

## CAPÍTULO V

# **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTENTIONAL STRATEGY IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL LANGUAGE: BERLUSCONI'S SPEECH AT THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES ON THE 13TH MAY 2008.**

**Dario Intorre**

*Universidad de Córdoba*

### **Abstract**

In this context we will oversee to understand if and in which measure, the intentional attitude delineated today by the school of Anglo-Saxon thought and, in particular, by Dennett's philosophy, can constitute an opportune and effective instrument for the analysis of the public language. With the expression "intentional system" we refer to the addressee of the communicative enterprise: a collectivity of people joined by the sharing a physical space and a temporal time; such a system can be explained, rationalized and, possibly, anticipated (as for its actions and to its behaviors) through the attribution to it of shared convictions and desires, which constitute the common sense of that organism.

The so delineated philosophy of intentionality becomes, in this within, hermeneutics of the speech held by the then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to the Chamber of Deputies on May, 13 2008, that is in occasion of the beginning of its IV legislature.

The exposure of the former prime Minister insisted, in order to guarantee to his own government the necessary consent, on the baggage of convictions and desires shared by the Italians, in an historical moment of confusion and political-institutional instability. That speech evidenced proper values of the cultural and ideological matrix of Italy: the house, the family, the entrepreneurial increase of North, the elimination of the organized crime in the South, the tax reduction on the job of the entrepreneurs, individual safety, the removal of the material causes of the abortion. Such concepts were introduced in order to attract the interest of a conservative public opinion and to diverge the attention from the substance of that government's action, that realized itself in a plan of drastic reduction of the job in Public Administration and of increase of the tax charge, in the picture of a progressive and general economic recess.

## **The effectiveness of the intentional strategy in the analysis of the political language: Berlusconi's speech at the Chamber of Deputies on the 13th May 2008.**

### **Comprehensive relation**

This paper intends to analyze if and to what extent the intentional stance as described in the Anglo-Saxon school of thought and, in particular, in the philosophy of Dennett<sup>83</sup>, can constitute an appropriate and efficient instrument in the analysis of political language. This research concerns the motives, development dynamics and the objectives themselves of the oratory universe of politicians, whose discourse techniques have as their objective, public persuasion. With the expression "intentional system"<sup>84</sup> (here used in an exclusively socio-political sense). We are referring to the addressee of any communicative intent: a group of people sharing a physical space and temporal time, which become the aggregating elements of a social organism; such a system can be explained, rationalized and, consequently, anticipated (as far as its actions and behavior are concerned) through the attribution of shared beliefs and desires, that for such an organism constitute a form of orientation criteria.

The intentional stance pertains to a heuristic methodology which enables man/hermeneut to analyze a cluster of happenings, so as to reduce them to an action/reaction dynamics realized by systems that, having a language and rationality, will act in a conscious way. The scope of such a hermeneutic strategy<sup>85</sup> is to identify the reasons behind the actions and thoughts of a society, in such a way that we are able to predict its effects in the social, political and economic fields. This prediction, closely approximated to the reality of shared behavior, will be possible only if a careful and detailed recognition is carried out (this constitutes the essence of intentionality) of the quantity of pre-comprehensions<sup>86</sup> that, in terms of beliefs and desires, constitute the socio-cultural *humus* which permeates society. What we have to do is to identify, on the basis of the thought of a given historical community, what direction will constitute the most rational and efficient actions for the members/agents of that specific social structure.

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<sup>83</sup> **Dennett D.**, *Contenuto e coscienza*, tr. it. di G. Pacini Mugnai, Il Mulino, Bologna 1992, p. 39.

<sup>84</sup> **ID.**, *Brainstorms. Saggi filosofici sulla mente e la psicologia*, tr. it. di L. Cola-santi, Adelphi, Milano 1991, p. 37. **ID.**, *Dove nascono le idee*, tr. it. di F. Garofoli, Di Renzo, Roma 2006, p. 28.

