

# ISSA Proceedings 2006 - Past-Oriented And Future-Oriented Emotions In Argumentation For Europe During The Fifties



## 1. Introduction

Studying some texts by the so-called “Fathers of Europe” in the French-speaking area (Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Paul-Henri Spaak and Denis de Rougemont) and comparing them among each other and with their “inter-discourse” (cf. Amossy 2000, pp. 97-99), it is possible to perceive some nuances of their argumentation and in particular to detect some specific emotive strategies (cf. Plantin 1999, pp. 209-216 and Caffi 2001, pp. 69 ff.). In fact, discourses for Europe in the Fifties reveal a relevant presence of emotive communication.

In this paper, we focussed in particular on the evocation of emotions in their orientation towards the future or the past. In fact on the one hand authors often refer to the disphoric couple *grieve and fear* and on the other hand they point to *pride and hope*. Observing the temporal characterisation of these emotions, it can be said that *grieve* refers to the recent past of Europe and *fear* to its future, in that immediate decisions about the management of the political international situation will determine peace or another war like the two World Wars just finished at the moment of the discussion. On the other hand, when authors argument for *pride and hope*, they refer *pride* to the ancient past of European countries, made of great honour and cultural traditions. Pride turns out to be an argument in favour of *hope* about the political international situation (cf. Schuman 1963, *passim*).

It should be noticed that the analysis of the historical context allows us to state the “contextual reasonableness” of emotional involvement (i.e. spontaneous expression of emotions) and the relevance of emotive discourse (i.e. strategically provoking emotions in the audience)[i].

The traditional distinction we just mentioned between emotional and emotive communication was firstly proposed by Anton Marty in 1908 and it is still

considered valid even if it goes on posing a number of problems. Let us see some of the most important ones.

Emotional communication of ten provokes emotions in the addressee (it causes a natural phenomenon of «emotional synchronization» as Martina Drescher calls it, cf. Drescher 2003): a first important question is to what extent it is correct to call this communication emotive, as addressee's involvement is not sought after purposely by the speaker. Many effects of emotional synchronization do not depend on strategic communication, as they are a natural effect of the addressee's emotive capacity (Caffi - Janney 1994, p. 327) when reacting sympathetically with the speaker. The pathological lack of this capacity as a consequence of neurological diseases or chirurgical interventions has been studied e.g. by Damasio (cf. Damasio 2001) while a specific psychological trouble, alexithymy, has been used by Christian Plantin as a metaphor to stigmatize the modern refusal of emotion as intrinsically fallacious in argumentation theory and in some currents of Western culture (Plantin 1998).

Another problem concerns the recognition of an emotion as authentic: it is obviously difficult to determine by a verbal distinctive feature whether an emotion is genuine or simulated; moreover it is sometimes uncertain whether the distinction makes any sense at all. In therapeutic contexts, for instance, the therapist displays towards the patient a "bigger" quantity of involvement than expected in a "normal" context, in order to oblige him to synchronize and guide him back to a "normal" involvement (cf. Caffi 2001).

Finally, emotive communication may be used purposely in order to manipulate the addressee (in the sense explained by Quintilian, when he says that anyone is able to create arguments if he has proofs at his disposal, but what the orator must be able to do is to make the judges *see* reality in a different way, provoking emotions with his discourse, and thus changing the judge's view, cf. Quintilian VI, 2, 5-6). This notion of emotive communication could be easily linked to the censure of emotions as sources of fallacies. But emotive communication can be "used" in a reasonable (cf. Rigotti - Rocci - Greco 2006, pp. 268-272) way also in argumentative contexts, not for manipulation purposes. In this case, emotive communication aims at provoking the *due* involvement in the addressee, i.e. at making him feel the relevance of the decision or choice he is facing. Emotive appeal focuses on the *interest* of the addressee, in the sense that the author suggests him that it would make no sense to decide without considering some particular implications of his decision. These implications could not be perceived

if they were not described in detail and thus imagined and evaluated. The author's intention, anyway, is not to twist (cf. Rigotti 2005) the addressee's view. On the contrary: emotive communication is used in a strategic way in order to make the interlocutor consider in a more serious way some relevant aspects of the situation. Here emotion plays its most natural role: it works as a magnifying glass, producing in the addressee a magnified image of a relevant detail. Relevance is addressee oriented (it is not a particular interest of the speaker to make him see that detail, in order to bias his judgment; on the contrary, he realizes that the addressee could miss a relevant point and "forces" him to consider it).

