TM

SHADES OF COURAGE.
EMOTIONAL DIMENTIONS OF COURAGE
IN THE FAMILY SEMANTIC POLARITIES MODEL

VALERIA UGAZIO
UNIVERSITY OF BERGAMO

FERDINANDO SALAMINO
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON

This article puts forward the hypothesis that courage varies accordingly with the dominant meanings through which people construct their own world. Delving into the model of family semantic polarities (Ugazio, 2013), the authors identify different shades of courage within the semantics of freedom, goodness, power, and belonging and illustrate and discuss them providing examples from their clinical practice and from literature. The goals people aim at when acting courageously, the threats they feel, and obstacles that entangle them are different in the four shades of courage discussed. The threat within the semantic of freedom is represented by the dangers the world is fraught with, in front of which the individual is constructed as vulnerable. Autonomy is the purpose, since losing autonomy means to lose value in front of oneself and the family. Fear is thereby the obstacle. Facing the word alone is the paramount shade of courage within this semantic. Breaking the siege of guilt is the principal shade of courage within the semantic of goodness. Being brave within this semantic often means to trespass the boundaries established by a moral code perceived as oppressive. Consequently the threat is to become corrupt and the obstacle is guilt, whereas the aim is to feel alive. Winning alone is the prevalent shade of courage within the semantic of power. It requires overcoming the need of approval (obstacle) and facing others' envy in order to gain one-upmanship (aim). Within the semantic of belonging, being courageous means accepting the fate of a stray dog in order to retain one's own dignity. Exclusion and loneliness are the threats, whereas the hope of being loved and included is the obstacle, since it may lead to the loss of dignity.

Key words: Eating disorders; Phobic disorder; Obsessive-compulsive disorder; Depression; Family semantic polarities.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Valeria Ugazio, Department of Human and Social Sciences, University of Bergamo, Piazzale S. Agostino 2, 24129 Bergamo, Italy. Email: valeria.ugazio@unibg.it

WE ARE NOT ALL COURAGEOUS IN THE SAME WAY

Unlike fear, its antagonist, courage does not seem to attract the interest of clinical psychologists, apart from a few exceptions such as Seligman (2005), who considers courage as one of the main goals of therapy and a protective factor against mental health issues. The paradoxical nature of this disposition, preventing a clear definition, might be a reason. "Courage is almost a contradiction in terms" — Chesterton stated (1908/2013) — because "it means a strong desire to live taking the form of readiness to die" (p. 77). Add the focus of clinical psychologists on flaws and damages, rather than on resources and skills, and this lack of interest comes as no surprise.

TPM

Nonetheless, courage inhabits the clinical conversation, hidden in the wishes of our clients, or in their regrets. As a matter of fact, many of our clients come to therapy asking us to help them find the courage, or complaining about the loss of it.

One of the more convincing operational definitions of courage identifies it as "the disposition to voluntarily act, perhaps fearfully, in a dangerous circumstance, where the relevant risks are reasonably appraised, in an effort to obtain or preserve some perceived good for oneself or others, recognizing that the desired perceived good may not be realized" (Shelp,1984, p. 354).

According to this definition, fear, although often present, is not an essential component. Other authors have questioned the essentiality of fear in the definition of courage. Rachman (1990) found out that phobic patients, who experience high levels of fear and anxiety, are also capable of amazing acts of courage. Woodard (2004) discovered that people connect their perception of courage to "the fear associated with perceived threat exceeding the available resources" (p. 174). Moreover, a courageous person is willing to undertake a dangerous task, despite his own vulnerability — according to Woodard's study — when the goal has a socially recognized value. Courage here reveals a changing nature, depending on individual endurance to vulnerability, and contextual factors including group belonging.

The importance of social belonging is even more stressed by Maddi (2004) who stated that the meaning of a courageous conduct cannot be understood by simply considering the entity of the threat (challenge). A sense of connection with others (commitment) and the willingness to actively influence events (control) are necessary requirements. Woodard and Pury (2007) offer a definition of courage in which fear is no longer essential: "Courage is the voluntary willingness to act, with or without varying levels of fear, in response to a threat to achieve an important, perhaps moral, outcome or goal" (p. 136).

