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# Storytelling: the virtuous circle of narrative contributing to identity building and transmission.

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## Abstract:

My research deals with storytelling used by politicians. According to Jerome Bruner, storytelling has the power to influence, define, and create. As the medium shapes the message, the purpose of my work is to show that the tale shapes the identity, or that form and content deliver information about the individual. Here, action of speech and action caused by the speech contribute to shape the identities of the speaker and listener. As Martin Kreiswirth reminds us, storytelling is the inheritor of narratology and tells events happening in a precise and defined cultural environment, which fits into a historicity. Shaping identity, individual stories are steeped in collective narratives.

Barack Obama during his first presidential campaign was a perfect illustration of efficient and well-handled storytelling, combining his own story, the citizens' and the nation's history. I will show, notably with the work of George Lakoff, that he succeeded in building a presidential ethos, making himself a new identity. His narrative gathered a majority of voters through myths and elements drawn on the Americans' collective imagination. This imagination nourishes individual stories and participates in the building of individual identities. Hence, it seems obvious that collective narratives nourish individual stories, participating in the building of individual identities. I will emphasize that the individual shapes himself in relation to the other and to other people, relying on Ricoeur's work. But at the same time, these different individuals constitute a same group and approve a common tale, constituted by elements that form the popular imagination. I will demonstrate that we are in a "narrative virtuous circle" at the disposal of the identity, both in its building and in its transmission. A virtuous circle formed by collective and individual narratives nourishing and building each other, to the benefit of collective and individual identity.

Our question, concretely, how does story build individual identity?

Keywords: storytelling, interaction, transmission, politics, speech

As part of my PhD, I am working on storytelling and the role of stories in the political discourse. My whole research consists in considering storytelling as a perspective from which to analyze political speech, which has little been done in France. Working on presidential and campaign speeches of French and American politicians, I have been gradually aware that discourses, and more peculiarly stories, could convey identity. I saw that with one or several stories, a politician could convey one or several identities: his own story, as a public person and a layman, that of his fellow citizen's, and the national History. I realized that stories were more than a tool in a communication strategy, but a mode of communication in itself. One knows the other thanks to what is told about him or her, and thanks to the story he or she tells, paying attention to form and content. Individual and collective stories, as a social practice, are at the basis of identity and nourish each other. Indeed, collective stories influence individual identities, and the latter contributes to the production of collective narratives. That is why I will insist on the principles of *social constructionism* and interactions.

In order to understand how stories contribute to identity building and transmission, it is necessary to define the narrative. The origin of a story is the problem which upsets the course of events. Hence, the narrative sheds light on the problem. In the frame of a political discourse, storytelling used by politicians enlightens a societal issue, to provoke reactions, and then, try to solve the problem with political measures. I would like to show how the narrative in political discourse is at the disposal of the collective and individual identity, both in its building and transmission. Insisting on the fact that collective identity is made up of many stories, and identities are always evolving, I will demonstrate that the individual story contributes to the collective one, and vice-versa, to finally form what I call a "virtuous circle of narrative". Every story of the circle participates in the building of the other, characterizing as much the individual identity as the collective one.

Analyzing storytelling in the frame of political discourse, it seems necessary to understand the context, to grasp what frames are used and what functions the story gets. That is necessary, to be able to establish the relation between story and identity, because the President and candidate's identities are above all a discursive one. The politician heads a political party, or governs a country. He/she has the authority and the floor. Hence, her/his power is above all the power of speech. From that speech, a presidential ethos emanates, making up an identity, both in the form and the content. To demonstrate how narratives build and transmit both individual and collective identities, and eventually make up that virtuous circle of narrative, I will emphasize three types of stories: collective stories, citizens' stories, and autobiographical stories.

## I Methodology

I decided to take my research field as a starting point, and to go and fetch theoretical concepts after. Working on presidential and campaign speeches, focusing on stories, I saw that some of them had a peculiar style, a special discursive identity, contributing to transmit their identity as an individual, a public person and a member of a group. From this moment, I decided to dig the notion of "ethos", notably in the book of Ruth Amossy<sup>i</sup> dealing with the building of Ethos in the discourse, and in the book of Damon Mayaffre<sup>ii</sup>, who analyses the speeches of the French presidents, from Charles De Gaulle to Jacques Chirac, thanks to several means, like lexicology. Thanks to those data, I could make the relation with the work I had already undertaken about the transmission of values thanks to identity, in the book of George Lakoff<sup>iii</sup> addressed to the Progressive party, and the analysis I had done for my master thesis about the use of storytelling in the communication strategy of Barack Obama. Since the beginning, I have settled stories, as elements of speech and as a global structure, at the center of my analysis.