The following methodological remarks (paragraph 3) aim at clarifying how interdiscourse in our corpus has been used in order to define the communicative context of discourses in support of Europe during the Fifties as a persuasive (i.e. not-manipulative) one.

## *2. Emotions and time*

Time is generally acknowledged as a relevant variant in the description of emotions: emotions differ from each other and they differ from feelings, affects, sentiments, passions etc. (also) because of their temporal configuration. In fact it is generally agreed in psychologists' descriptions that emotions rise in a sudden way and that they have a short duration, while feelings and other attitudes are more persistent i.e. differently time-bound[**ii**]. This condition is gradual more than discrete and it depends on the origin of the emotion: the very attitudes we are dealing with (grieve, fear, pride and hope) may assume different temporal configurations depending on situations and therefore be experienced both as emotions and as feelings (cf. Plantin 2005 and D'Urso - Trentin 1998).

However, independently of the time of its origin, references to an emotion in texts aim at provoking a reaction *now*. In this sense, it has been said that emotions are "energy for action" (Plantin 1998), allowing to switch from the decision to its execution[**iii**]: they may lead further than a simple argument supporting a certain conclusion in discourse.

The roots of involvement and its precise shade should be found in the interdiscourse of the text, i.e. in the co-text and in other texts (experiences, interpretations, evaluations, and the like) shared by the particular speech community addressed (Aristotle's Rhetoric II): for the text we analysed, e.g., the interdiscourse shows how grieve is linked to the shared experience of war and

pride to the common European citizenship, as we will see below.

The text we analysed displays a significantly high presence of signals linking the argumentation to time (adverbs, verb tense, lexical meaning of many words). In fact the argumentation developed in the corpus is not an abstract dissertation about some general principles, but an urgent speech pushing Europeans to make some rapid decisions about the political organization of the continent.

The sense effect of urgency is especially amplified by the repetition of deictic elements meaning that the danger is very near (present tense: "Europe is threatened", "Europe is divided", "our *present* anarchy *exposes* us *tomorrow*..."): the disphoric memory (grieve) of the recently past experience of war is evoked as an argument in itself for making up a decision and avoiding the fearful repetition of such a calamity.

The sense of urgency is not linked to euphoric emotions in a strictly similar way: pride and hope open up the discourse to larger time perspectives. Pride is rooted in the tradition of European countries. The more ancient this tradition, the stronger the argument for pride. The stronger pride is argued for, the better reason it is for hoping: if we have been able to create such important values (freedom and human rights in particular are quoted), why shouldn't we be able to give them vigour again or at least to preserve them? This argument appears anyway to be less strong than the argument based on fear, because the present situation is represented by the orator starting from the disphoric features characterising it: the time component plays an important role as war has just finished – while glorious tradition seems to be somehow lost in the past – and the probable immediate evolution is the negative one – while the hope of recreating the old conditions seems to be far and somehow desperate.

In order to sum up what we have been saying, let us make two points. Firstly, emotions that have been experienced by the addressees in the past are evoked and made present in the discourse: grieve and pride are proposed as relevant elements in the text world created by the proponent. At this stage emotive strategy is based on *interest* dynamics (Cigada 2006), in that the perception of relevance – among other factors – is time-bound: it is a general interest-principle implication that what is happening at the discourse time is more interesting for the addressee than what happened years before or than what will happen in a very long time. That is why the speaker evokes past events showing that they are linked to the present situation. Imagination (Rigotti – Cigada 2004, pp. 116-120) causes not only the conceptual memory of these events, but their re-presentation

("Veranschaulichung" in Drescher 2003, pp. 101-102 and 189-194; cf. Cigada 2006) and therefore allows a present repetition of the effective experience of the emotions these past events caused time ago.

