love' as pivotal emotional triggers, but rather to different ways of responding to the basic need of defining identity (this time) also within or with respect to the group.

7. From Collective/Societal to Strategic Political Dimension

Moving on from a collective/societal to a typically strategic political dimension, a very effective though misfortunate example of how a persuasion strategy can play on identity and affect identity in the long run is offered by strategies of fear, as for instance the one used to promote preventive war by George W. Bush Jr. in his post-9/11 discourse. I have extensively exploited this strategy in Ferrari (2018) and it can be exemplarily represented by the

sentence: "we choose to meet that threat now, where it arises, before it can appear suddenly in our skies and cities" uttered by the president within his Address to the Nation on 17 March 2003 to support the choice of preventive war to Iraq (Ferrari 2013, 2018). "The *catastrophe metaphor* strategically plays" in this case and other similar cases so as to frame "the characterization of the menace coming from 'outside,' within the *fear strategy*" (2018, p. 194).

> Not only is the menace being personified in the form of a unique animated "threat," but it can also be spatially collocated. As a person it can be met, as an animated entity it can be born, arise, possibly die and also move. More specifically, thanks to spatialization, the "threat" becomes something that can appear suddenly and hang over us, very much like an atomic bomb. On the whole, this metaphorical process conceptually implies the construction of an entity to be feared.
>
> Emotionally speaking, this image conjures up fear and terror as the expected reactions in the audience. In a macrotextual argumentative perspective, it supports the argument of 'preventive war' (2018, pp. 205-6).

Metaphorical articulations aside, the basic argument of the strategy of fear is the necessity of a military intervention on the basis of an approaching and increasing danger whose disastrous arrival can be stopped only by means of an urgent preventive intervention. It is clear that the justification of the choice is nothing but rational. It is rather, emotional, despite being supported by a complex conceptual articulation. The preventive intervention would in fact have been rationally sustainable only if the enemy approaching was truly an individual entity that could be stopped. But this was (nothing but) a metaphor, the 'enemy' being a complex situation and articulated entity gathering under the cover of "terrorism" and alternatively represented by a series of principal characters playing the role of 'protagonist' in the projected discoursal worlds (the Taliban, Al Queda, Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein...). And yet, fear, when activated, is very 'real', and can easily justify extra-ordinary measures of any kind.

8. Framing Persuasive Strategies: Focus on the Fear Strategy

The fear strategy is a kind of persuasive strategy which is structurally bipolar and is rooted in typically bipolar conflictual frames. In other words, in

order to exploit a strategy of fear, a conflictual scenario needs to be set as an ideological basis of the discourse.

> The constitutive terms of what I define *fear strategy* are two antithetical spaces, projected in association with two opposing emotions evoked in the discourse: an 'outside' (locus of 'fear'), represented as peril and threat, as an enemy approaching and an 'inside' (locus of 'confidence'), represented as a space of tranquility and an ideal of perfection. But as horror films teach us, the maximal emotive reaction is obtained with the potential break of this equilibrium of antithetical spaces, or, in Charteris-Black's terms, "the potential for penetration of the container" (2006, p. 576), usually offered by the sudden appearance, and incursion, of the monster in the space of tranquility (i.e. of *fear* suddenly entering the locus of *confidence*) (Ferrari 2018, pp. 189-90).

In security discourse, both fear and confidence play a crucial role as opposite emotional states in correlation with the discoursal construction of two antithetical spaces, such as the external and the internal, respectively loci of fear and confidence, as well as of *alter* and *ego* projections, and the maximum level of fear and anxiety conjures up in co-incidence with "the potential incursion of the external threat into the country, in other words the appearance of the *alter* in the locus of the *ego*" (2018, p. 190).

Persuasively speaking, given the conceptual structure of the conflict frame, the strategy functions thanks to "the trigger [...] given by the subliminal creation of a bond": "the maintenance of 'a state of peace'" depends on "the maintenance of this equilibrium between inside and outside" (2018, pp. 191-2). The bond creates a dependency relation, which is the reason why it can be played strategically.

But the turning point emerges upon questioning that internal 'state of peace' which is at stake: why is it so crucial and persuasively effective? Because it "corresponds with the internal 'state of peace' of the psychological subject of persuasion":

> The strength of the strategy of fear is based on its (capacity of) *embodiment* within the individual psychological reality and respectively by the individual's *identification* in the discoursal entities which are called for (Ferrari 2018, p. 192).