We share this definition in essence, and we agree with the authors that the antagonist emotion of courage is not necessarily fear. However, we consider that courage is better understood in relationship to an antagonist emotion, which represents the obstacle to trespass for the courageous act to take place. Other emotions, no less violent than fear, may paralyze and constrain the subject in front of the courageous task. Threats and goals may likewise vary deeply.

This article presents the hypothesis that threat, aim and obstacle of courage vary accordingly with the dominant meanings through which people construct their own world. We are not courageous in the same way. Hidden inside the same word, multiple shades of courage coexist. This hypothesis is supported by Pury, Kowalski, and Spearman's (2007) discovery of personal courage, which links the nature of the courageous act to the individual's unique aims, values and fears. What we will propose here is that multiple types of personal courage cohabit in our culture.

THE ANATOMY OF COURAGE

According to Guidano (1987, 1991) and Ugazio (2013), people build their own world around a few core meanings, linked to specific emotions. These meanings and the emotions that feed them constitute the heart of the ordering processes through which the self provides continuity and coherence to the internal experience, and underpin individual values and ways of relating to others. Ugazio (2013) identifies four meaning configurations, called "family semantics," widespread in western culture: freedom, goodness, power, and belonging. These semantics are learned within the family and other emotionally relevant contexts in which the individual is embedded, hence the defi-

nition of "family semantics." There is evidence (Castiglioni, Veronese, Pepe, & Villegas, 2014; Faccio, Belloni, & Castelnuovo, 2012; Ugazio & Fellin, 2016; Ugazio, Negri, & Fellin, 2015; Veronese, Procaccia, Romaioli, & Barola, 2013) that these semantics characterize the conversation and the definition of self and others, of patients with phobic (semantic of freedom), obsessive-compulsive disorders (semantic of goodness), eating (semantic of power), and mood (semantic of belonging). According to Ugazio (2013), these semantics can characterize the conversation also with non-symptomatic individuals, and in families where no one has ever experienced psychological suffering.

The hypothesis we will develop in this article is that these aforementioned semantics direct the goals people aim at when acting courageously, the threats they feel, and the emotions that entangle them, making the courageous act difficult to perform. As a result, shades of courage emerge as systematically different within these four semantics, as displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Semantics and shades of courage

Semantic	Threat	Aim	Obstacle	Shade of courage
Freedom	Endangering life, health…	Autonomy	Fear	"Facing the world alone"
	Being trapped Becoming dependent	Safety		"Trusting somebody"
Goodness	Self-corruption To be a bad person	To feel alive	Guilt Anguish & Fear	"Breaking the siege of guilt"
	Feeling lifeless	Purity	Desire	"Enduring relinquishing"
Power	Face others' malice	One-upmanship To be admired	Need for approval	"Winning alone"
	Losing status	Assertiveness Authenticity	Shame	"Embracing the defeat"
Belonging	Exclusion Loneliness	Dignity	Hope	"Accepting the fate of a stray dog"
	Losing self-respect	Inclusion	Rage	"Bearing the shame"

Courage is prominent within the *semantic of freedom*. The two main polarities marking this semantic — freedom/dependence and exploration/attachment — are based on the emotional dialectic between fear and courage. Fear is herein an essential component of courage. It is the obstacle that stands between the individual and his paramount existential goal, that is autonomy, perceived as the ability to face the world alone, without guidance and protection.

Due to dramatic events in the family history, or for less clear reasons, the outside word is constructed as dangerous, hence threatening. It takes courage, then, to venture into the world and explore what is beyond an "inside" perceived as warm and protective: family, lifetime friends, a solid marriage, a well-known and familiar job environment. Fear of the outside world often anchors people dominated by this semantic to protective bonds, able to reassure them.