## II Theoretical position

### 1) *social constructionism*

I adopted the point of view of social constructionism to define the identity and see the relation between identity and narratives. Anna De Fina, Deborah Schiffrin and Michael Bamberg start their book *Discourse and Identity*<sup>iv</sup>, describing the definition of identity according to *social constructionism*. This definition consists in asserting that identity is plural and moving. It is a process, so it is in perpetual building. It depends on interactions, hence identity depends on the other people and on groups. The three authors remind us that this perspective may seem too general, but I think it is also essential to understand the identity as a process, an inclusive notion, since new data and stories add themselves to the founding narratives which constitute individual and collective identities:

“Perhaps the most general perspective, one that provides a very basic way of thinking

about identity, is *social constructionism* (e.g. Berger and Luckman 1967; Hall 1996; Kroskrity 2000): the assumption that identity is neither a given nor a product. Rather, identity is a process that (1) takes place in concrete and specific interactional occasions, (2) yields constellations of identities instead of individual, monolithic constructs, (3) does not simply emanate from the individual, but results from processes of negotiation, and entextualization (Bauman and Briggs 1990) that are eminently social, and (4) entails "discursive work" (Zimmerman and Wieder 1970)." (De Fina et al. 2006, 2)

This definition confirms that identity always evolves according to interactions, people and context. By definition, identity cannot be fixed, each man changing through times, places, events, meetings and discoveries. The interest we find in the defining trend called *social constructionism*, is the focus on interaction in the situation of communication, seen in a specific context. Here, we focus on identity in the social practice of telling stories, in a social context and a communicative practice, which is the political discourse. Authors insist on the influence of social practices on the process of identity, and also on the role of discourse practices. They refer to Foucault and Fairclough's works, both of them giving a consequent influence to the context, an idea on which I will also insist, notably with the *framing* theory and practice, described by Lakoff:

"Both social and discourse practices frame, and in many ways define, the way individuals and groups present themselves to others, negotiate roles, and conceptualize themselves. Taking the concept of practice as central to processes of identity formation and expression entails looking more closely at ways in which definitions of identity change and evolve in time and space, ways in which membership is established and negotiated within new boundaries and social locations, and ways in which activity systems (Goodwin 1999) impact on processes of identity construction." (De Fina et al. 2006, 2)

Hence, if the discourse practice contributes to define individual and collective identity, I want to focus on the use of storytelling in political speeches, considering that every narrative participates in the transmission and building of the identity of each participant, orator and audience.

## 2 Storytelling and interdisciplinarity

The term of "storytelling" has been very used and often bandied about by the media for ten years in France, without anyone really being aware of what it is. That is why I think it is necessary to consider storytelling as a discipline to establish its epistemology. Storytelling is the heir of narratology, which analyzes narrative as a structure and a structural element in the discourse, attaching a large importance to context. Stories as a medium and a message is a multidisciplinary object. Indeed, George Lewi explains in *The Odyssey of Brands* (our translation)<sup>v</sup> that narratives are used in marketing, many advertising spots using the structure of the mythical story: a hero, an opponent, an incident, the hero's victory and the solution to the problem. Martin Kreiswirth<sup>vi</sup> talks about a "narrative turn" in the human sciences, beginning in Europe in the 1970s, with Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette, then arriving in the USA in the 1980s, with Didier Coste or Thomas Leitch. He explains how this narrative turn is characterized by a transdisciplinarity, observing that disciplines like ethnology, anthropology and painting, use the narrative. Peter Brooks<sup>vii</sup> and Jerome Bruner<sup>viii</sup> confirm that storytelling can get out of the novel field to be used by lawyers, psychologists and scientists. That is why I consider storytelling as a legitimate perspective to analyze the political discourse.

