cree en las estadísticas construirá su mundo posible en base a los porcentajes que éstas reflejan. Otra fórmula de conocimiento de la realidad del público es agruparlo por estilos de vida o por *targets*, método que utiliza, por ejemplo, la publicidad comercial.

Si nos centramos en el ámbito de la política, según mi parecer y sin intención de agotar el tema, la forma básica de conocimiento pasa en buena medida por los símbolos o las representaciones sociales de cada grupo concreto. Las representaciones sociales podrían considerarse como imágenes vehiculadas socialmente a través de las relaciones con los otros. En este punto, las relaciones tradicionales se producían fundamentalmente a través de la familia, la educación y las redes amistosas mediante experiencias compartidas y vividas de una manera directa. La aparición de los medios de comunicación de masas, y especialmente de la televisión, hace que aparezca un nuevo actor creador de imágenes sociales. Por lo tanto, es de este simbolismo colectivo de donde el orador extrae los puntos de partida comunes para elaborar el mundo posible en el que asentará toda la estrategia persuasiva.

La segunda conclusión se centra en la importancia de los mecanismos argumentativos en la persuasión. A pesar de la simplificación progresiva que provoca la televisión en las argumentaciones políticas, sin los procedimientos de enlace y disociación sería imposible el cambio de opinión. Si el orador se limitara a mostrar unos puntos de partida comunes (aunque la manera en que se construye un mundo posible no está exenta de persuasión, ya que se ponen en contacto elementos aceptados pero de manera novedosa), no sería posible la aceptación de nuevos postulados. La persuasión será más lograda cuantos más procedimientos se utilicen. Cada argumentación escogerá los procedimientos más adecuados para la persuasión teniendo en cuenta, como ya hemos dicho, que la elección de éstos no está exenta de valor argumentativo.

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Design of a political propaganda spot: converging communication strategies

The aim: strategic meeting-point

The basic aim of any propaganda spot is to persuade a determined audience to a specific action: in this case, giving their vote to a party. We are thus dealing with an object,[1] the election spot, capable of persuading someone, the receiving audience, to do something, vote or change opinion. But how do you manage to persuade someone? What mechanisms make a strategy persuasive? In fact, what has to be taken into account when making a persuasive propaganda spot? In this article, I will try to give an answer to these basic questions.

Spanish law, unlike that of other countries, limits election spots to free spaces on public television. All parliamentary parties use these spaces and present various spots characterised by an explicitly propagandistic nature and to a clearly persuasive end. Thus, these spots become privileged examples when analysing persuasion. We must also take into account that the basis of all spots is the same, although we find differences in the diverse parties' strategies. Thus, the analysis we propose is common to all. To simplify, we will not enter upon specific examples, but rather deal with the theme of aim strategy in general.

At this point it is necessary make clear some basic premises which will mark the different parts of the article as an outline. The first consists of considering that at least three instances intervene in any communication process: sender, message, and receiver.[2] These

1. In this article I try to analyse the points to be taken into account when using persuasion by means of an election propaganda spot. I consider the spot as a communication object and, for this reason, will use in this article both the term text and message to refer to the object. In the same way, the manufacturer of the object will be both broadcaster and speaker. The receiver will be both this and audience.

2. It is a great simplification to consider only these three instances of the communication process. The outlines in communication theory have advanced quite a lot in this sense and pick up many more factors of the fact of communication. Even so, we can say that these three elements are basic and appear in all communication models.

three notions are neither empty elements nor merely formal structures; in all of them, circumstances intervene which attenuate and explain the way in which information arrives. Both the sender and the receiver are defined by their previous knowledge, their environment, their beliefs, their values, etcetera. This defines that there are several ways of understanding and interpreting the information sent by the message, which, in this way, is no longer something neutral and objective but becomes interpretable. That is to say, when faced with one and the same text, object, or fact, not everyone reacts in the same way. The sender has to take into account the beliefs of his audience when elaborating his message. This aspect is fundamental when analysing the spot's elaboration process. In this communication process, a basic role is played by the context in which the broadcast and the reception of the object take place.