As a result of these conversational processes, members of these families will feel, or be defined as fearful or cautious or, alternatively, courageous, even reckless. They will find people who are prepared to protect them or will meet up with people who are unable to survive by themselves, who need their support. They will marry people who are fragile and dependent, but also individuals who are free and sometimes unwilling to make commitments. They will suffer for their dependence. They will try in every way to gain their independence. In other cases they will be proud of their independence and freedom, which they will defend more than everything else. Admiration, contempt, conflict, alliances, love, and hatred will be played out around issues of freedom/dependence. (Ugazio, 2013, p. 84)

The more this polarity dominates the conversation, the more probable is the polarization of the identities within the family:

In the same family we will therefore have the globetrotters as well as people who have never moved away from the district where they were born. And there will be those — like agoraphobic patients — who are so dependent and in need of protection that they will require someone to accompany them in dealing with the most ordinary situations in daily life, and those who, on the other hand, will be so independent as to seem self-sufficient. (p. 84)

Courage is not only a core element of this semantic, it is also an undisputed virtue everyone aims at. In families dominated by the semantic of freedom, everyone shares

a moral order in which freedom, independence and exploration are constructed as values, while the bonds of attachment and the company of others are regarded as an expression of the need of protection from a "dangerous" world and are consequently associated with a certain degree of humiliating dependence. (p. 86)

To summarize, the threat within the semantic of freedom is represented by the dangers the world is fraught with, in front of which the individual is constructed as vulnerable. Courage herein serves the purpose of autonomy, since losing autonomy means to lose value in front of oneself and the family. Fear is the obstacle that can sometimes be so powerful to turn into panic attacks.

Facing the world alone is the paramount shade of courage within this semantic, although other shades, significantly different, are present. In the other aforementioned semantics, courage has a different and less crucial role, since the core emotions of the dominant polarities are different.

Understanding families or groups in which the *semantic of goodness* is dominant seems like venturing into a Dostoevsky's page, where the struggle between good and evil is fed by the emotional polarity guilt/innocence. When this semantic prevails, conversation revolves around:

Episodes which bring into play the deliberate intention to do harm, selfishness, greed, guilty pleasure, but also goodness, purity, innocence, asceticism, as well as sacrifice and abstinence. As a result, members of these families will feel, and be seen, as good, pure, responsible or alternatively bad, selfish, immoral. They will meet people who will save them, improve them, or, on the contrary, who will initiate them into vice, lead them to behavior that will make them feel guilty. They will marry people who are innocent, pure, capable of self-denial or, on the other hand, cruel egoists who will take advantage of them. Their children will be good, pure, chaste or alternatively will express their feelings without restraint, be aggressive in affirming themselves and their sexuality. Some of them will suffer for the selfishness and the malice of others, or for the intrinsic badness of their own impulses. Others will be proud of their own purity and moral superiority. And some will feel gratified by the satisfaction of their own impulses. And there will be those, especially in families where these polarities dominate the conversation over several genera-

tions, who have so proven their particular self-denial as to seem ascetic, and those who have expressed their impulses with such selfishness as to be considered evil. (p. 129)

Another polarity, alive/dead, brings dramatic pathos into the good-evil dialectic, typical of this semantic, because life stands on the evil side. To feel alive into this semantic means being evil and selfish, satisfying one's urges and drives by reprehensible conduct. Conversely, being good herein has little to do with generosity. It does not involve acting for the common good or making other people happy. It primarily means abstinence. Goodness within this semantic is a matter of sacrifice, mortification and the willingness to step back from life. "Vital expressions — sexuality, self-affirmation, investment in people and things — are where evil is played out whereas sacrifice, renouncement and asceticism are identified with good" (p. 131).

When the *semantic of power* dominates the conversation, two polarities prevail: "winner-loser" and the "strong-willed/yielding," fuelled by the emotive polarity shame-boasting. The latter prevails when one is in the winning position: their superiority is recognized by conversational partners whereas shame and embarrassment prevail when one is in a losing position. The polarity "strong-willed/yielding" is subordinated to "winner-loser" as means to an end.

> These people are winners because they are willful, determined or efficient, or they are losers because they are passive, compliant or liable to give in to others. Affability, amenability, acceptance of definition given by the other person to the relationship are construed within these families as passivity, faint-heartedness, ineptitude. (p. 182)

Winner-loser polarity "had a particular aspect that distinguishes it from the other polarities: its content is purely relational. People can only regard themselves as winners or losers in comparison to others" (p. 182). Consequently, "the *conflict over the definition of the relationship is a continual issue in the conversation of these families.* The subject matter being argued over — the 'contents' of the conflict — is generally irrelevant: what is important is supremacy, 'one-upmanship'" (p. 185).