Secondly, the renewal of grieve and pride is used for the present argumentation. In the decision making process, fear is supported by the representation of the consequences of war and hope by the recalling of Europe's achievements.

### *3. Emotions in interdiscourse: methodological remarks*

During the Fifties, how to build Europe probably was the most relevant question in political debate, in the whole French speaking area and especially in France. In fact the opposition between France and Germany had been particularly cruel and disconcerting, with the occupation of France, the armistice between Hitler and Pétain, the resistance of a part of French army led from Great Britain by Charles de Gaulle.

Promoting the overcoming of barriers built up after World War II between European countries and between France and Germany in particular appeared to be a necessity, in order to oppose a strong Europe to Soviet Union's increasing influence.

The "interdiscourse work" takes into consideration three different kinds of text. First, we compare political discourses, official declarations, and public messages produced during the Fifties by the protagonists of political life (French Minister for Foreign Affairs Robert Schuman and his collaborator Jean Monnet; the Swiss federalist Denis de Rougemont; Belgian President Paul-Henry Spaak); secondly, it is relevant to compare this first source with texts written by the same persons some time after the events, in which they remember and explain their former political action (we consider especially *Pour l'Europe* by Schuman, *Mémoires* and *Les Etats Unis d'Europe ont commencé* by Monnet, discourses by Rougemont). Finally, the interdiscourse is built up by newspapers (*Le Monde*, *Figaro* and *L'Humanité*), through which we can perceive the immediate reaction to political decisions in public opinion.

The text we are studying for the present paper (*Message to Europeans*) was pronounced in 1948 by Denis de Rougemont, who cooperated with politicians from France and other countries in order to prepare a consistent project for the first European Community. This is one of the first texts in our corpus from a chronological point of view (even if we take into account some older registrations of Pétain's discourses broadcasted by the radio and De Gaulle's answers, during

Vichy).

From a methodological point of view, taking into account interdiscourse is particularly meaningful because it helps defining the communicative context (“discourses in support of Europe during the Fifties”) as a persuasive (and not-manipulative) one. It is reasonable to do so for some important conditions our corpus meets.

In fact, interdiscourse is a reasonable warranty about the intentions of the orator: written memories by the author himself and by other credible persons who worked with him for a long time guarantee about his *éthos*, i.e. about the sincerity of his commitment to the cause of Europe and peace.

It should be remembered that the interdiscourse of these texts tells us about the strong emotive effect they caused in people at the time (cf. newspapers’ articles commenting on the diffusion of discourses and declarations). Sometimes, interdiscourse even tells us about the strategic intention of producing emotion. It is the case of Schuman’s Declaration about the first economic treatise between France and Germany in 1950: both Schuman and Monnet remember how they worked secretly in order to create a strong surprise effect in governments and in public opinion.

It should be noticed also that the study of the immediate historical context tells us about the positive result of the communicative strategy in the immediate decision making by French and German Governments[iv].

Interdiscourse plays another relevant role for the interpretation of texts. As a matter of fact, the description of emotions cannot be made on the bases of a self analysis of the researcher (Caffi - Janney 1994). If studying discourses pronounced in a (relatively) past time surely helps avoiding the dynamics of self-identification with the effective target audience (cf. Cigada 2006), another instrument is necessary in order to check descriptive objectivity at some acceptable degree. This instrument is the comparison between the semantics of some verbal expressions and their use in other texts in the interdiscourse (same age, same context).

For instance: the expression “genius of variety” used by Rougemont in the *Message* is used and discussed in Schuman’s *Pour l’Europe*, where the French minister diffusely praises the idiosyncrasy of French *génie* in European cultural tradition. That is why we interpret this expression as a reference to a positive value: it brings about an explicit reference to the constructive contribution that each European country gave to the formation of specific aspects of European

culture in past centuries and, at the same time, the respect in front of differences between nations and their mutual integration.

