

Research Article

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The Strategies of Ultranationalist Discourse: *This Is England* and Brexit

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Abstract: A speech given by the skinhead Combo in the film *This is England* (2006) provides the ground for an analysis of far-right nationalism. This article uses Critical Discourse Analysis and the idea of the nation as a discursive construct to explain Combo's strategies to gain dominance over his gang by means of rhetoric, body language, building up an ethos based on Christian and epic mythologies with ethnic connotations, drawing boundaries, and discrediting and excluding his opponents. These strategies are then compared to those of the UKIP leader Nigel Farage in his "Brexit victory" speech delivered in June 2016, which was based on a mystification of territorial boundaries, symbolic allusions to a defensive war, and a verbal construction of an ideally independent nation and a promising future. Thus, the article argues that analysis of a scene from the film set in the Thatcherite Britain of 1983 can still illuminate the articulation of later nationalist discourses.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, English nationalism, discursive construction of nations, multimodal analysis, film studies, *This is England*, Brexit

My article looks at the representation of far-right nationalism in Shane Meadows's film *This is England* (2006) set in 1983. It will focus on the scene in which the character called Combo defines his political position for his younger skinhead friends through a dramatic speech. In a four-minute spellbinding performance, the character played by Stephen Graham provides viewers with an outstanding text sample for the analysis of British ultranationalist discourse. As the scene is rather complex and sufficiently self-contained, it deserves scrutiny in relative isolation from the plot of the film as a whole and from its three television sequels. Furthermore, the discourse strategies which are deployed in this filmic text are, as I will finally argue, representative enough to serve as a model for a brief comparative analysis of actual, non-fictional instances of British populist-nationalist discourse, such as Nigel Farage's "Brexit victory" speech. The discursive resemblance between Combo and Farage implies a similarity between the 1980s ultranationalism portrayed by Meadows and the nationalist populism of Farage's UK Independence Party (UKIP). My approach combines various forms of discourse analysis and cultural studies theories to examine the art of delivering political speeches and their relations to power.

Critical Approach and Context

I am examining the texts of Combo and Farage's speeches from the point of view, above all, of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It is a methodology which, according to a classical definition (van Dijk), centres on three issues: the role of discourse in the (re)production of and resistance to dominance; social cognition as the nexus between power and discourse production; and the way discourse may legitimize social inequality as well as access to structures of communication. This approach is combined with a theoretical

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perspective on the idea of “nation” as “an unstable and decentred complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle,” with the effect that “nations” are “political artefacts called into being by nationalist ideologies and movements” (Jenkins and Sofos 11). The “nation” is thus an empty signifier on whose ideological surface a nationalist discourse may inscribe all sorts of demands, hopes and aspirations (Torring 195-196). In Hobsbawm’s words, “the idea of the ‘nation’, once extracted, like the mollusc, from the apparently hard shell of the ‘nation-state’, emerges in distinctly wobbly shape” (190). Combo’s brand of extreme nationalism, detaching itself from the official state nationalism of Thatcherism, is, therefore, the more pliable to discursive construction.

This is England, set in a grim small town in the north of England, is about twelve-year-old Shaun who has recently lost his father in the Falklands War, and, during his summer holidays, finds a new sense of belonging and fresh male role-models joining a skinhead group led by Woody. The teenage pranks and wanderings of the band acquire a new dimension when Woody’s friend Combo, who has just come out of prison, introduces his political ideas. The dramatic turning point comes when Combo persuades the group to help him put his ultranationalist politics into action, which leads to a split in the group. Shaun’s experience of violent extremism in Combo’s faction brings him a disappointment, which he expresses in a final sequence by throwing a St George’s flag which Combo had given him into the sea.

The film had three sequels in the form of subsequent TV series. The most notable feature of the sequels is that the character of Combo acquires many redeeming traits. In the film, it is hinted at that he is fundamentally a loyal person that will stand up for his friends if the situation arose. In the first TV sequel, set in 1986, he heroically takes criminal responsibility for Lol’s killing of her abusing father (Lol is Woody’s girlfriend in *This is England*) and goes to prison for her. In the third series, set in 1990, Combo becomes a tragic victim of the revenge of Milky (a youth of Jamaican background in the original skinhead group) and his family. While this complete reconfiguration of Combo’s character in the TV series adds an intriguing complexity to his characterisation, there is no need to consider this later transformation in order to understand Combo in the original film as a personification of extremist nationalism in the early 1980s. Moreover, as the focus of my analysis is on the interface between language and culture, I will concentrate mostly on the scene in which Combo’s ideas are fully developed in the form of speech. All the later events in this film can be said to derive directly from bringing his discourse into action.