<sup>85</sup> Cfr. **Gadamer H. G.**, *Verità e metodo*, tr. it. di G. Vattimo, Bompiani, Milano 1983, pp. 349-57.

<sup>86</sup> *Ivi*, pp. 552-57.

The first aspect to look into concerning intentional systems as understood in this way, is that if we are to speak about any intentional system, on the one hand, we must begin a discussion, on the other, we must analyze with one or more of the intentional actors, what constitutes their interpretative strategies, what can be considered a rational prediction of the behavior of the others<sup>87</sup>.

From a political point of view (regarding the efficacy that a good communicative technique by the orator can have on the acquisition of public consent) the right attitude to have regarding any potential electoral system/corpus, is to ask oneself which is the most rational move to make<sup>88</sup>, once you have gathered all the starting information, concerning precisely the objectives to reach for the people, the socio-economic conditions in which it has lived up to that precise moment, its expectations regarding any new political direction; in other words, the data that photograph the present day *status quaestionis*.

The adoption of an investigative attitude is particularly significant in the elaboration of the prediction of the behavior of other people, that is, the adoption of an investigative attitude which is teleologically orientated with the purpose of identifying and understanding the objectives of an intentional system. It is not possible to elaborate a reliable prediction, without being able to establish, with a good level of precision, the nature of the information which the public opinion possesses in a given historical moment together with the objectives that the actors of a community want to reach, projected towards the future in social, political and economic terms.

It should be clear, at this point, what we mean with the concepts of intentional system and intentional stance. The inclination of our mind to admit presuppositions of rationality in the system it wants to analyze, is what we call intentional stance and the social organism that is interpreted according to this prospective, is what constitutes the intentional system<sup>89</sup>.

The interpretation of future behavior of a society is realized on the basis of the information and scopes that we ourselves attribute to it. Consequently, in relation to a historically determined social corpus, we can define the following in this manner:

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<sup>87</sup> Dennett D., *Brainstorms* ..., op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>88</sup> *Ivi*, p. 43.

<sup>89</sup> *Ivi*, p. 47.

1) beliefs<sup>90</sup>, a mix of its traditions, uses and customs which have in time been interiorized, as well as the influence that these habits have in structuring shared thoughts;

2) desires, desired objectives of each member of a community considering him/her as a part of the whole.

When one tries to explain the working of a system on the basis of a universe of beliefs and desires which are attributed to it, one arrives at what can be effectively considered a theory of behavior. In the light of this consideration it is important to establish the relationship between intentional models and other explicative criteria of behavior itself.

Rationality certainly constitutes an extremely important pillar of our intentional system regarding our interpretation of the world, in fact man is not usually ready for an irrational reaction in facing specific events. The person protagonist of any intention, is so used to considering the existence of a strong rational basis to the intentional system, that he is not often ready to accept failure in his own system of predictions<sup>91</sup>. When our predictions of a system are revealed as false by factual proof, rather than doubting the effective rationality of an intentional system, we tend to correct, re-analyze and update the conditions through which the information was communicated and the real scopes of that system. This can reveal itself to be misleading, because as the history of thought has taught us, man is composed of both a rational and an irrational part, which is strongly linked to impulses and desires. It can happen that the latter can sometimes dominate on the former in the elaboration of collective thought<sup>92</sup>.

It is not always true, in realizing any strategy of behavior, that a system follows a regular pattern, in some cases, it can assume unpredictable decisions that go far beyond any predicable framework.

What had been elaborated above, poses another stronger objection, creating many problems to our discussion so far: the inferential rules of an intentional system are not necessarily valid, because some of them may not be the verifying criteria of logic; in this sense our attempts to give a sense

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<sup>90</sup> **ID.**, *Rompere l'incantesimo. La religione come fenomeno naturale*, tr. it. di S. Levi, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 2007, p. 215, **ID.**, *Brainstorms ...*, op. cit., pp. 57-60, **Peirce C.S.**, *Caso, amore e logica*, Introduzione di M.R. Cohen, tr. it. di N. e M. Abbagnano, Taylor, Torino 1956, pp. 28-30.