The second premise to consider, although it can be deduced from the first, is that there is no such thing as a universal public, that is, no message can be directed to all of humanity as something homogenous. There are no longer universally shared values and facts; we only find general premises for specific types of audiences to which the sender speaks. That is to say, the speaker, while elaborating the object, has to construct an ideal audience, a model which can reflect some general traits considered basic by the real or empiric audience to which it is addressed. Thus, any object is addressed to a very specific audience with which it tries to connect. This marks the predominating position of the audience, which, in this way, is at the centre of the process of construction of any object which intends to establish a successful communication (as is the case we are setting out).

Finally, and taking into account all we have said so far, the object can be considered strategic in itself, as in it converge the communication strategies of the elaborator of the object and the receiver of it. That is to say, the speaker projects onto the object, along with his internal world, his idea of the audience he is addressing, building on his idea of it, a model audience which, though it does not exist empirically, reflects some traits which are characteristic of the audience actually receiving the object. The different strategies of the speaker consist of seeing what elements he considers pertinent. On the other hand, the receiver, when interpreting a text, does so while putting all his knowledge and beliefs into play to decode all the meanings the object can have.[3]

We could make a plan of these premises on which the whole theory will be built, in the following way:
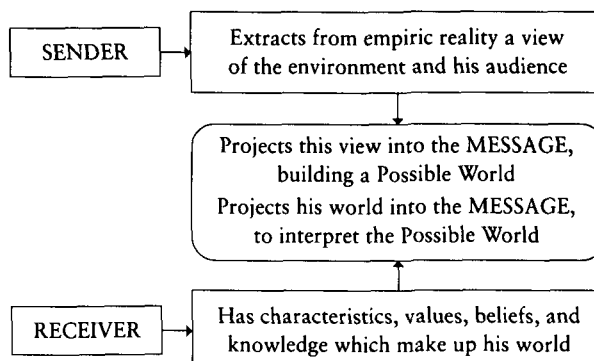
Taking these premises into account, we will try to analyse in this article the process followed by the speaker when defining the process of construction of an object-text. To get to this objective, we will apply two theories I consider fundamental. In the first place, the theory of argument proposed by Perelman. For this author, any communication has to begin from minimum accords between the speaker and the audience. Without this common beginning, any later communication strategy will not achieve persuasion or conviction. But we must first place this theory in context in a communication system: we will do so by means of the Possible World theory proposed by Umberto Eco.

Characteristics of the object

Although any object is susceptible of accomplishing the minimum requisites we spoke of in the previous chapter, that is: establishing communication between speaker and receiver to intent a specific action effect, I believe that the election propaganda spot is a privileged object for analysing persuasion strategies. Its situation of analytical privilege is basically derived from its communication characteristics, as it is constructed with a clear aim of achieving a specific action through its use, which is to make the receiver vote a determined party. Because of this, we consider a brief outline of its basic characteristics necessary.

The first basic characteristic to be considered is its

3. This leads Eco to speak of text as «a lazy machine» (1996: 11) «All texts are lazy machines which ask the reader to do part of their work.»

explicitly propagandistic nature. That is to say, its main function is neither aesthetic nor merely communicational, but rather persuasive. Moreover, this function is not hidden from the audience under the appearance of general information or opinion within programmes of different genres, but is broadcast as a spot within a television space especially reserved for such an end. Thus, the audience will interpret it while taking into account the genre's keys.

This first characteristics of propaganda explicitness has a second important effect, which is the object's need to achieve its end. In this way, the speaker will have a greater interest in achieving a successful communication. This will make him develop to the limit all the strategic possibilities of his message. As we will see in the next chapter, to achieve this, the deep knowledge of the audience to which he wishes to speak must take an important place in the design of his strategy (as also happens in commercial publicity).