In this particular speech, Combo is trying to gain dominance over the group, taking it over from the younger, more moderate apolitical leader Woody. The controversial issue Combo initially offers for discussion is that he, Combo himself, has been bullying “Milky”, the only non-white member of the pack. Thus in an attempt to gain acceptance from his audience, Combo begins by apologising, but he soon turns to accusing Woody of doing nothing to defend his mate Milky when he was being abused. He further discredits Woody by branding him “a snake in the garden,” thus suggesting that he is a traitor to his own people. Next, Combo delivers a long political speech, criticising Margaret Thatcher and the Falklands War, which makes Shaun protest as his own father was killed in that war. Then Combo turns apologetic again, only to instrumentalise the young boy’s feelings and urge him “to stand up and fight this fucking fight that’s going on the streets” so as to make sure that his dad did not die for nothing. Combo is thus deploying a rhetoric of warfare which was common at that time when the Falklands War was often contrasted with the “race riots” and clashes between the police and miners led by the National Union of Mineworkers. As Gilroy noted (51), Thatcherite discourse established clear connections between the “Argies” (as people from Argentina were called in the tabloids) and the miners on strike.

Through such discourse Combo is trying to persuade the members of Woody’s group to join his agenda of violent action (“this fucking fight”) whose most likely target, given the description of England’s problems in his speech, will be “Pakis.” He sees Pakistanis and other immigrants as bent on taking the jobs and welfare resources rightly belonging to the English. This call to arms against immigrants, based on a rigid, ethnic distinction between British natives and foreigners, was the mark of ultranationalist discourse from the Blackshirts in the 1920s and 30s (Valdés Miyares), to UKIP’s campaign for Brexit. Characteristically, Combo fends off any allegations of racism by asking Milky whether he considers himself Jamaican or English and simply accepting him with congratulations and praising his “pride” as soon as Milky replies “English.” The choice is turned into performance through Combo’s drawing of a line with his own spittle

on the floor, a symbolic border between what is England and what is not. Those who agree with him are supposed to signal it by standing on his side of the line.

The Text: Linguistic Analysis of Combo's Speech

A linguistic analysis of the properties of Combo's speech with the aid of CDA can further elucidate the meaning of the scene. In CDA (Fairclough), such analysis would include, in the first place, *control of interaction*. Combo, who always has behind him a hefty bearded skinhead, a fellow ex-convict called Banjo, is in full control of the situation from the beginning to the end: he is the one to summon the meeting and to call it off by stage-managing a split between the participants. While the rest are sitting and using very little body language, he is moving around and his turns are much longer. He is in command of turn-taking most of the time, and keeps standing, supported by Banjo's imposing figure, or walking about and moving his arms to add meaning to various deictic phrases in his speech that otherwise could not be fully understood. For example, when he says "This is England," his body language indicates the temporal and situational context of his words. As he is uttering this sentence, he is pointing his finger at the floor to suggest that the context he means is "here and now," with "this" referring to the situation, "is" indicating the present and "England" standing for a larger context. Combo's use of the noun "England" with the deictic "this," in particular, is very telling. His "England" is a metonym of the whole nation, which, in conjunction with the connotations of "this" ("the situation we are part of"), slips easily into a denotation that enables him to claim the space of the entire nation for himself. It might even be said that his charisma stems from his ability to move from denotation to connotation in this way. His discursive strategies that I will discuss later are grounded in such skills.

CDA theory of modality can shed further light on the sources of strength in Combo's speech. The most crucial distinction within modality is that between *epistemic modality*, which expresses the speaker's opinion about the truth of a proposition according to evidence, reason or beliefs; and *deontic modality*, which is concerned with obligation, permission or commands according to a set of rules or desires. Combo's use of modality ranges from the epistemic, stating the possibilities, like when he begins by saying he has just one question to ask: "when you've heard it, if you want to leave you can leave. That's fine by me," to more emphatic, deontic modality. The latter includes the use of the intensifier "really" and then, progressively, "fucking," particularly about the middle of his longest turn, when he declares: "And I'm gonna say it, cos you're gonna have to fucking hear it. We're giving the flats to these fucking Pakis, right?"