<sup>91</sup> **Dennett D.**, *Brainstorms ...*, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibidem*.

to the actions of an intentional system can become sterile and unsuccessful<sup>93</sup>.

This is when common sense assumes a particularly important role<sup>94</sup>, becoming a lifeline in the difficult task of the intentional subject who has to rely on a rational structure (even only partially) implicit in any intentional system.

What becomes particularly important, is to understand if, and in what terms, common sense can constitute a valid theoretical presumption for the construction of a system of beliefs about natural reality that may have an epistemological basis.

Dennett has had the cultural merit, starting from the Anglo-Saxon lesson, of trying to found a psychological theory of common sense, analyzing an example and asking questions on the characteristics of magnets and on the plausible answers given to these questions by people from different socio-cultural levels<sup>95</sup>. The reply given at a first glance is that certainly magnets attract iron. The second reply would try to supply a description in technical-scientific terms of the material, explaining all its chemical characteristics and the effects these qualities produce in the natural world<sup>96</sup>. The conclusion is that man establishes his first cognitive approach to surrounding reality, not on the basis of an abstract technical-scientific exposition, the result of a longer or less longer learning process, but through the existence of a common set of thoughts, shared by that society, which are substantiated in *auctoritas temporis*.

From the moment that terms like belief or desire are an integral part of our daily language, as are magnets, our scope is to specify which elements or aspects of reality can be explained intentionally, basing our work, on the analysis of a specific event, on a shared interpretation, founded on common sense and, thus on collective beliefs.

The role of natural beliefs understood as the founding principles of knowledge has been asserted by the tradition of Scottish Enlightenment and, in particular, by Thomas Reid, who underlined the function of common sense as a parameter of rational reference for all human communities<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>93</sup> *Ivi*, p. 49.

<sup>94</sup> **Reid T.**, *Ricerca sulla mente umana e altri scritti*, a cura di A. Santucci, UTET, Torino 1975, *infra*.

<sup>95</sup> **Dennett D.**, *L'atteggiamento intenzionale*, tr. it. di E. Bassato, Il Mulino, Bologna 1993, p. 67.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>97</sup> **Reid T.**, *Ricerca ...*, op. cit., *infra*.

Dennett seems here to be recalling the inductivist position of Reid, when he asserts that we conceive the psychology of common sense as a sort of vernacular technique which has been shared and consolidated within a social community<sup>98</sup>; it can be considered the result of a process of observation on specific aspects of natural reality, through which we arrive at the identification of the general rules<sup>99</sup>. Something like the characteristics of magnets. We observe how they attract iron and from that, we elaborate a systematic theory of their chemical-physical characteristics.

What meaning should we attribute to the term belief in relationship to the psychology of common sense and to its predictive and explicative role within a specific context? The psychology of common sense maintains that beliefs are psychic states of individuals, founded on the transmission of information that lead, together with the formation of desires appropriately correlated to the beliefs themselves, to undertake guided actions by the intellect<sup>100</sup>.

Moore has analyzed very effectively, from the hedonistic point of view, the concept of desire considered as a propulsive stimulus to an intelligent action<sup>101</sup>, in particular, he affirms that such a concept is generally referred to an interior state characterized by the effective non existence of an object or event, but which is ideally present in our mind and functions as a motivating factor towards its realization<sup>102</sup>.

The non-realized idea of an object determines in us a feeling of pleasure which, in its turn, produces desire. This causes a proairetic attitude towards the resolution of the action, whose ultimate goal is the obtaining of the object of pleasure<sup>103</sup>. Only when in our mind we have the presence of the non realized thought of a pleasure, can we admit the existence of the pleasure itself that becomes the reason behind the realization of an action orientated towards that objective. The stimulus to act must, however, be guided

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<sup>98</sup> **Dennett D.**, *L'atteggiamento intenzionale*, op cit., p. 71.