Joy/cheerfulness and despair/anger permeate the emotional experience of family members when the *semantic of belonging* prevails. Joy/cheerfulness is experienced by those accepted and honored in the group, while despair/anger affects those excluded, abandoned, ostracized.

Here the sense of being included in the group or excluded and cast away from it is crucial, and connects with the polarity honorable/unworthy. Some people are welcomed, honored, worthy of being remembered whereas others are excluded, marginalized, defrauded, forgotten. People within this semantic crave belonging to a family, a community, and an all-absorbing marital relationship. They all yearn to be at the center of their partner's emotional world, but some end up feeling rejected, alone, misunderstood, abandoned, as those prone to depression.

> Expulsion from the group, or not belonging to a family, is seen by such people as an irreparable disgrace, whereas the greatest good is to be well-established and respected within the groups to which they belong, including family and community. Yet it is often in the name of dignity that permanent rifts occur. Honor in these families is a value just as fundamental as belonging. Breaks up with parents, with relatives, and with the community are frequent in these family groups. Sometimes they are irreparable, at other times they are healed, nevertheless they have a profound effect on the destiny of certain members of the family. (pp. 228-229)
>
> When the semantic of belonging has a long history in a family, extending back over several generations, those who are black sheep, or have been disowned, defrauded or forgotten co-position themselves with individuals who are respected, or worthy of being remembered for

TPM®

their actions, or have simply been included by divine grace among the elects. Illegitimate births, desertions, abandonments are matched with fortunate events such as inheritances, fairy tale weddings, professional honors, dazzling careers. Life for some seems to have been harsh, while for others it has been particularly kind. Some members of the family are adored and admired while others are ignored or become the object of aggression and violence. At other times, especially when the semantic of belonging has only recently acquired central importance in the family, events are less typical but generate anger/despair or, alternatively, joy/cheerfulness, and are interpreted in terms of exclusion/inclusion. (pp. 232-233)

We will see how the meanings generated by these semantics give life to substantially different shades of courage. We will illustrate and discuss them in the following sections, providing examples from our clinical practice, where this hypothesis has developed, and from the literature.

FEELING FEARLESS WITHIN THE SEMANTIC OF FREEDOM

I admire my brother! His recklessness is amazing! He was fearless also as a child. I could never be like him, said Enrico, a thirty year-old agoraphobic patient. His brother, Marco, is a young man in his late twenties, who recently started his career as a professional chef. What made him so admirable in Enrico's eyes? Soon after his professional diploma, Marco successfully applied for a job as a boat chef and now is about to leave his family and his girlfriend for at least one year. His readiness to leave everything behind and explore the world alone amazed Enrico and the rest of the family. In families where the semantic of freedom is paramount, courage is an undisputed virtue everyone aims at in order to assert their own autonomy.

People within this semantic often come to therapy when they realize fear has taken over, preventing them from reaching the important goal they were aiming at. Usually this goal has much to do with affirming one's own autonomy, like in the case of Alessandro. At the start of his therapy, he had just quit his Erasmus in London, and had seen his whole life plan fade away. Unlike many of his University mates, he knew exactly what he wanted to do in his life. He wanted to work for NGOs and live overseas. Traveling the world had always been his main passion, but, after an episode of hashish overuse, he fell prey to panic attacks. Initially he tried to resist, also because he was romantically involved with an English girl. In the end, he had to surrender. The panic was too strong; he could not go to his University alone, his girlfriend had to accompany him. Reluctantly, he decided to return to his parents' house. He started feeling better but panic attacks and a sense of depersonalization trapped him as soon as he tried to leave the house.