Besides, comparing Rougemont's discourse with others of his texts, it is possible to detect in the expression "genius of variety" a strategic feature of his personal discursive *éthos* as a Swiss man. In a conference held one year before the *Message* (Rougemont 1947), in fact, Rougemont compared Switzerland with Europe, speaking about Switzerland as «union paisible de deux religions, de quatre langues, de deux républiques, et je ne sais combien de 'races' en un Etat qui les respecte» and he said that «cette union prend l'allure à la fois d'un antiracisme déclaré et d'un anti-nationalisme». Assuming the stereotype that a Swiss citizen generally is a good federalist and a good democrat, Rougemont's discourse about the possibility that Europe follows the example of Swiss Confederation sounded more or less as an expertise. So his *éthos* is the most congruent to confirm that a traditional "genius of variety" is a very positive condition to build a federation of nations. His authoritative evaluation encourages Europeans to be proud of their own "genius" and to believe that diversity and unity can be successfully combined.

#### 4. Analysis of the corpus

During the final session of the European Congress which took place in The Hague in May 1948, eight hundred participants adopted this basic text, *Message to Europeans*, drawn up by Rougemont (Rougemont 1948). The text of the message is integrally quoted[v].

##### *Message to Europeans*

*Europe is threatened, Europe is divided, and the greatest danger comes from her divisions.*

*Impoverished, overladen with barriers that prevent the circulation of her goods but are no longer able to afford her protection, our disunited Europe marches towards her end. Alone, no one of our countries can hope seriously to defend its independence. Alone, no one of our countries can solve the economic problems of today. Without a freely agreed union our present anarchy will expose us tomorrow to forcible unification whether by the intervention of a foreign empire or usurpation by a political party.*

*The hour has come to take action commensurate with the danger.*

*Together with the overseas peoples associated with our destinies, we can tomorrow build the greatest political formation and the greatest economic unit*

*our age has seen. Never will the history of the world have known so powerful a gathering of free men. Never will war, fear and misery have been checked by a more formidable foe.*

*Between this great peril and this great hope, Europe's mission is clear. It is to unite her peoples in accordance with their genius of diversity and with the conditions of modern community life, and so open the way towards organised freedom for which the world is seeking. It is to revive her inventive powers for the greater protection and respect of the rights and duties of the individual of which, in spite of all her mistakes, Europe is still the greatest exponent.*

*Human dignity is Europe's finest achievement, freedom her true strength. Both are at stake in our struggle. The union of our continent is now needed not only for the salvation of the liberties we have won, but also for the extension of their benefits to all mankind.*

*Upon this union depend Europe's destiny and the world's peace.*

*Let all therefore take note that we Europeans, assembled to express the will of all the peoples of Europe, solemnly declare our common aims in the following five articles, which summarise the resolutions adopted by the Congress:*

#### *PLEDGE*

*(1) We desire a United Europe, throughout whose area the free movement of persons, ideas and goods is restored;*

*(2) We desire a Charter of Human Rights guaranteeing liberty of thought, assembly and expression as well as the right to form a political opposition;*

*(3) We desire a Court of Justice with adequate sanctions for the implementation of this Charter;*

*(4) We desire a European Assembly where the live forces of all our nations shall be represented;*

*(5) And pledge ourselves in our homes and in public, in our political and religious life, in our professional and trade union circles, to give our fullest support to all persons and governments working for this lofty cause, which offers the last chance of peace and the one promise of a great future for this generation and those that will succeed it.*

As it is evident, the message has a twofold structure, the first part ends with the words *Upon this union depend Europe's destiny and the world's peace* and the second part is connected to the first by the connector *therefore* which opens the pledge's declaration. The first part displays an explanatory premise function



towards the pledge. The argumentation is mainly emotive.