In other words, the strategy works thanks to this connection with, on the one hand, the *ego* – 'comfort zone' – what is conscious, on the other,

the *alter* – hidden fears – what is unconscious. This is even more efficacious as it "happens subliminally and allows getting power and control over the individual without her/him being aware of the process. More specifically, the more fear is projected outside, the more it is denied inside, thus progressively creating the conditions for 'fearland': the total coverage of space, no matter whether internal or external, by fear" (Ferrari 2018, p. 193).

Identification is crucial in persuasion functioning as well as for understanding persuasion. In the case of fear strategies, taking an identification perspective helps understand how fear is at the same time functional to persuade for (any kind of) security measures and, once activated, also functional to the maintenance of national identity (a national identity which may have been eventually reframed out of fear). All the more, an insistent use of fear can make it become 'constitutional' of (national) identity itself. This could be rendered into sentences hypothetically functioning at an unconscious level[3], like: <I exist up to when the menace invades me>, <I exist to the point I am able to defend myself from the menace>, which can be strengthened into the extreme of <I exist out of fear>: <I am the fear>. Paradoxically, the bond created between the (nation) self existence and the capacity to maintain an inner peace despite/against the potential incursion of the menace into the country/my own comfort zone, if perpetuated for long in time and with high intensity can affect the very sense of identity of an individual/collective self instance so as to render their very own conception of identity dependant on the presence of the menace/cause of fear itself. The problem is that the very identity of the self can become imbricated with fear, to the point of creating such a close bond as expressed by the unconscious hypothetical sentence <I 'love' the fear>. In other words, the bond suggests such a fusion between self identity and fear as to make the first almost coincide with the latter, and the subject of persuasion may remain without any other sides of identity in lack of fear: <I do not exist without the fear>, eventually translating into <I am the fear>. This logically happens because the basic logical principle of a conflictual logic developed into a fear strategy is of substitution (like in the structure "either... or...") and subtraction (definition of something as without/opposed to something else: <I am (only) without the other>). The paradox of the consequences of fear in a conflictual persuasive strategy, and its problems from a metaphor-

3. The *escamotage* of the sentences hypothetically functioning at an unconscious level has been conceived in order to render the logical steps which could be produced not being the persuasive subject aware of them but however functioning persuasively so as to constrain subsequent ideological positioning as well as discoursal and behavioural stances.

ical, interactional, persuasive and ultimately psychological point of view, is that it calls for an interactional identity framing which is isolationist (as fear is the menace without which the self can exist) thus creating a strong dependency relationship in the argumentation base against the menace, but then, by promoting fear itself, it forces the subject of persuasion into a condition of co-existence with the very anti-condition of existence, whose only logical, as well as metaphorical, argumentational and possibly psychological solution is coming to coincide with fear itself (on the basis of the either or logical structure of the *isolationist identity framing*). This would of course turn out to be suicidal for subjective as well as collective identity. Thinking of the situation we are presently living with the worldwide pandemic and consequent security discourses and policies, it would be interesting to raise the fear argument to the point of conceptually questioning how some of humanity would feel after the 'disappearance' of the virus as a metaphor, which up to now has so strongly permeated our discoursal existence to paradoxically put our identity in potential difficulty in the lucky case the virus metaphor should be taken off the table abruptly. Problems of identity definitions, sense-making processes and consequent behavioural scripts anomalies may rise on the horizon.

However provocative it may seem, this perspective questions the identification mechanism of persuasion and its power, and danger, as for the psychological processes it can enact, potentially going well beyond the political needs it has been called for to the point of affecting (national) identity.

An alternative strategy to the one based on fear, typical of conflictual rhetorical attitudes, is the *union strategy* of Obama's Inclusive Rhetoric, also promoting consensus on the chosen political directions and measures. The way in which the nationhood is defined in Obama's inclusive logic (2018, pp. 212-3) corresponds in fact rather to an *integrationist interactional identity framing*. Persuasively speaking, his strategy could be referred to with the sentences <Together we can make it>, <Together is better>. The difference with the inclusive logic is that the constitution process for identity is suggested here by enrichment, which, translated in logical terms is by addition, not by subtractive logic. Therefore, the way they operate is not to the detriment of individual/collective identity alternative definitions, but for the sake of other identity sides to be eventually added. In other words, while a conflictual strategy based on fear can be very dangerous, particularly when the identity core of an individual as well as of a collective unit as a nationhood is (or has become) weak, inclusive strategies can provide additional and alternative identity sides to be added to the core without menacing it.