For two years Alessandro tried to regain part of his autonomy. He even rented a room in a shared house, but never managed to sleep there a single night. He tried not to surrender to his fear, enacting recurrent attempts to leave his parents' house, ending up more than once at the Emergency ward. When he later realized that he was unable to leave the house even in the company of his most trusted friends, he seriously considered suicide. Surrendering to fear was indeed an unacceptable breech of his self-esteem: *When my friends proposed having a trip to the lake together I agreed since I could not concentrate on my studies anyway, but it was dreadful. The very first night I felt this strong suicidal instinct. They wanted to go out, but I couldn't. I remember there was this chair in the house, it seemed like one of those barber shop chairs. I was staring at that chair thinking* wait, as soon as they leave I'll take the razor and kill myself there on that chair. *It was a strong idea and it scared me. I must have become pale because one of my friends noticed something was wrong*

and decided to stay home with me. The morning after I said I had to go back home. So I took a train, I remember it was very crowded. I was sitting there, feeling like I was walking on a rope, suspended between madness and ... and I was trying to keep this balance. I felt the urge to stand up in the middle of the cabin and scream something like I am Jesus Christ! *I was completely out of my mind.* Alessandro could not accept the power fear had over him (Figure 1), but his own emotional reactions, perceived as uncontrolled, were feeding his fear even more.

Obstacle

Fear

Threat

Risking my life
(hashish/not accepting
the constraint)

Aim

Being autonomous
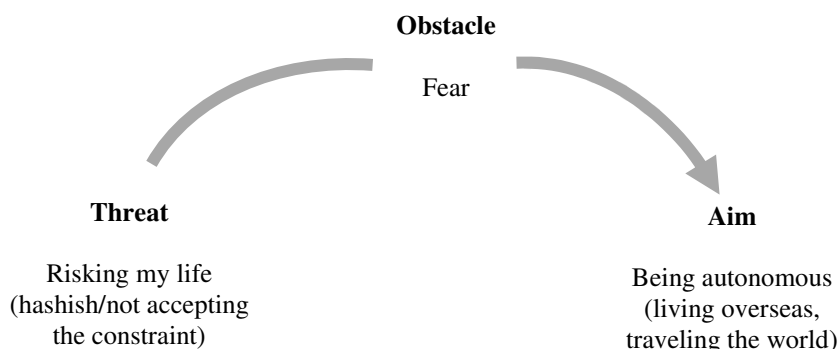(living overseas,
traveling the world)

FIGURE 1
A shade of courage: Facing the world alone.

Quite a few people belonging to this semantic do not ask for therapy due to specific symptoms like panic attacks, but because they want to *learn* how to stay by themselves. This is the case with Rodolfo, a sixty-five year-old man with no previous therapeutic experience. He came to therapy with a very specific aim, *being able to manage without a wife*. His second marriage had silently failed, nonetheless neither he nor his wife ever decided to split up. Both apparently tolerated mutual betrayals as a part of an unspoken deal. Rodolfo never questioned his marriage, as being married to a substantially reliable woman was a guarantee for him, as he was growing older. When his wife, unexpectedly, asked him to leave the house, he was traumatized. *I am scared of aging by myself. Who will take care of me? How will I cope with an empty house? I have never been a single man my entire life*! Soon after the initial disorientation, he started to feel worried about getting married for a third time simply because he was not able to live by himself.

Apparently, fear of loneliness ran in the family: it was the reason why Rodolfo's mother accepted her husband's bigamy. The man used to live half of the week with his wife (Rodolfo's mother), and the other half with another woman, *an absurd situation that was painful for everyone. What is startling is that my mother didn't really need my dad, she was a competent professional from an affluent family. Plus, my grandfather was very rich. She was full of interests and surrounded by friends, she could have handled a separation. She simply could not stand sleeping alone*. Rodolfo sees himself much like his mother. For him, not getting married for the third time and face the prospective of aging alone would have been like showing the courage his mother never found.

His love life was not at stake here and he had no intention to renounce it. For Rodolfo, like for many other people positioning themselves within the semantic of freedom, love is a dimension involving freedom, self-discovery and some degree of adventure, and therefore it exists outside the marriage. Marriage has often to do with security and is therefore perceived as necessary and constraining at the same time.