A second characteristic comes from the medium used to broadcast the spot. Television appearances condition the way the spot must be presented so as to have greater efficiency. Television's basic influence can be seen above all in the length and verbal and visual language used. This influence can be followed by means of the evolution of election propaganda: spots are slowly becoming shorter, and now currently last two and a half minutes, from the five originally broadcast. This also implies progressive simplification of outlines. In regard to language, spots are more and more often presented with much more importance given to visual elements while the verbal part loses strength, although it is still the main part.[4]

We must point out that the mediatisation of television has not yet arrived at contents, as spots are made by the political parties themselves and not the television networks. This also makes them a valuable instrument for analysing the image each party wants to give of itself and helps us to see to which audience each political party wishes to address itself. If this were not so, it would be difficult to determine if the audience-target was the party's or the network's (as can happen with other television products). Thus, we can assert that the third basic characteristic is that they are direct messages between a party and its voters. This characteristic makes the analysis of mediatisation provoked by television in the product remain in the background and reduced, as we have said, to aspects which are rather of form than of content.

Each political party presents a propaganda campaign made up of different spots which are enveloped in a wider set of propaganda products (meetings, posters, debates, market visits, etcetera). The percentage of votes being vied for in a campaign is scarce but decisive (the undecided who can give the results to one party or the other). This makes analysis, though limited, give a quite interesting qualitative information on this sector of voters.

Strategy design

The communicator, when designing the communication strategy for election spots, must take two key phases into account. The first consists of building a Possible World inhabited by elements shared with the audience. This Possible World will be the indispensable beginning for the construction of the second phase, which consists of the use of linking and disassociating procedures which will make the audience accept new presuppositions. In Perelman's words,

> Our analysis of outline will first refer to what is accepted as a beginning for argument and, then to the ways that they develop thanks to a set of linking and disassociating procedures [...] the development of the argument, as well as its beginning, implies the approval of the audience.

General agreement as individuals in a Possible World

General agreements are beginnings agreed on by the audience and from which the producing entity has to begin. They can be of several sorts, according to the intensity of adhesion they provoke in the audience. Perelman classifies them in the following way:

1. Agreements based on what is real, including facts, truths, and suppositions.[5]

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4. We must exclude the PSOE's last campaign in the general elections in 1996 from this rule; the weight of argument basically resided in images, while the word stayed in the background.

5. Perelman differentiated, in each of these groups, different sub-groups. For reasons of space, I will not go deeper into each specific type of fact or value. In any case, it must be taken into

2. Agreements based on what is preferred, where he distinguishes values, hierarchies, and places.

Facts are defined by Perelman as «unarguable universal agreement» for a determined audience. It is an agreement which need not be argued because the audience to which the speaker addresses his message accepts it as real and does not doubt it. It must be pointed out that, from the author's point of view, facts are not objective in and of themselves, as their consideration as such at any time depends on the audience and this can change its opinion. Perelman points out two cases in which fact can lose its status: the first is when it is doubted by a specialised audience. For example, an audience can consider it a fact that the Milky Way is made up of nine planets, but if an astronomer proves the existence of a new planet, the audience can change its opinion. The second supposition is that the fact be doubted by a sufficient majority of the people in the audience (by a majority).

Truths are more complex systems that link diverse facts, as Perelman points out they may be scientific theories or philosophical or religious concepts. Truths may refer both to real facts and to deductive propositions derived from a specific fact.

Presuppositions are general agreements based on feebler realities and need to be reinforced by other external elements, that is, they must be previously argued. They are linked to what is normal and probable. The existence of certain situations which are considered normal by a specific audience do not need overmuch argument. For example, one of the most widely-used presuppositions used in political propaganda is that of quality, by which one supposes that a person's quality is reflected in his actions. That is to say, if someone is considered a good politician, it will be supposed that his actions will be good.

In reference to agreements based on audience preference, those with most strength are values, which may be defined as attitudes of a real audience towards what is real. At this point it is important to differentiate between general values (such as Justice, Solidarity, etcetera) and specific private values (such as, for example, Catalonia). Both sorts of values have different argumental strength. But not all values are organised within the Possible World in the same way. They normally appear in hierarchies. In this way, a second set of individuals appears: the hierarchies. Like the rest of agreements, hierarchies tend to reflect the mental organisa-

tion of the audience, as they give weight to preferences and ways of perceiving reality.