## II Cultural and instinctive: stories at the disposal of identity

### 1) The influence of narrative structure

Jerome Bruner insists on the natural way people have of telling stories, describing it as a "gift", as natural as the

upright position:

"The narrative gift seems to be our natural way of using language for characterizing those deviations from the expected state of things that characterize living in a human culture. None of us knows the just-so evolutionary story of its rise and survival. But what we do know is that it is irresistible as a way of making sense of human interaction." (Bruner 2002, 85)

Fiction and true stories are so influential that they contribute to shape daily experiences. Characters from literature are often used to describe somebody. Hence, a seducer becomes a "Dom Juan", an adventurer is an "Indiana Jones". Those references give a meaning to things and events. Stories provide mental structures and references to the audience to recognize a situation, to identify with it, contributing to identity building:

"Never mind that we know, again implicitly, that the real world is not "really" like this, that there are narrative conventions governing storied worlds. For we also cling to narrative models of reality and use them to shape our everyday experiences. We say of people we know in real life that they are Micawbers or characters right out of a Thomas Wolfe novel." (Bruner, 2002, 7)

Reminding people of familiar elements, stories become meaningful in the political discourse. Narratives influence the reason and the perception, constitutive of identity. As readers of fictions and actors of reality, people have internalized narratives' rules, which confirms that people build themselves thanks to narratives:

"A narrative models not only a world but the minds seeking to give it its meanings. And this restless dualism is not confined to drama and fiction: it also plagues the lawyer telling his law stories and the autobiographer trying to construct a self." (Bruner, 2002, 27)

The cultural environment provides people with a common basis of stories. One can deduce that individual identity is founded on the basis of a collective identity. Therefore, each individual story is different, since it builds itself in relation to the other, environment and a system of representations, produced by the interactants. Thus, the community participates in the creation of individual stories, which themselves found the collective identity. Indeed, individual narratives make the collective story and identity, since narrative has to be approved by the people, to join the popular imagination and become a founding text. Bruner confirms that a culture is made of several texts, contributing to build collective and individual identity:

"Besides, narratives acts of self-making are usually guided by unspoken, implicit cultural models of what selfhood should be, might be – and of course, shouldn't be. (...) Yet all cultures provide presuppositions and perspectives about selfhood, rather like plot summaries or homilies for telling oneself or others about oneself." (Bruner, 2002, 65-66)

## 2) Identity: coming and going between individual narrative and collective narrative

To be coherent with the principle of social constructionism, I want to insist on the role of the Other and of the group, in the individual identity building. Hence, I will quote the work of Martine Xiberras, in the collective book *Political Myths*<sup>ix</sup>, entitled "Myth and individual and collective identification process". One of her points to define the notion of identity is that individuals are categorized and identified. But what I want to emphasize in her definition of identity and identity building, is its interactive characteristic. Individual identity is the result of interactions, "it fits into an interactive relationship with the other, and in "a confrontation with the cultural patterns" which are prevailing and

surrounding." (Xiberras 2010, 18)<sup>x</sup> Relying on the works of Berger and Luckmann, dealing with the social construction of reality, she insists:

"Berger and Luckmann confirm that the identity building process can always be described as a dialectic coming and going, going all over the subject/world relationship." (Xiberras 2010, 18)<sup>xi</sup>

Hence, the individual gives and receives messages, some are collective or individual stories, fictive or real ones, and thanks to them, he finds his own place and story, he defines and identifies himself. Then, Xiberras refers to Paul Ricoeur's ideas, explaining the inevitable evolution of the individual, who works on one self, taking change and permanency into account:

"Paul Ricoeur distinguishes *idem* identity and *ipse* identity, to depict the permanency of the "collective being" through continuing changes. This inherent complexity of identity implies a hermeneutic of the self, that is to say "a narrative work likely to produce meaning", a work of interpretation. Hence, it confirms the inherent characteristic of the narrative in the individual identity and collective identity." (Xiberras 2010, 18)<sup>xii</sup>

Along the same line as social constructionism, one understands that identity arises from a confrontation with the Other, who can be an individual and a collective entity. Going on the identity building through time, Xiberras insists on the accumulation of narratives, which constitute or will constitute the popular imaginary and will have an influence on individuals:

"The identity builds itself thanks to successive stories, producing a constant narrative corresponding to a present moment, and making a clearly defined reality emerge, in a moving potentiality." (Xiberras 2010, 18)<sup>xiii</sup>

Identity is not fixed, it is a global narrative, evolving with the arrival of new stories. Individual and collective narratives pile up to build a collective identity, compulsorily changing. Those stories are first approved and adopted by a majority, to get into the popular imagination, and then base the collective identity. That is why Martine Xiberras says: "Telling itself, the people acquire their own identity." (Xiberras 2010, 19)<sup>xiv</sup> She talks about the people, but the principle is adaptable to any individual, if one refers to the hermeneutic of the self developed by Paul Ricoeur, or to the work consisting in narrating the self, exposed by Jerome Bruner in psychoanalysis. Hence, telling oneself, the individual gets his/her own identity, referring, defining and identifying to some stories. To finally insist on the coming and going between the individual and collective identity, and on the influence both types of stories have on the other, she uses the metaphor of the "mille-feuille". The sum of individual stories makes the collective story, to build the identity of the people gradually.