The use of politeness also plays a part in the critical analysis of discourse, as it is an essential way for speakers to exert control and influence over their interlocutors. The most remarkable aspect of Combo's *politeness strategies* is probably his frequent utterance of questions which seemingly give options to his interlocutors, though some of them are merely rhetorical and self-answered. The options, moreover, always narrow down to two alternatives, and only one of them is face-saving: when Milky says he considers himself "English" (no hybridity is allowed), Combo immediately rewards him with his "love."

These choices build up an *ethos* in Combo's discourse, a term which Fairclough defines as the "sorts of social identity [people] implicitly signal through their verbal and non-verbal comportment" (166). In this case, the ethos will consist of Combo's definition of who is English and who is not, based on the ethical values of "pride" and loyalty. Holding Shaun's father as a heroic model, Combo ends up suggesting they all should follow his example and fight (even to death) in order to preserve the England of "proud warriors" that he defined as the national essence. Thus, his speech bases its sense of *cohesion* or connectiveness on two main aspects: one is the repeated use of immigrants as scapegoats and the Falklands War as a symbolic turning point; the other, a recurrence of essentialism (an essential English identity) and dualities (English / Non-English).

Due to its ethic, ideological standpoint, Combo's speech can be situated in the transition between the Powellite discourse of the 1970s and the Conservative discourse of Thatcherism in the later 1980s. According to Smith (1994, 70-84) and Torfing (208), Enoch Powell portrayed the black immigrant as, at once, a foreign invader and an insidious enemy within. The black immigrants are, on the one hand, a supplement to an

essentially white British identity, a simple addition that can be easily removed and repatriated to their home countries without affecting essential Britishness. At the same time, those blacks are seen as an enemy inside, which is a threat to white British patriotism and the commitment to regenerating the nation. Combo seems to have overcome the prejudice when he accepts Milky's declaration of Englishness. His is a new brand of racism which arrived in the 1980s and defined exclusion in terms of culture rather than race (Barker). The blacks "should be excluded only in so far as their behaviour, values and norms constitute a threat to the British nation" (Torfinn 209; Smith 95-99). Combo's acceptance of Milky's Englishness, which later turns out to be spurious, suggests the ethnic anxiety at the heart of his construction of a national ethos.

In terms of *grammatical reference*, the most distinctive feature is Combo's use of exophoric (that is, external) reference linking his discourse with something outside it which he defines as "England." It is his construction of "this England" that endows the whole text of his speech with cohesion. He uses his fingers to point to connections between his speech and the world outside, particularly when he says "Yeah, this is England and this is England and this is England," pointing out of the window, to his heart, and to his forehead. The reiteration of "England" brings home the point that *this* is English, rather than British nationalism. The idea of British Nationalism nowadays is largely confined to ultranationalist manifestoes like those of the British National Party, and to those political positions like Ulster Unionism which use it to counteract other, more influential nationalisms within the British Isles, such as the Irish, Scottish and Welsh nationalist movements. The notion of "Englishness," on the other hand, is charged with an emotional load that "Britishness" never had. English identity has been a subject of intensive debate particularly since the end of the 20th century (see Berberich for an overview). *This Is England* can be considered as a contribution to that debate in the way it questions Combo's definition of "England."

Transitivity, defined by Fairclough (181) as the assignment of "agency, causality and responsibility, is another significant aspect of Combo's speech. Combo explicitly points his accusing finger at immigrants whom he holds responsible for the unemployment of "three and a half million of us" by providing "cheap and easy labour." They are represented as the agents of change, when an agency should, in fact, have been in the hands of Prime Minister Thatcher, who, instead, is just sitting in her "ivory tower" and waging her "pathetic," misplaced Falklands War. Transitivity is thus made evident by the use of loaded words.