<sup>99</sup> **Bacone F.**, *Novum Organum*, libro II, in *Scritti filosofici*, a cura di P. Rossi, UTET, Torino 1975, pp. 389-91.

<sup>100</sup> **Epicuro**, *Lettera a Meneceo*, in *Opere*, a cura di M. Isnardi Parente, UTET, Torino 1974, pp. 201-03. **Nussbaum M.C.**, *Terapia del desiderio. Teoria e pratica nell'etica ellenistica*, pref. di G. Reale, tr. it. di N.S. Muth, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2007, cap. IV, pp. 113-114.

<sup>101</sup> **Moore G.E.**, *Principia ethica*, tr. it. di G. Vattimo, Bompiani, Milano 1964, p.135.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>103</sup> *Ivi*, p. 136.

by the idea of the object considered as the source of pleasure, and not by that of the simple desire itself<sup>104</sup>.

The English philosopher has even spoken of two forms of thought contextual to desire: first a general one, connected to the idea of pleasure, the other, connected to the idea of the object as a source of pleasure. However only the latter can constitute the cause of behavior. The extent of the importance that reason assumes, in the deliberative process of the desiring subject, is very difficult to establish, because this an aspect closely linked to historical, social and individual contingency.

The moral of common sense can be easily applied to very different sectors of reality and, after all, this is also the case with the intentional technique to it related; it exists in the same way as a phenomenon, or a religion or a language, thus it can be studied and analyzed in depth with an investigative approach of the anthropological type<sup>105</sup>.

Anthropological analysis, in particular, should comprehend, in its vision of the psychology of common sense, what each individual, considered singularly and as part of the whole, would include in his own system of beliefs, desires, predictions about the others, however misleading, wrong or banal they may seem. When an anthropological analysis, stimulated by an exclusively hermeneutic intent, deconstructs a universe of theories formulated by the members of a given community towards a specific phenomenon and decrees that they are not true, it is referring to a false ideology or to a false conscience. The role of an ideology, however false it may be, should not be scorned, on the contrary, it represents a starting point for planning new projects in the sense that it may open new horizons concerning reflection on questions of cultural and social interest. A false ideology and a set of wrong beliefs represent an intentional system founded on a basis which is not true.

Geertz, in his analysis on the formation and the role of ideology in social contexts, has clearly demonstrated what risks an anthropologist has to face, when he has to interpret the complexity of theories present in a community which are considered representative of its own identity. In particular, he considers, that we use two constructs to study the elements that define an ideology: the theory of interest and the theory of tension<sup>106</sup>. In the first case, which is the most relevant for us, ideology is considered similar to a weapon, in the second case, it is considered a corrective instrument. In the theory of interest, ideological declarations are referred to the general

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<sup>104</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>105</sup> **Dennett D.**, *L'atteggiamento intenzionale*, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>106</sup> **Geertz C.**, *Interpretazione di culture*, tr. it. di E. Bona, Il Mulino, Bologna 1987, pp. 256-58.

context of a race for power seen from the sort of utilitarian point of view. It is because of this, that such a construct presupposes an extremely low level of psychological complexity<sup>107</sup>. The existence of social systems that direct their choices on the basis of interest, implies the possibility of manipulating consensus by the dominating *elites*, exploiting the natural tendency of human beings in their desire to satisfy their own needs. Such satisfaction can often have a purely transitory or illusory nature, not based on any solid and rational motivation and can be considered the symptom of a general absence of any critical conscience. From this point of view an efficient intentional strategy should insert itself in this vacuum of opinion, building up the basis for the conquest of a hegemony.

The human being who thinks and acts on the basis of an intentional stance, continually resorts to the psychology of common sense to try and predict his and other people's behavior, attributing beliefs and desires and, thus, describing the world in intentional terms.

The intentional strategy based on the development of common sense can present obviously some weak points, such as for example, the inability to explain, even retrospectively, certain types of behavior, especially if they are exceptional or abnormal compared to ordinary mental frames of mind belonging to their own social context.