Lastly, within this type of agreement, we find the outline places. The (common)places are premises of a very general nature, which can be used on many occasions. Places store a great deal of information which, due to their length, allow their quick understanding among the audience. For example, it is quite widespread within the audience that what is large is better than what is small (although sometimes the opposite can be affirmed, with the use of small is beautiful). They are a sort of value judgement which is rarely questioned, but which need arguing. However, it must be taken into account that they are not fixed but vary according to the moment, culture, or personality of each person.

It is important to point out that all general agreements have a variable nature and always depend on circumstances surrounding any communication whatever.

At each moment they are extracted from the context of the broadcast of a message which is very influenced by several variants.

Once we have looked at the inventory of basic agreements which are used as a basis for outlines, the question which arises is: where do these agreements come from? On what are they based? According to Perelman:

> Each medium could be characterised by its opinions, by its undiscussed convictions, by the premises it admits without faltering; these concepts are part of its culture.

In other words, general agreements arise from social interactions generated by individuals by means of their shared beliefs. From this shared world, the speaker has to choose the elements which best connect with the specific audience he is addressing.

But the theory set out by Perelman needs more contextualisation. Perelman did not set out his theory for analysis of audio-visual texts in communication media and thus when applying this theory to the analysis of television objectives we must complement Perelman's theory with something else, such as the theory of Pos-

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account that a Possible World can be made up of multiple and varied general agreements.

sible Worlds set out by Umberto Eco. This theory clearly puts the three basic instances of communication: sender, receiver, and message in contact, and establishes relations among them.

In the case we are looking at, the Possible Worlds are used to put into context the speaker's decisions, as these allow the object to be considered as a Possible World inhabited by determined agreements differentiated from any other Possible World. For Eco,

> a world is made up of a set of individuals gifted with qualities. As some qualities or prestige are actions, a Possible World can also be interpreted as developing accomplishments. As this developing of accomplishments is not actual, but precisely possible, it must depend on the propositional attitudes of someone who asserts it, believes it, dreams it, desires it, foresees it, etc.

From this point of view, general agreements would be «individuals» within a wider Possible World. But we must take into account that the Possible World is only a text construction, that is, it has no existence outside the text, although in it we can find reflected certain aspects of the real world in which communication is produced. The impossibility of coping with reality makes choosing some of its pertinent characteristics necessary in order to put them into play to construct a vision towards a persuasive end. In this way, the Possible World presented by any communication object can be defined as the meeting-place of the images the speaker has of the audience which he addresses. If the image given is not correct, persuasive communication will not be achieved. Thus, we can assert that presenting a coherent Possible World can in itself be persuasive, due to the directed mental structure brought about in the audience's mind. Even so, acceptance is not persuasive, as it has to coincide with the audience's previous considerations.

Thus, Possible Worlds act as a framework for text reference, that is, from them the interpretation of the object can be produced and which conditions all possible later readings of the object (although these need not be the same, as people activate their own knowledge to bring up to date the clues the speaker gives in the text so that they will be bought up to date). Another interesting idea comes up here when we analyse persuasive election strategies. It is the idea of the Model Viewer.[6]

But by constructing a Possible World inhabited by

general agreements, only the minimum requisites for establishing communication are set up. The following step in elaborating a strategy is to find the structures of procedures, by means of which the common departure points become the basis for audience acceptance of new concepts. It is precisely these new concepts which produce a change of opinion and which in fact modify more directly the context and mind-set of the receivers.

Quasi-logical mechanisms

Among the quasi-logical mechanisms, Perelman distinguishes linking procedures and disassociating procedures. Both of these produce the transmission of validity from some accepted principles to others which at first are not so. It is here that all quasi-logical operations are carried out which provoke modifications in the audience's thinking. Here it is also very important to chose certain elements over others, as not all provoke the same mental processes for persuasion.

Linking mechanisms are defined by Perelman as

> diagrams which join different elements and allow establishing among these elements a solidarity which intends to either give them structure or judge them positively or negatively.