Combo's choice of *wording* tends to go to extremes. It ranges from rather formal words with an emotional charge such as "honest to God," the reiterated adjective "proud," "men have laid down their lives for this" and "has set the standard" to his constant use of the expletive "fucking" to reinforce his expression both positively ("this little tiny fucking island") and negatively ("So we can just open the fucking floodgates and let them all come in?"). Finally, ideologically loaded *metaphors and allusions* show his dexterity with words, as when Combo calls Woody "Sigmund Void" because he objects to being "brainwashed." Primarily Combo's sarcasm means that Woody may think himself clever, like Sigmund Freud, but that his brain is in fact empty. Yet the pun also works against the prestige of the Jewish neurologist and may involve the note of anti-Semitism creeping into much classic Fascist discourse, derisively associating Combo's antagonists with Jewish culture.

Summing up, various linguistic aspects of CDA discourse analysis, such as control of interaction, modality, politeness, ethos, reference, transitivity, wording and metaphor, provide Combo's speech with cohesion and potential effectiveness.

Aspects of the Visual Text: Multimodality and Dramatic Interaction

Although the primary focus of my analysis is on verbal communication, visual aspects cannot be ignored in a film text. Therefore, in this section, I will use a multimodal approach to complement the linguistic analysis above. The approach takes account of various aspects of image composition, including the character's gaze, gesture, posture, head movement, and proxemics, along with spoken language and prosody (Norris). I will take a brief look at each of these aspects in this section.

The scene opens with a sequence of close-ups on Combo, on Milky's anxious face (his worried expression marks him off from the rest of the characters present), and on Combo again. Then close-ups of

other characters alternate with longer shots of the room. Combo is standing while the rest sit (except for Banjo, who always stands behind him) and listen to him. This places him in a vantage position, as he tends to gaze down on others while they gaze up.

In addition to gaze, he uses a great deal of gesture and body language, mostly to give force to his key statements. He often points with his index finger down to stress the factual, down-to-earth nature of his declarations, for example, when he cites unemployment figures. His posture and head movement sometimes evoke combat movements, and his own name may also suggest (in addition to his mixed race, which I will mention below) fighting combos, mostly defensive ones. When, in the initial seconds of the scene, he holds his bald head down between his hands, the image may suggest the self-torturing thoughts of a psychopath, especially if we are intertextually reminded of Marlon Brando's iconic performance of Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*. Pukey, one of the young skinheads, imitates the same gesture when he decides to stay with Combo while his friend Kes is asking him to leave with Woody, and so does Shaun when he chooses to remain as Woody also urges him to go. At the same time, Combo sometimes mimics the movements of a teacher instructing his pupils, and sometimes those of a political leader (notably Mussolini) haranguing the audience.

Combo seems to be well aware of how to exploit his proximity to an audience. Body language is related to proxemics, the use of space in communication. Proxemics plays a role in the emotional aspect of drama in two distinct ways: when viewers can see characters' feelings through close-ups, and when the characters get closer to each other and so establish a relationship of relative proximity between each other. When Combo hears about the death of Shaun's dad at war, he closely bends down to talk to the boy, who is sitting between Woody and Lol (in an intuitive protective gesture, as if they were surrogate parents), and touches Shaun's heart down with his index finger. This physical *approximation* symbolises Combo's *appropriation* of Shaun's heart for his own cause, in other words, for "this England" of his.

The high rising terminal intonation of Combo's speech is probably its most distinctive aural aspect, providing it with an interrogative, rather than declarative tone. It creates the impression that he is not imposing his opinions but expecting dialogue, a reply from his audience. Another key prosodic feature is his use of the local Midland accent (though with very few dialectal, informal and slang words). Both the interrogative tone of much of the speech and his local accent create empathy and a positive interpersonal response in the public. It is another dramatic feature which Combo is able to put to full effect.

Last but not least, the dramatic interaction between Combo and those listening to him also significantly contributes to the representation and development of ultranationalist discourse. Therefore, my multimodal analysis should conclude by examining the role of the participants in the dramatic process of discourse. Combo is the leading actor in the process, and his particular addressees are Woody, whom Combo sees as his rival in the struggle for the group leadership; Shaun, the 12-year-old protagonist of the film, and Milky. Other participants are Woody's girlfriend Lol, who remains mostly silent and relegated in this markedly masculine environment, except for her motherly attempt to keep Shaun from joining Combo's violent faction; and his ex-prison mate Banjo who now acts as his deterrent bodyguard. Then there are also three members of Woody's skinhead group, known as Kes, Pukey and Gadget, whose allegiance Combo is struggling to win over as his raw recruits. The fact that two out of these three (Pukey and Gadget), as well as Shaun decide to stay with Combo, marks his victory. Finally, there is also Meggy, a middle-aged man who hangs around with the group. Each of these participants plays a symbolic role, standing for a different political position in the film's representation of ultranationalist discourse.