However some strong points can be traced, consistent with what has been said above, in that the psychology of common sense, in tracing back the actions and behavior of a system to a series of elements of pre-comprehension (beliefs and desires) that belong to it, succeeds in describing the origins of actions themselves, conferring to them a meaning in a specific historical context<sup>108</sup>.

The attribution of meaning does not imply, however, in itself, the moral correctness of a shared decision, it only means that a choice that has been made by a social community is seen in a neutral motivational context where that choice constitutes a theoretical framework of reference.

In other words, we consider each other reciprocally as if we were everlasting rational agents and the capacity of using intellect to acquire a critical awareness of the natural need inherent to our species, allows us to possess a reliable prevision system on the behavior of other people.

In this sense (always considering the psychology of common sense as a hermeneutics of behavior) we could trace back the totality of the actions of a community to a form of logical behavior which can be formulated in terms

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<sup>107</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>108</sup> **Dennett D.**, L'atteggiamento intenzionale, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

of the inclination to act in a certain way, only when certain events have occurred. What sort of events are we talking about? Actual circumstances that are free of all historical- social conditioning.

This would lead us to admit, within the relationship between the intentional subject and the intentional system, the existence of a reductionist logic<sup>109</sup>, based on a communicative dynamics regulated by the stimulus- response binomial, in which habit plays a fundamental role.

In referring to his criticism of Cartesian body-mind dualism, Ryle maintains that mental acts are not different to body acts and the reasons why a person acts in a certain way, are determined by real dispositions that an individual possesses to act in such a way in specific situations<sup>110</sup>.

The example of the clown<sup>111</sup> is particularly significant, whose ability is shown in the acrobatics he performs. He succeeds in his programmed clumsiness in evoking laughter and cheerfulness in the people looking at him; but the enjoyment of the spectators in the *hic et nunc* of the performance is not determined by a rational reflection on the anthropological conditions that, in the course of decades, have made clowns become a sort of cathartic figures in the eyes of society. Fun and evasion are simply guaranteed, according to Ryle, by the simple observation of the efficient performance by the artist. The latter, in his turn, in stimulating collective entertainment, does not carry out any form of reason or meta-cognition on the sense of his execution. His acts are simply the effect of consolidated dispositions that in time, have produced a specific result on the basis of an exclusively sensorial communication between the intentional/public system and the intentional/clown subject.

Can an approach of this sort really contribute to presenting the mind as a scientific concept? If we really believed this, we would remove from the intentional stance and system, that historical-anthropological and hermeneutic rationality in which they are on the contrary impregnated.

Geertz on the case of the clown described by Ryle, maintains that only physical gestures can be reduced to the stimulus-response binomial as in the behaviorist prospective, not the ability<sup>112</sup>. The latter is a concept that contains a multiplicity of meanings and interior references (concerning the mind of the clown) and exterior references (historical-social). In the con-

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<sup>109</sup> Ivi, p. 77, but also **Wittgenstein L.**, *Ricerche filosofiche*, tr. it. di R. Piovesan, Einaudi, Torino 1999, p. 108.

<sup>110</sup> **Ryle G.**, *Il concetto di mente*, tr. it. di G. Pellegrino, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2007, p. 33.

<sup>111</sup> **Geertz C.**, *Interpretazione ...*, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibidem*.

cept of ability and in the way it manifests itself, we must consider the emotional universe of the circus artist, the way in which the circus as a social institution has meant to propose, in the course of its history, this entertainment service which belongs to it, as well as continuing the tradition of thought, that in its imitation of irrationality, has suggested the possibility of its own critical deconstruction<sup>113</sup>.

The American anthropologist traces back the abilities of an individual to the desire to put them into practice that, in their turn, will be based on a socio-cultural system interiorized by the single person.

The conclusion that emerges from what has been said so far on the characteristics of the intentional stance and on its possible modality of approach to reality, is that intentionality, if it is to be efficient, can not disregard common sense.