### III Storytelling in the political speech: Barack Obama's stories in the presidential campaign of 2008

#### 1) Lakoff's advice to the progressive party:

##### a) Identity and framing at the center of the candidate's communication

George Lakoff wrote a book in 2006 addressed to the progressive party whom he would like to see win the presidential election of 2008. In *Thinking Points*, he gives to the Progressists some advice to better communicate on their values and vision. Lakoff explains that the efficiency of a campaign rests upon the transmission of the candidate's

values to his electors, and upon the use of symbols:

"Politics is about values; it is about communication; it is about voters trusting a candidate to do what is right; it is about believing in, and identifying with, a candidate's worldview. And it is about symbolism." (Lakoff 2006, 8)

Progressivists have to create their frame, to place themselves in the political spectrum. By framing their values and ideas, they will gain an identity. Hence, he places identity at the center of the communication strategy:

"It should be taken to heart by all progressives: Concentrate on your values and principles. Be authentic; stand for what you really believe. Empathize and connect with the people you are talking to, on the basis of identity - their identity and yours." (Lakoff 2006, 8)

The concept of *framing* consists in creating and using patterns and mental structures, which help us to see and interpret reality. Those mental frames determine our thought and behavior. To get into contact with someone, the fact of sharing a frame is very efficient, it is like sharing a world vision. Lakoff uses the explanations of Goffman, and the metaphor of the play to describe life, to interpret "life as a play". Indeed, everybody has a part and a function, guiding one's behavior in a given environment. In some context, some behaviors and actions are appropriate or not, in accordance with established and latent rules. Succeeding in creating this mental structure, it is being able to foresee what people will do in that given context. As a result, the one who frames the discourse, has a kind of control on the situation of communication, since he gives mental structure, structure of thinking to the audience.

Framing the discourse helps the orator to gain an identity, and consequently to make the difference with the other political parties. Hence the definition of the concept of nation framed by the Progressivists on the one hand, and by the Conservatives on the other hand is completely different. In many countries, the nation is often seen through the metaphor of the family. According to George Lakoff, the vision of the family corresponds to the vision of the nation, he says that "(...) the nation-as-a-family metaphor structures entire world views, organizing whole systems of frames in our brains." (Lakoff 2006, 49). He explains there are two models: "the strict father" family and the "nurturant parent" family". The nurturant parent model corresponds to the progressive party. According to this pattern, both parents are as much responsible for their children, the notions of love and happiness are essential. Parents teach empathy and social responsibility. They are authoritative, but not authoritarian. They explain their decisions to the children to legitimize their authority, and those latter are not afraid of their parents. In the progressive vision of the nation, empathy and responsibility are emphasized. From those values, other essential ones follow: protection, fulfillment in life, freedom, opportunity, fairness, equality, prosperity, community. Then, Lakoff describes four political principles resulting from those values: "the common good principle", "the expansion of freedom principle", "the human dignity principle", "the diversity principle" (Lakoff 2006, 54-57). Those values and principles give an identity to the progressive party. Lakoff advises a way of expressing them: stories.

## b) Stories: an efficient way to convey identity

Lakoff explains that a good argument includes a good story, underlining the people's affection for good stories. The structure and the elements of the narrative must be simple, respecting some precise characteristics and steps. There are few roles: a hero, an opponent, a victim, a helper. An incident happens, the hero has to fight against the villain, rescue the victims, cope with other incidents, and finally solve the problem. Stories help the orator to make his message structured and meaningful to a majority, thanks to well known cultural elements, a beginning, a middle and an end. Indeed, Lakoff confirms that the use of collective stories and symbols is very efficient to make the message attractive and convince the audience. He quotes Robert Reich, former labor secretary of Clinton, who identifies « *the 4 essential American stories* » (Lakoff 2006, 129). According to Reich, those stories are a part of the American culture: "The Triumphant Individual", "The benevolent society", "The Mob at the gates", "Rot at the Top". Politicians can use those narratives and citizens will recognize them. Lakoff reaffirms the importance of the story, confirms that the medium is the message, telling: «Perhaps the most effective political argument come not in the form of arguments but in the form

of stories.» (Lakoff 2006, 137)

Progressists had message, values and program. Now we are going to see that the party found its candidate in the person of Barack Obama, and the know-how to deliver this message, consisting in using different stories, which always have a common point.