Embracing the union strategy argument within an inclusive rhetorical attitude can be integrated with the making of self-identity, without creating any dependency relationship nor exclusive logics: in other words, translating this into (un)conscious sentences, the <I am...> instance can co-exist with <we are...> also encompassing empowerment, which in the end presides over more sustainability. There is no exclusive choice in the background and the horizon can expand for both, to express it metaphorically.

In both cases, working on the core of the self, be it in terms of constructive national identity concepts (re)framing or in terms of individual self-core building/reinforcing, can represent a good solution as well as a sensible preventive treatment, to introduce the dimension of healing as a political as well as an individual way of coping with their own well-being in an intrapsychic, interactional as well as collective and political perspective[4].

In a sustainable perspective, and maintaining a reference to identification, the potential extremizations of the strategies are also worthy of attention. "Extremizing the strategy of fear means [...] transforming the entire internal space of the individual into a space of fear and terror: 'fearland'. [...]. Similar scenarios are those projected by the strategy of ISIS, whatever its identity is: creating a sense of a limitless incontrollable threat which can come out wherever and whenever without possibility of prediction or control over it. [...] This is also the scenario embraced by those policies which make the protection against the other's threat their main argument for political identity and action. This is the potential extremization of the strategy of fear (Ferrari 2018, p. 213). This is also the metaphorical scenario we are living out of the discoursal management of the pandemic situation, however serious it is, and with all the backlash which can be envisaged from a psychological point of view (Ferrari, work-in-progress).

An extremization of a <together is better> strategy could be represented by the radical attempts at realizing the communist utopia like in the Kibbutz experiment or with the western experience of the post-'68 communes. Although Inclusive Rhetoric and framings appear to be more sustainable with respect to conflict ones, both extremizations bear crucial consequences from the point of view of interactional identity framings and consequent individual autonomy, to the point of affecting free-choice.

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4. For in-depth and articulated discussions on how to frame, motivate and eventually change political thinking and behavior see Heidt (2013), Lakoff (2002, 2004).

9. Metaphor, Persuasion, Emotions, Identity, Interaction

Coming to our conclusions, from a discoursal persuasion perspective, framing strategic discourse means framing identity.

Identity is fundamental in persuasion production. It is fundamental for the individual, or persuader, to have a certain degree of intrapersonal consistency, i.e. identity definition and certainty, to be potentially and practically able to convince others. This comes even before issues of interpersonal agreement and reciprocity, fundamental as well for a persuasive process to fulfil its goals and give rise to an action. Identity becomes crucial for persuasion reception as well. Identity awareness is fundamental for participating in the persuasive process and taking responsibility for oneself as active part of the communicative exchange. Moreover, the functioning of persuasion is itself based on identity projection, i.e. (embodiment) identification.

As a matter of fact, the balance between the internal and external interface of persuasion (intrapersonal consistency, interpersonal agreement and match) can also be related to the crucial issue of persuasion and identification, which is what makes a persuasive action really effective. If there is no identification, which is to say a relation between the discourse worlds projected in the persuasive action and the internal world of the individual, no persuasive strategy will work. "Interactional identity framings" are those structures that help understanding the connections among the various levels of the persuasive action, from the more internal, psychological functioning of the individual to the more external interfaces of individual interaction at a collective/societal and political level. "Interactional identity framings" are not static and can be worked on at the various levels of the individual (inter-)action for the sake of more sustainable well-being as singular as well as collective units. Though conflict may be one of the easiest ways to answer identity issues, and fear the quickest way to gaining power over others, there may be alternative ways to play in the societal ground, which are more sustainable and possibly more effective and even amusing and motivating. These translate in alternative ways to articulate persuasion with respect to strategic action. Is this where *sustainable persuasion* can come in to make the change in a wider perspective of more well-being? This leads us back to a metaphor grounded account of persuasion and to a psychological, emotional and interactional account of the persuasive subject and actor meant both intrapersonally, with respect to her/himself (internal storytelling) and with respect to the other (interaction). This also moves us towards

a view of metaphor, all the more from an interactional point of view, as strategic for persuasion as well as a gateway to healing.

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