The latter can be described as:

the outcome of an inductive proceeding meant to identify specific phenomena, from which general rules for action can be obtained;

a process of volition directed to obtaining pleasure, through the mental representation of the object that, of that pleasure, constitutes the source;

the critical deconstruction of a socially relevant happening, realized on an ideological basis.

The relationship that comes between intentionality and common sense can constitute the theoretical basis of reference within which we can insert the analysis of a political speech that constitutes a perfect example of the annulment of public dialectics between what is known as the 'legal' country and the 'real' country.

We are referring to the inauguration speech pronounced at the Chamber of Deputies on the 13th May 2008 by Silvio Berlusconi, on the occasion of the beginning of his fourth experience as head of the Italian Government.

His exposition exploited (as he had done in his speeches during the political meetings in the election campaign preceding the victorious elections of the 13th-14th April)

a core of beliefs and expectations historically shared by Italian society, which needed to be concretely reassured in moments of political and institutional confusion and instability. Thus that speech underlined the real values of the cultural and ideological core beliefs of Italy, which partly went

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<sup>113</sup> Ibidem.

back to the Risorgimento: the home, the family, the gap<sup>114</sup> between the industrialized North and a backward South victim of organized crime<sup>115</sup>, the reduction of public debt<sup>116</sup>, cutting labour taxation for entrepreneurs, individual security, the removal of the material causes of abortion. These concepts were introduced to attract the interest of conservative public opinion and to distract attention from the substance of that government action, which in a short period of time, would carry out a program of drastic reduction of civil service jobs and in increase in taxation in the midst of progressive and general economic recession.

The intentional stance and the contextual attribution of beliefs and values to Italian civil society contained in the speech made on the 13th May 2008, found their *ratio essendi* on recuperating two historically significant experiences, which good or bad, have strengthened the common sense of Italians in the last one and half centuries of history: the epic of the Risorgimento and the Fascist dictatorship. Both are present in the speech we are analyzing, in that they condition contents and form.

The first aspect which is evident in Berlusconi's exposition, as far as the argument of our paper is concerned, regards the *incipit*. The subject he quotes at the beginning of the speech is Italian society, an intentional system impregnated with meaning, values and expectations which have to be rationalized, administered, orientated in the direction of the acquisition of consensus.

In particular, Berlusconi's rhetoric recuperates the Risorgimento lesson, using it as an instrument of seduction of the common sense of Italians respect to:

1) the declared will to resolve the economic-productive crisis of the industries of Northern Italy, which was expressed with the following words: "growing means listening to the cry of pain coming from the North and from the European standards of work and stagnation<sup>117</sup>".

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<sup>114</sup> **Duggan C.**, La forza del destino. Storia d'Italia dal 1796 a oggi, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2008, pp. 298-301. **Romeo R.**, L'Italia liberale: sviluppo e contraddizioni, Il Saggiatore, Milano 1987, pp. 268-73. **Romanelli R.**, L'Italia liberale (1861-1900), Il Mulino, Bologna 1979, infra.

<sup>115</sup> **Del Boca A.**, Italiani, brava gente? Un mito duro a morire, Neri Pozza, Vicenza 2005, pp. 57-66. **Candeloro G.**, Storia dell'Italia moderna, vol. V: La costruzione dello Stato unitario. 1860-1871, Feltrinelli, Milano 1968, pp. 164-69.

<sup>116</sup> **Carfagna L.**, Dualismo e sviluppo nella storia d'Italia, Marsilio, Venezia 1989, pp. 288-93.