It is not worthwhile to do here a complete textual analysis in order to show in detail the linguistic features of argumentation for each emotion[**vi**]: it will be enough to highlight that the first part of the premise is mostly disphoric, while euphoric emotive orientation prevails in the second part as the pledge comes nearer (it would not make sense to commit to some common action if the situation were absolutely desperate).

Past-oriented disphoric emotion of grieve is based on *division* concept, which is contextually referred to as an immediate and painful consequence of the war: *divided, divisions, barriers, disunited, present anarchy...* Besides, the systematic use of passive verbal forms conveys a sense effect of defeat and inertia (*threatened, divided, impoverished, overladen, disunited*). Defence and economic problems are mentioned. War is explicitly mentioned too, associated to *fear* and *misery*.

Future-oriented disphoric emotions (fear) is argued both as perpetuation of the present negative situation and as its degeneration (...*will expose us tomorrow to forcible unification whether by the intervention of a foreign empire [i.e. Soviet Union] or usurpation by a political party [as Hitler did]*). *Danger* (twice) and *great peril* ground *fear*. The intensity of fear is high, as the perspective is desperate (*Europe marches towards her end* and ...*no one of our countries can hope to defend its independence*).

Euphoric movement starts as an opposite movement, grouping expressions referring to political and economic unity as a source of power. The argumentation of future-oriented euphoric emotions – *hope* – is based on the notion of unity and *unity of free men* in particular (*together...we can tomorrow build the greatest political formation and the greatest economic unit our age has seen; so powerful a gathering of free men*). Hope is evoked both explicitly (*this great hope*) and implicitly by verbal forms as *we can...*, future indicative tense and terms like *mission, destiny* or *extension...* to all mankind.

The specification of unity as *unity of free men* is used to pass to past-oriented euphoric emotion. Freedom is implied in the genius of diversity and mentioned both in *organised freedom for which the world is seeking* and as Europe's *true strength*. Some expressions link freedom to European tradition (and the reference to the forced union of the Soviet Union is clear): in addition to the *genius of diversity* we discussed before, Rougemont uses the verb *revive* in Europe's

*mission is... to revive her inventive power.* This verb presupposes that Europe had an inventive power in former ages. Or the adverb *still*: *Europe is still the greatest exponent* (of protection and respect of the rights and duties of the individuals), meaning that Europe has always been the greatest exponent of these values. In the first point of the pledge, the verb *restore* is used, presupposing as well that *free movement of persons, ideas and goods* had already been possible in the past. Besides, Rougemont states that *human dignity is Europe's finest achievement*: the abstract noun refers to the positive conclusion of a process (*to achieve - achievement*). Pride is not explicitly mentioned, but it is clearly the emotive result the speaker aims at.

### 5. Concluding remarks

As a sense effect result, the *Message* - like the other texts in the corpus - shows as a peculiar character the shared perception between orator and audience of the historical relevance of the decisions at stake. Emotional/emotive references to past and future events make the argumentative process lively, "interesting" in the most dramatic sense of the word: Rougemont is not just speaking about political chances that could be changed by a democratic majority, but of a decision upon which the destiny of the whole continent and the values it created depend on.

And maybe this historical consciousness is precisely the dimension that has been lost and we are missing in nowadays discussions about Europe.

### NOTES

**[i]** In particular, it seems to be relevant in this sense the apparent oxymoron between some historical events - such as the French proposal of a Treaty establishing the "European Coal and Steel Community" in 1950 - and the extreme intensity of emotional and emotive involvement surrounding them (cf. Cigada 2006).

**[ii]** Let us notice en passant that, besides this specific meaning, the term emotion often displays in literature a comprehensive value entailing both emotions and the other emotional attitudes in general.

**[iii]** It is very interesting to analyse argumentation, decision making and execution when some emotions push towards different contrasting actions, or when emotion pushes towards a certain decision while a more comprehensive (reasonable) evaluation indicates a decision contrasting with it (cf. Cigada 2005).