All in all, the various multimodal aspects of Combo's speech including movement, gaze, proxemics, prosodic features and character interaction, contribute to a distinctively filmic representation of discourse. Bearing these aspects in mind, we may now turn to dealing with the most remarkable aspect of the analysis of ultranationalism: Combo's discursive strategies.

The Discourse at Work: Constructing and Legitimizing National Identity

In this section, I look into the rhetorical construction of Combo's speech in order to understand its ideological effectiveness. I will draw initially on Van Leeuwen's (105-6) model of discursive construction of legitimacy through authorisation, moral evaluation, rationalisation and mythopoesis (i.e. myth-making) to show how Combo is able to consolidate his power over the group. Combo's speech aims to establish the authority of his own brand of nationalism. He morally assesses the situation of the skinhead gang, gives some rational explanations about the problems of England (unemployment and immigration), and alludes to the Serpent in the biblical Garden of Eden to delegitimise his rival in the group leadership. Also, Combo's use of mythopoesis involves a version of the history of England which justifies his political position. The pragmatic presupposition is that England might be an Eden without Serpents like Woody in the Garden of its regeneration. As pointed out above, he also constructs essential Englishness with the aid of the epic mythology of a land of proud warriors who will fight to the death in defence of it, which provides his discourse with ethic values. It is a recognisably Anglo-Saxon military system of values implicitly looking back on the Old English epic poems known as *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*.

It is, therefore, evident that the construction of Combo's discourse goes hand in hand with his construction of national identity. The analysis of this construction can be further developed through the Vienna School of CDA (Wodak) and their critique of nationalist discourse. According to Wodak, national identities are produced, transformed and dissolved in discourse, and they involve perceptual, emotional and other schemata which are internalised through education, the media, and other organisations. Discourse constructions of nations often emphasise uniformity and exclude difference, even though there is no unique national identity but identities which are constructed according to context. The ultranationalism which is portrayed in the film relies on a specific historical reconstruction of time and place. Nonetheless, the discourse on which it is based, once it is analysed and typified, exceeds that specificity and becomes recognisable not only when the film was made (over a decade ago), but even nowadays, in post-Brexit Britain, as I shall argue later.

In terms of historical context, *This Is England* dramatises a construction of the nation in the specific milieu of ultranationalism in Thatcher's England in Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, drawing on the autobiographical experience of film-maker and screenwriter Shane Meadows, though much of the film was shot on location in Nottingham. The title itself suggests the limited spatial positioning ("*This*") on which it is built, a relative frame of reference which indicates "an egocentric system" (Huang 149). Combo's frame would be relative, as the scene suggests that he is constructing his "England" on the spot, from his own viewpoint, for the sake of his present audience, through using classic rhetorical and mythological materials. His self-centred spatial perspective is marked by his frequent use of the demonstrative of proximity "this."

The dramatic climax of the film is Combo's speech, which deploys a number of discourse Strategies of Justification / Relativisation, Construction, Perpetuation, Transformation, and Demontage / Destruction, as classified by Wodak. Each of these five macrostrategies (including within itself more specific microstrategies) is defined as a planned social (or, in this case, discursive) activity. Each has a political or socio-psychological aim or function. Each is realised linguistically by means of argumentation schemes or topoi (Wodak 34), as shown in the next paragraph.

Combo's performance demonstrates that Nationalist discourse can, indeed, be articulated in a schematic way (Wodak 36-42). The following systematic classification aims to demonstrate the remarkable match between Combo's speech and the strategies of European nationalist discourse as a whole which Wodak analysed:

1. Combo begins by admitting his previous error: "I was fucking horrible," which is a macrostrategy of Justification.
2. Combo reminds them that Woody did not stand up for Milky when he should. As he betrayed his friend, he may be associated with "a Serpent in the Garden." Combo uses a biblical motif to magnify Woody's blame. This is the microstrategy of Delegitimation of the opponent.