<sup>117</sup> **Berlusconi S.**, Discorso alla Camera dei Deputati del 13 Maggio 2008, versione digitale scaricata da Internet [http://www.affaritaliani.it/politica/discorsointegraleberlusconicamera130508\\_pg\\_2.html](http://www.affaritaliani.it/politica/discorsointegraleberlusconicamera130508_pg_2.html)

This affirmation is an evident recall of the words pronounced by King Vittorio Emanuele II to the Parliament on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 1859 at the time of the beginning of the Second War of Independence: "we are not insensible to the cry of pain rising from many parts of Italy towards us". This linguistic analogy is used to remove the political-institutional discourse from its historical context, depriving it of all the necessary references to present day conditions, which must constitute the core of every critical debate. It has also the function of evoking in public opinion (through resorting to the myth of the Second War of Independence) the idea of a patriotic war against a common enemy. This is also a way of diverting public attention from the difficulties of contemporary reality;

2) to the necessity of adopting rigorous taxation policies to solve the problem of the Italian public debt. In this case Berlusconi also manages to recuperate in both, contents and form, the example of the Risorgimento. The problem of public deficit has always been present right from the beginning of the Unification of Italy, for this reason it can not be considered a novelty to place it as a point in the program of the government. In presenting to the Chamber of Deputies and to the nation the necessity of realizing a severe fiscal policy to put the accounts in order, Berlusconi affirms that taxes "constitute the counterpart the citizens owe to the State for the services they receive and are therefore the premise and guarantee of the good functioning of public services"<sup>118</sup>. The ex-Prime Minister, uses for persuasive objectives, the didactic technique typical of the pedagogic literature of the Risorgimento, which had had the aim of educating and instructing people which were virtually illiterate<sup>119</sup>. What is evident, once again, in both, the style and tone of the speech, is how its political prospective is removed from its historical context and actualized without resorting this time, to any explicit references at the linguistic level.

The Risorgimento was an extremely complex period, associated to a profound political-institutional ambiguity regarding especially government organisms<sup>120</sup>. In this historical phase Italy demonstrated, once again, that it did not possess a diplomatic-military personality strong enough to allow it to resolve independently all the questions connected to the occupation of its territories by foreign powers. But it was the occasion for the birth of an inspiring collective feeling, based on the exaltation of the values of family

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<sup>118</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>119</sup> **De Mauro T.**, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1991, pp. 36-44.

<sup>120</sup> **Banti A. M.**, *Nazione*, in *Atlante culturale del Risorgimento*, in **Banti A. M.**, **Chiavistelli A.**, **Mannori L.**, **Meriggi M.**, *Lessico del linguaggio politico dal Settecento all'Unità*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2011, pp. 214-17. **Colombo P.**, *Monarchia/Repubblica*, in *Atlante ...*, cit., pp. 319-26.

and nation, that has witnessed in certain types of generational literature (like *Cuore* by De Amicis) the cultural basis of reference for the construction of the idea of Nation<sup>121</sup>. An idea that anticipates, with the notion of the ordinary and respectable bourgeois, the homologation of conscience typical of a fascist society<sup>122</sup>. It's to this Risorgimento that Berlusconi's speech appeals, to orientate the common sense of Italians in getting them to welcome favorably the new political course.

The fascist ideology that has just been quoted, regulates the tone of the speech, influencing its style. We notice in different moments, how the orator manages to demonize the enemy. Berlusconi's wish in the initial part of the speech to the Chamber of Deputies, that "debating ideas and interests (...) should not degenerate into fighting", putting "respect in the place of bigotry (...) lively polemics in the place of a paralyzingly guerrilla warfare (...) the beauty of politics (...) in the place of demagoguery, mere chatter, theatricality and deception"<sup>123</sup>.

He structures his role to appear as a victim, as if he were to be continually discredited, attacked and defamed, as if his majority were to be involved in a continual state of war. But who against? The feared enemy is never specified, it appears in the speech as a general, abstract category.

Italian public opinion has preserved, in the course of decades, the myth of personal security, seen through the eyes of twentieth century conservative thought, as the indestructible bastion of national identity<sup>124</sup>, an instrument used to legitimize consensus and a remnant of fascist ideology, repeated in the popular saying that during the twenty years of Fascism "you could sleep with your doors open". The security of any citizen is a central aspect of the common sense of Italians, especially in the South, where after the dissolution of the Bourbon regime, the integrity of the subjects who faced the menace of brigands, was one of the central questions of newly born unified Italy<sup>125</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> **Chabod F.**, *L'idea di nazione*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1998, pp. 17-23.