In these words, the author allows us to glimpse that, although recurring to mechanisms which are apparently logical, it is possible to make a value judgement on the arguments. Within these procedures, we can find three possibilities: quasi-logical structures, which intend a certain manner of conviction as long as they are presented as comparable to formal, logical, or mathematical reasoning; structures based on reality, which have recourse to what is real to establish solidarity between admitted judgement and others it tries to promote; and, finally, the links which begin as agreements and structure reality: in these the procedure is the opposite of the latter, as reality is modified

6. This idea of the Model Reader is used and analysed in quite a wide sense by Umberto Eco in his *Lector in fabula*. Although he initially sets it out in a specific way for written texts, there are clear parallels with audio-visual texts. For this reason I use the expression Model Viewer.

in relation to the argument the speaker presents (as would be the case of example, model, and illustration).

The other mechanisms would be the disassociation mechanisms, defined by Perelman as

> rupture techniques whose aim is disassociating, separating, and desolidifying elements considered components of a whole or, at least, of a solidary set in the heart of a single system of thought.

It is once again clear, then, that the cultural system of the audience, reflected in the general agreements, is important when choosing the elements to be used to produce a change from one argument to another. The most important elements of disassociation procedures are the philosophical binomial and disassociative definitions. Their aim is to come to link things which seem incompatible by means of adequating concepts, to which they give either a positive or negative value depending on the speaker's aim, which will evidently depend on the cultural system in which we move. It is precisely in this second part where the logical adequation of Perelman's model can most clearly be appreciated. It is from here that the speaker takes all his strength, through reasons which are somewhat admitted by the audience.

Conclusions

The first conclusion derived from this analysis is that by means of the object we can know some characteristics of the audience the speaker is addressing. But we must take into account that the audience which the object shows is not an empiric audience but rather the image of it a certain speaker has, that is to say, filtered by his ideology. In spite of this, we can assert that although it is a specific model, it has to have some contact with the audience's reality if it wishes to connect in order to persuade. That is to say, the election propaganda spot gives us clues to discover which is the voting audience for each party, but at no time can these clues be considered as an exact and perfect reflection of reality. To use a simile as example, we could say that the text is like a mirror which distorts the figure of the reader according to the speaker's own image.

As Perelman and Eco both assert, the model audience does not exist empirically speaking. Each individual reader will tend to come more or less closer to this model according to his interpretation of the text. The interpretation will depend both on the mechanisms the reader uses when deciphering the text and the speaker's ability when choosing the individuals who make up the Possible World. Knowing the audience to which the object is directed is thus basic for building a successful strategy. This operation is not lacking in difficulty: how can we come to a deep knowledge of all the characteristics of an audience so diverse and widespread as that of television? The question has a difficult answer, and the way of answering, one way or another, greatly conditions each speaker's strategy. If, for example, the speaker believes in statistics, he will build his Possible World on the percentages in them. Another formula for knowing the audience's reality is grouping them according to life-styles or targets, a method used by commercial publicity, for example.

If we centre on the political environment, I believe —and I do not wish to exhaust the matter— that the basic form of knowledge is measured by the symbols or social representations of each specific group. Social representations may be considered as images socially driven by relationships with others. At this point, traditional relationships were basically produced through family, education, and webs of friends by means of experiences directly shared and experienced. The appearance of mass communication media, and especially television, brings about the appearance of a new actor which creates social images. Thus, it is from this collective symbolism that the speaker extracts the common beginnings for the elaboration of the Possible World on which he will base all his persuasive strategy.

The second conclusion is based on the importance of argumental mechanisms in persuasion. In spite of the progressive simplification produced by television in political arguments, a change of opinion would be impossible without the linking and disassociating mechanisms. If the speaker is limited to showing only common beginnings (although the way in which a Possible World is built is not exempt from persuasion, as it puts accepted elements in contact in a new way) accepting new postulates would not be possible. Persuasion will be more successful if more procedures are used. Each argument will choose the most adequate procedures for persuasion, taking into account, as we have said, that this choice is not exempt from argumentative value.