3. By pointing out “That was fucking wrong,” Combo turns from Justification to Strategies of Construction—the Construction of a new moral order. The next three micro-strategies (Dissimilation, Singularisation and Cohesivisation) are part of the macrostrategy of Construction.
4. “English or Jamaican?”: Dissimilation, with emphasis on national difference.
5. His emphasis on the uniqueness of English “pride” is a Singularisation.
6. Then his emphasis on unifying common features in “That’s what this nation has been built on. Proud men” is a micro-strategy of Cohesivisation.
7. The next point Combo emphasizes is the continuity of the English nation. This is a microstrategy of Continuation, which is part of the macrostrategy of Perpetuation: “Two thousand years, this little tiny fucking island has been raped and pillaged by people who have come here and wanted a piece of it. Two fucking world wars, men have laid down their lives for this.” This is followed up by a panegyric on sacrifice for the flag, linking country and self: “For this, and for what? So we can stick our fucking flag in the ground and say, ‘Yeah, this is England and this is England and this is England.’”
8. Next Combo warns them against a threat to that continuity, a danger to the myth of proud warriors defending England: “Eh, what for? So we can just open the fucking floodgates and let them all come in?” This is Heteronomisation, a microstrategy of Transformation, which Combo uses as a turning point to move from the macrostrategies of Construction and Perpetuation of national identity to the following four Strategies of Demontage.
9. Negative Presentation of Others through the argumentative topos of *locus terribilis*, a terrible place (which England has become), realised by means of pejorative attributions (*antimiranda*) addressed ironically to an imaginary audience of immigrants: “Follow your own fucking religions.”
10. Dissimilation based on comparison between “single parents” who cannot get a flat and “Pakis ... who’ve got 50 and 60 in a fucking flat.” This is sustained by the continuation of *locus terribilis*, associating the shops built by immigrants, their “cheap and easy labour,” and the three and a half million unemployed (supposedly) English people.
11. Discrediting opponents through ad-nominen defamation: “And that Thatcher sits there in her fucking ivory tower and sends us on a fucking phoney war!”
12. Devaluation of the Falklands War describing it as an unheroic fight of “innocent men” (the British soldiers) against (Argentinian shepherds): “What the fuck’s The Falklands? ... Fucking innocent men ... What are they fighting against? Fucking shepherds ...”

To conclude, Combo returns from these destructive strategies of Demontage to constructive ones, by assimilating Shaun’s father to the myth of proud warriors, including Shaun himself, and calling on him to continue the fight for England. These are constructive microstrategies of Assimilation and Continuation: on learning that Shaun’s dad died in the Falklands War, the father is assimilated as a role model; once he feels his discursive strategies have made their effect, Combo is ready to draw the line between those who will fight for the continuation of the nation which his discourse has just constructed, and those who stay out. He finally reiterates his warning against the Serpent in the Garden (that is, against supporting Woody), in order to consolidate the new moral order built up by his rhetoric.

Thus, the scene dramatises the discursive point at which a subculture (or an ideology, or a religious practice), under certain circumstances, becomes fundamentalist and potentially violent, or, in Woody’s words “well out of line.” The film makes a convincing case for this transformation when it illustrates the subsequent behaviour of the group, including Shaun. They get involved in acts of racial antagonism of increasing violence and gravity, such as spraying racist graffiti on walls, threatening some Asian boys, and harassing and robbing Mr Shandu, a local Pakistani shopkeeper.

The Model Applied to Politics: Combo, Farage and Brexit

The brief scene of Combo’s speech becomes a remarkable synthesis of much ultranationalist discourse. The practical use of this model may be tested by comparing it to current nationalist discourse, particularly

Nigel Farage's speech after the referendum on the European Union membership of the United Kingdom on 23 June 2016. The question Combo's group had to decide was also one of Leave or Remain, although in the film English nationalism is represented by the "Remainers," that is, those who stay with Combo. The victory of the Leave vote over the Remain in the referendum was as narrow and controversial as Combo's victory over Woody. Although those who voted to leave came from many different political backgrounds, parties and ideologies, they became largely associated, especially in the eyes of their political opponents, with UKIP and its high-profile leader Farage, whose overall political purpose was precisely to make Britain leave the European Union. There was, in fact, a geographic divide between voters (the Remain vote obtained a large majority in London and other large cities), as well as age, educational, and cultural divides (Singh). In the West-Midlands, largely rural, of British white ethnicity, and predominantly Conservative county of Staffordshire, for example, where *This Is England* is set, the turnout for voting was high and the victory of the Leave vote a clear 56% ("EU Referendum Results: Stafford Votes LEAVE").