## 2 Collective stories: at the disposal of collective and individual identity building and transmission. When "The American Promise" becomes "A Mother's Promise"

Barack Obama, in his strategy of communication for the presidential election of 2008, used what I decided to call the virtuous circle of narratives, alternating collective and individual stories. In his biographical film "A Mother's Promise"<sup>xv</sup>, Obama tells a collective story at the basis of the American Constitution, called "The American Promise", and merges it to his personal story. The Founding Fathers' promise becomes the promise of his own mother, the one he wants to keep for his own children and his fellow citizens. The film had been broadcasted for the first time during the Democrat Convention, on August, 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Obama had been chosen by the party to be its candidate, on this occasion he confirmed his status. The film had been shown just before his speech entitled "The American Promise"<sup>xvi</sup>. The strategic order of the two types of discourse already aimed at showing that collective and individual stories nourish each other, to make one. The goal of this biographical film, merging his own story and the nation's History, mixing collective and personal narratives, is to prove that Barack Obama is legitimate as President of the USA. The use of collective symbols and moments of national History shows how collective narratives participate in the individual identity and presidential ethos.

To start the film, Obama talks about a story in the History, his own one: "My story is part of the American story". Then, pictures of his childhood are mixed to American history's pictures. Each element of his own story is linked to an element of the national history. The picture of his grand-father shown beside a picture of Patton's army. A photograph of his grand-mother with another one representing the American task force during the Second World War. Every symbol constituting the nation of America are there and every American can recognize them: wheat fields, gigantic valleys, skyscrapers. The audience understands there is not any border. Obama makes reference to the myth of the frontier, founding the American civilization. Then, one can see the candidate with his family, his fellow citizens of Chicago, then in Harvard. He is an example of the self made man and an illustration of the American dream. Following the film, in his speech entitled "The American Promise", Obama lists the key American values from the American Constitution, insisting on empathy (maybe following Lakoff's advice?), giving a democratic perspective to national values. Empathy and responsibility are enlightened. He underlines the influence of those values in his own life and in the collective story. All those elements make the electors identify themselves with the story of the orator. The succession of all those elements makes the spectator slide from the story of Barack Obama to the History of the USA. By this process, he places his story in the History of his country, his identity in the collective one. He demonstrates his legitimacy by the use of the collective story, which has always been nourishing his own story and identity. The collective story, here "The American Promise", totally pervades his personal story. As proof of the integration of the collective story in Obama's discursive identity, I did look for "American promise constitution" in French, on Google, on March 12<sup>nd</sup>, 2013. On the first page, upon 10 results, the first four results refer to Obama's promisexvii. Finally, one does not know any more which story pervades the other. Obama tells collective narratives, his own, but he also gives a major part to his fellow citizens, telling their stories.

## 2 Citizens' stories: at the disposal of collective and individual identity building and transmission. The example of "American Stories, American Solutions"<sup>xviii</sup>

In order to illustrate the fact that individual stories nourish collective stories, but also the story and identity of the orator, I wanted to recall the campaign film Obama's team realized and broadcasted few hours before the election: "American Stories, American Solution". During thirty minutes, Obama talks about his country, its inhabitants, makes portraits. He tells the story of the actors of History, who drive his policy.

He is in an oval office, where the spectator tries to guess the future, while Obama talks about change. He makes four intimate portraits of representative American families, who have to face difficult situations, for whom he wants to find solutions. The spectator comes in the families' homes who tell their own lives, they confide their story to the candidate and to the audience. They expect a lot from their candidate. It begins with Rebecca, mother of a large family, her husband lost his job after a long illness. They cannot pay for his treatment, they have had to mortgage their house and have difficulty making ends meet. Larry is retired, he worked hard all his life, but his wife is sick, and as he has no health insurance any more, he has to work again... Juliane is a single mother, she has a full time job and takes evening classes to get a better job. Mark is a father, he worked for years for Ford, but he was laid off and still has to support his family.