<sup>122</sup> **Cannistraro P.V.**, *La fabbrica del consenso. Fascismo e mass-media*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1975, pp. 419-24. **De Grazia V.**, *Consenso e cultura di massa nell'Italia fascista. L'organizzazione del dopolavoro*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1981, pp. 190-92 e 212-15.

<sup>123</sup> **Berlusconi S.**, *Discorso ...*, cit..

<sup>124</sup> **Melossi D.**, *Andamento economico, incarcerazione, omicidi e allarme sociale in Italia: 1863-1994*, in **AA.VV.**, *Storia d'Italia – Annali* vol. XII, Einaudi, Torino 1997, pp. 237-62.

<sup>125</sup> **Molfese F.**, *Storia del brigantaggio dopo l'Unità*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1976, pp. 281 sgg..

Berlusconi affirms that "security is a synonym of liberty and (...) it is precisely on the protection of individual security that the pact of union between citizens and the legitimization of public power is founded.

The declamatory fascist style returns in the conclusive part of the speech, when the ex-Prime Minister, invokes, as support for the political action of his own government, "the help of God".

Once again we have an irrational streak, which together with anti-historical and clerical aspects which we have already talked about, produce the absolute absence of any critical thought.

Italian history has underlined, both in the medieval age and in the modern age, the general lack of a political and civil conscience of society<sup>126</sup>. This has been seen in three ways:

the incapacity of Italy, manifested various times, of freeing itself from the occupation of the different foreign powers by itself;

the presence of the Vatican, symbol of the central power of the Catholic Church, that has exercised, in the course of centuries, influence in the ethical, political and social fields<sup>127</sup>;

the lack of any revolutionary experience capable of de-structuring (on the English and French models) the existing institutional order, so as to redefine in the long term, new forms of political equilibrium.

The only one historically important experience in a revolutionary sense shared by the Italian people was the Resistance Movement to the Nazi-Fascist occupation, where the protagonists were the Partisan forces during the Second World War<sup>128</sup>. These events, especially with the intervention of the Anglo-American forces led to the break-up of the Fascist regime and to eventual National Liberation. This speech by Berlusconi represents an effective demonstration of how a universe of values, convictions and hopes of a community, can be intentioned on the basis of historical rationality which

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<sup>126</sup> **Tanzarella S.**, *Gli anni difficili. Lorenzo Milani, Tommaso Fiore e le esperienze pastorali*, Il pozzo di Giacobbe, Trapani 2007, p. 41. **Altan C. T.**, *La coscienza civile degli italiani. Valori e disvalori nella storia nazionale*, Gaspari, Udine 1997, pp. 273 sgg..

<sup>127</sup> **Sacchetti G.** *Intervento al Primo Congresso – Venezia 1874*, in *Storia del movimento cattolico in Italia*, a cura di F. Malgeri, Il Poligono, Roma 1980, vol. I, pp. 419-26. **Miccoli G.**, *Chiesa e società in Italia dal Concilio Vaticano I (1870) al pontificato di Giovanni XXIII*, in *Storia d'Italia*, vol. V.2: *I documenti*, Einaudi, Torino 1973, pp. 1496-97 e 1502-10.

<sup>128</sup> **Bocca G.**, *Storia dell'Italia partigiana*, Laterza, Bari 1966, pp. 13-22. **Galante Garrone A.**, *Aspetti politici della guerra partigiana in Italia*, in <<L'Acropoli>>, n. 16, 1946. **Bobbio N.**, *Profilo ideologico del '900*, Garzanti, Milano 1990, pp. 178-80 e 182-84.

has as its purpose individualizing models of contemporary public opinion, in order to orientate consent. The historicizing hermeneutics of the power structure has as its object, depriving the intentional system of any synchronic approach to reality, through a de-historicizing process of the political speech which is typical of illiberal ideologies.

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