**[iv]** The argumentative situation created in that political context was so convincing that it was difficult to find a true opponent: French newspapers quote

the objections made by German socialists against Schuman's proposal, but these objections were very weak and abstract indeed. I thank Christian Plantin for posing this question during my presentation and suggesting me to consider this point. I agree that it will be useful to enlarge the interdiscourse taking into account the argumentation of a completely different point of view on the unification of European nations: presently I am working on articles published by the French newspaper L'Humanité, supporting the Communist party.

**[v]** The French text of the message: "Message aux Européens. L'Europe est menacée, l'Europe est divisée, et la plus grave menace vient de ses divisions. Appauvrie, encombrée de barrières qui empêchent ses biens de circuler, mais qui ne sauraient plus la protéger, notre Europe désunie marche à sa fin. Aucun de nos pays ne peut prétendre, seul, à une défense sérieuse de son indépendance. Aucun de nos pays ne peut résoudre seul les problèmes que lui pose l'économie moderne. A défaut d'une union librement consentie, notre anarchie présente nous exposera demain à l'unification forcée, soit par l'intervention d'un empire du dehors, soit par l'usurpation d'un parti du dedans. L'heure est venue d'entreprendre une action qui soit à la mesure du danger. Tous ensemble, demain, nous pouvons édifier avec les peuples d'outre-mer associés à nos destinées, la plus grande formation politique et le plus vaste ensemble économique de notre temps. Jamais l'histoire du monde n'aura connu un si puissant rassemblement d'hommes libres. Jamais la guerre, la peur et la misère n'auront été mises en échec par un plus formidable adversaire. Entre ce grand péril et cette grande espérance, la vocation de l'Europe se définit clairement. Elle est d'unir ses peuples selon leur vrai génie, qui est celui de la diversité et dans les conditions du vingtième siècle, qui sont celles de la communauté, afin d'ouvrir au monde la voie qu'il cherche, la voie des libertés organisées. Elle est de ranimer ses pouvoirs d'invention, pour la défense et pour l'illustration des droits et des devoirs de la personne humaine, dont, malgré toutes ses infidélités, l'Europe demeure aux yeux du monde le grand témoin. La conquête suprême de l'Europe s'appelle la dignité de l'homme, et sa vraie force est dans la liberté. Tel est l'enjeu final de notre lutte. C'est pour sauver nos libertés acquises, mais aussi pour en élargir le bénéfice à tous les hommes, que nous voulons l'union de notre continent. Sur cette union l'Europe joue son destin et celui de la paix du monde. Soit donc notoire à tous que nous, Européens, rassemblés pour donner une voix à tous les peuples de ce continent, déclarons solennellement notre commune volonté dans les cinq articles suivants, qui résument la résolution adoptée par notre Congrès: Engagement. 1) Nous voulons une Europe unie, rendue dans toute

son étendue à la libre circulation des hommes, des idées et des biens. 2) Nous voulons une Charte des Droits de l'Homme, garantissant les libertés de pensée, de réunion et d'expansion, ainsi que le libre exercice d'une opposition politique. 3) Nous voulons une Cour de Justice capable d'appliquer les sanctions nécessaires pour que soit respectée la Charte. 4) Nous voulons une Assemblée Européenne, où soient représentées les forces vives de toutes nos nations. 5) Et nous prenons de bonne foi l'engagement d'appuyer de tous nos efforts, dans nos foyers et en public, dans nos partis, dans nos églises, dans nos milieux professionnels et syndicaux, les hommes et les gouvernements qui travaillent à cette oeuvre de salut public, suprême chance de la paix et gage d'un grand avenir pour cette génération et celles qui la suivront".

**[vi].** From an empirical point of view, we can observe throughout the corpus the presence of some typical linguistic choices in denomination and in the deictic structure of the textual world, used in discourses to argue dysphoric or euphoric emotions. Observing different texts it is possible to notice the different linguistic and textual phenomena surrounding emotion (for instance: the lexical choices in the denomination of friends and enemies, or the use of many details in descriptions, the intensification of emotional situation and the superposition of different and even opposite emotions; repetitions, tropes...): typical phenomena connected to emotional and/or emotive communication.

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