Just as Combo's name alludes to mixed-race background ("This Is England Wiki") Farage's name suggests hybridity. Farage's father Georgius Ferauge lived in the Ardennes, a region straddling France and Belgium, which, might be regarded the very heart of Europe (Dathan). Thus, the quintessential Britishness of both nationalist spokesmen is similarly questionable.

Like Combo, Farage consistently sought to distance himself from far-right nationalist groups such as Britain First, though Britain First expressed their support for UKIP. Like Combo's discourse, Farage's relied heavily on anti-immigration arguments, and it often deployed a markedly territorial stance, claiming as a key aim that of "getting our borders back" (Farage). While Combo makes significant allusions to the Falklands War and the British as warriors, Farage was also prone to using the discourse of war. One may notice the echoes of Churchill's war speech "We Shall Fight on the Beaches" at the House of Commons on June 4, 1940, in Farage's Brexit victory speech: "We have fought against multinationals, against the big merchant banks, against big politics" (Withnall). There was a warlike tone in his controversial statement on having won "without having to fight, without a single bullet having been fired." This was particularly jarring if one put this statement in the context of the recent murder of the pro-EU Labour MP Jo Cox, by a man who had ties with British nationalist and neo-Nazi groups (Gye, Castle). According to one of the reports (Peck), at one point during the counting of ballots, after Basildon yielded 69 percent for Leave and the crowds chanted "Fuck off Brussels" out loud, Farage solemnly declared: "We will win this war, we will get our country back, we will get our independence back and we will get our borders back." War, independence and borders were his political mantra.

Besides creating a climate of contained violence and ethnic-based exclusion, both Combo and Farage's discourses are based on the premise of zealously defining and safeguarding UK's borders, and on a metaphor that mystifies national territory as a paradise, the *locus amoenus* of classical rhetoric. Both Combo and Farage show, in their respective speeches, the interrelation of political frontiers, identity and subjectivity, and myths and imaginaries (Howarth, Norval and Stavrakakis 219-32). For Combo the key myth is the "tiny island" defended by "proud warriors"; for Farage, it is the "dream that the dawn is breaking on an independent United Kingdom." For both, their myths encapsulate national territory and subjective identity.

UKIP and Ultranationalist Discourse

Farage's discourse can be characterised as classical rhetoric at the service of populism. For example, in a speech delivered in Grimsby on 8 April 2015, a place whose economy depends largely on fishing, and which might, therefore, have been affected by the Common Fisheries Policy of the EU, he deployed classical argumentative rhetorical devices. These were *pathos* (nostalgic and nationalistic emotion igniting anger in the audience, for example repeating his claim that the establishment has "failed them, failed their families and failed their lives"); *ethos* (appearing as a concerned moral character); and *logos* (appealing to the rationality of voters in Grimsby). Finally, he tried to persuade his Grimsby audience that their only real problem was the UK's loss of sovereignty, allegedly the root cause of their economic decline ("Nigel Farage:

Grimsby can once again have a great fishing port”). At the same time, Farage’s speech has characteristics of populist discourse in general, evident in attacks against the “political class” (mainstream parties in Britain and political elites in Europe). He denounced “dangerous others,” particularly immigrants, while bolstering “the pure people” as a culturally homogeneous group. His speech defined who can be regarded as legitimate “people” and who the foreign body; and it laid stress on the crisis, breakdown or threat to shared cultural identity (Pareschi and Albertini 11). All of these features were also part of Combo’s ultranationalist speech.

In terms of Wodak’s macrostrategies, Farage’s victory speech has a great deal to offer. Justification is self-evident in his fight “against the multinationals, against the big merchant banks, against big politics, against lies, corruption and deceit.” An example of Construction is immediately added in the very same sentence: “and today honesty and decency and belief in the nation, I think now is going to win.” The Perpetuation of national identity is what is won in this victory: “I hope this victory brings down this failed project [of the EU] and brings us to a Europe of sovereign nation states.” These sovereign nation states will be the object of a Transformation that will have them happily “trading together, being friends together, cooperating together.” Finally, Demontage is expressed in the metonymic form: “let’s get rid of the flag, the anthem, Brussels, and all that has gone wrong.”