Those families and stories are different, but they meet on difficulties: layoff, debts, illness, problem of insurance, heavy loans... Those problems affect every American, they are part of their stories, they need to be told, to be enlightened and solved. In the film, Obama tells the citizen's stories who constitute the group, to touch the community. Many voters can identify with the films' portraits. Barack Obama identifies himself with some elements of stories, when he talks about his mother's cancer and of the difficulties caused by insurance. The themes and values Lakoff talked about are in the film and in the solutions of Obama. Lakoff emphasized the importance of fairness, commitment and responsibility, Obama talks about "fairness to the American economy", "commitment", "a new era of responsibility". He also insists on equality for every citizen, notably to have access to healthcare and to go to school. Those themes and values, emphasized by the portraits and discourse of Obama, in which he talks again about the American Promise, make a link with the collective narrative. In the film, the nurturant parent model is highlighted, every parent of the portraits give the best to their children. The model is also present in the story of Obama, told in the film, since he always makes the link between the individuals' stories and his own. After the four portraits, he tells his life: his family, childhood, absent father, devoted mother. Then, the wife of the candidate, Michelle Obama, describes him in his role as a parent, an attentive father, despite the work and lack of availability.

The biographical film "A Mother's Promise" linked the candidate with the national History. This second film links Obama with the individuals who form the community. Thanks to the succession of collective and individual narratives, the stories leave a mark, a kind of legacy that the following stories will tell. Collective and individual narratives pervade each other successively, that's why we can talk about a virtuous circle of narrative. The candidate concludes: "Everybody's got a story. That's the story of America". The knot is tied. In that sentence, the virtuous circle of narrative rests upon. Using stories, Obama always transmits and refers to his identity. He meets the people in order to be elected, always claiming History to be his own, emphasizing a legacy thanks to stories.

Stories as medium and message are natural and instinctive. They are meaningful thanks to frames and symbols recognized by a majority of people. The narrative has been integrated as a structure of the discourse, by the orator who builds his/her story, and by the audience who recognizes the frames. The story has also been integrated as an element of the discourse, becoming a part of the popular imagination, like characters or events, structuring everyday experiences. According to Bruner, the act of narrating contributes to shape the self. Telling oneself, the individual acquires his/her own identity, mixing different types of stories. He/She perpetually builds him/herself in relation to the other people and the environment. Thanks to collective and individual stories, identity can be built and transmitted. The "coming and going" of Xiberras show that collective stories nourish individual ones, and that the latter also feed collective narratives. Identity is the result of the continuous exchange between collective and individual stories, illustrated by the virtuous circle of narratives. The notions of permanent evolution is essential to understand identity and its building. Storytelling is a narrative meeting, in which several stories cross over to make meaning. But it is also a human encounter, since all the stories tell lives and entail identifications. Indeed, a politician

telling stories in his/her speech aims at meeting up with people, telling them what they want to hear. The orator uses collective stories to give familiar elements to the audience, and thanks to national myths, can make his/her own identity and myth. That is why Lakoff insists on the crucial role of identity in a presidential election campaign and of stories to convey it. When the orator tells citizens' stories and his/her own story, he/she tells the national history. While communicating with stories, the speaker communicates on identities. The virtuous circle of narratives enables the politician to go and meet the country, its people, history and its plural and moving identity.

#### Bio-note

I am in my second year of PhD in communication, in the University of Paris VIII. I have been working on the use of storytelling by politicians in their communication strategy, in France and in the USA, from 1940s to 2008. After my Master's degree in International Media, a first thesis on the use of storytelling by the Nike brand and a second one about the communication strategy of Barack Obama, I decided to start a PhD. I recently introduced my research to the international and cross-disciplinary conference of Amiens, in France: "Identity(ies): building and re-building in the discourse." I am also stand-in teacher in communication for the CNAM (url: <http://www.cnam.fr/>).

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- x Our translation: «une confrontation avec les modèles culturels» ambiants et environnants.»
- xi Our translation: «Berger et Luckmann confirment bien que le processus de construction identitaire se laisse toujours décrire comme un va et vient dialectique qui parcourt la relation sujet/monde.»
- xii Our translation: «Paul Ricoeur quand à lui, distingue l'identité *idem* et l'identité *ipse*, pour décrire la permanence de l'«être collectif» à travers des changements incessants. Cette complexité inhérente à l'identité suppose une herméneutique de soi, c'est à dire un «travail narratif susceptible de configurer un sens», un travail interprétatif. D'où le caractère narratif inhérent de l'identité individuelle et de l'identité collective.»
- xiii Our translation: «L'identité se construit à partir de récits successifs produisant un récit stable pour un présent donné et faisant émerger une réalité clairement définie dans une potentialité mouvante.»
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