Farage implemented these macro-strategies by means of a number of micro-strategies, such as the Delegitimation of opponents, when in the very same speech he associates Prime Minister David Cameron with the “failed” EU project and calls for him to resign “immediately.” The Construction of a new moral order is explicit at the beginning of the speech: “Dare to dream that the dawn is breaking on an independent United Kingdom. This, if the predictions now are right, this will be a victory for real people, a victory for ordinary people, a victory for decent people.” Dissimilation emphasising the national difference between the UK and EU countries and the Singularization of the UK as a unique nation are just implicit in this speech, but the Cohesivisation and Assimilation of his voters are clearly at work when he assimilates “real,” “ordinary” and “decent people.” Again, the Perpetuation strategy which emphasises the positive political Continuation of the UK as a sovereign nation-state is implicitly present in his final allusion to a Europe of independent nation states. Finally, the following strategies can be said to be more or less explicit in this as well as other Farage’s speeches: Heteronomisation (warning against heteronomy, that is being under the domination of an outside authority); the argumentative topos of *locus terribilis* (the terrible consequences for Britain being ruled by the EU); the Dissimilation (rejection based on emphasising their difference) of immigrants coming from the EU, and the Discrediting and Devaluation of the political establishment both in the UK and the EU.

Farage’s body language and his style of performance can also be subjected to multimodal analysis. In an article on British politicians’ body language during the pre-election TV debate on April 2015 (Blathnaid), the section on “Why hands are important” features a photo of Farage, apparently looking down at some notes. He covers the lower part of his face diagonally with his left hand in a gesture of tiredness and instinctive self-protection, which recalls Combo’s sinking his head between his hands. The article singles out this image of Farage to represent hand language, though neither the caption nor the accompanying text analyse it specifically. Nor is it the image that most TV viewers would immediately associate with him, which is one of “a giddy medley of facial expressions—smiles, laughter, grimaces, dancing eyebrows and displays of indignation” (White and Collett). A more critical (and satirical) analysis (Bennett and McDougall 61) concludes that “The face-object of Farage is its own border: self-mythologizing, preening, ridiculous, wine-redded set face against ‘old-fashioned’ tweed; the performative embodiment of the depoliticised frustration with everything and the illusion of a ‘something better’ which never was.” Farage’s passionate performance, which, as I have been arguing, bears a close resemblance to that of the fictional Combo, has indeed been considered as crucial to his political appeal and success (Newman 2014).

An uncanny effect is produced, as Freud explained, “when something that we had hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality” (Freud 367). In this sense, Farage’s discourse bears an uncanny resemblance to Combo’s. Given that Combo’s speech can be recognised as a classic form of ultranationalist discourse, the similarity with Farage’s reveals the UKIP leader as a classic ultranationalist. This is, of course, not to say that all Leavers shared his ideas, as UKIP has never become a major party among British voters. If it has become a more significant party than far-right groups such as Britain First, it has been thanks to UKIP

leaders like Farage, their disowning of violence and xenophobia, and their consistent focus on the idea of Britain's independence from the European Union.

Concluding Remarks

Those who share and support Farage's political views seldom have analysed his political style: those who do, tend to adopt a satirical stance which critiques the political significance of his words and gestures. Critical Discourse Analysis has always been defined as a committed activity. Kress insists that, while the activity of CDA practitioners "is politically committed, it is nonetheless properly scientific, perhaps all the more so for being aware of its own political, ideological and ethical stance" (Kress 85). This political self-awareness is precisely what CDA shares above all with cultural studies, where political positioning, rather than posing as a neutral observer, is crucial in the analysis of cultural texts.

Finally, in terms of methodology, my reading of Combo's speech in *This is England* has suggested how a fictional text, when analysed from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, can shed uncanny light on the discourse of real-life politics. In so doing, this article has also meant to illustrate that CDA can be applied both to cultural texts and political discourses to show similarities between them. What these similarities demonstrate is that Combo's speech is a time-enduring piece of satire, bridging two centuries to expose the characteristic strategies of ultranationalist discourse to the present viewer's and voter's eye.

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