Also living love within the semantic of freedom is an act of bravery, a virtue possessed by many of Thomas Hardy's characters, often forgetful of their own frailty. According to Parks (2015), both his novels and his own life are dominated by the semantic of freedom. Certainly he was able to depict the emotional dynamics of attraction within this semantic. In a passage of *Far from the madding crowd* (Hardy, 1874/2015), masterfully commented on by Parks, the disreputable but dashing Sergeant Troy manages to seduce the beautiful and brave orphan Bathsheba thanks to a dazzling display of swordsmanship involving having his blade flash all around her body. "She stands frightened and adoring. (. . .) Fear and desire are fusing in Bathsheba" (Parks, 2015, p. 111).

Whereas the man built the encounter as a duel in which he will be the winner and she the loser, Bathsheba "is not as concerned, as he, about winning and losing, nor does she even begin to frame the experience morally" (p. 113). She is overwhelmed by the excitement. This is the only reason that makes her forget the Victorian moral commands and accept that "terrifying" bliss that forces her to marry the wrong man. A moment of distraction is enough to get you into trouble!

As shown by the example above, in a world sprinkled by dangers, trusting someone else can become an act of bravery. Our patients are seldom as brave as Bathsheba. Like Hardy himself, they do not usually find the courage to fully trust someone, fearing they lack the resources to face the consequences of their misplaced trust.

This is the case of Giorgia, whose feeling of having "no safe bet" was paralyzing her when she started her therapy. Her relationship with Mario, a high school mate, had lasted for seventeen years without becoming a marriage. She had been having an affair for thirteen years with Antonio, a fifty-eight years old colleague, who was married.

Mario is the best person I have ever known, but he is a brother to me. Antonio instead is my perfect half, but neither of us seems able to take the final step. We are both cowards. Every time he looks like he made up his mind and is ready to leave, I take a step back. I'm split. He is seventeen years older than me. What kind of future, what kind of life can a man who is nearly sixty years old offer me?

Having a baby with Mario, on the other hand, could have been a solution, considering Giorgia was forty-three, but she was scared (Figure 2): *Mario is very independent, he wants his own space, he really loves his job and is devoted to it body and soul. It works fine for me because of Antonio, but what would happen if I quit my relationship with him? I couldn't predict his* (Antonio's) *reaction if I had a baby with Mario….*
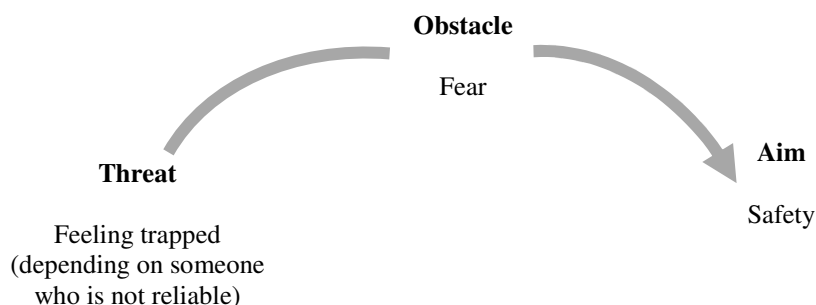

FIGURE 2
A shade of courage: Trusting somebody.

THE BRAVERY OF EVIL AND THE FIRMNESS OF SACRIFICE WITHIN THE SEMANTIC OF GOODNESS

Being brave within the semantic of goodness often means to trespass the boundaries established by a moral code perceived as oppressive. People positioning themselves on the negative pole of this semantic — the "bad" ones — although surrounded by moral disapproval, exert a sinister fascination over the other members of their family, because of their bravery. Courage can be displayed also by people positioning themselves on the positive (abstinent) side of this semantic. It is an abstinent form of courage, a firmness of renouncing craved pleasures. The first kind of courage requires the person to face the external threat of moral blame and breeches in relationships with significant others who disapprove their behavior. The second involves an internal threat, feeling dead or lifeless because of renouncing. Guilt is the obstacle for those who transgress, while the desire for the craved object is the obstacle to be overcome for those who renounce.

Patients with obsessive-compulsive disorders seem to position themselves in the middle of this semantic. The sense of debasement that comes with giving up their desires is so strong that they cannot position themselves among the good ones for long. On the other hand, fear and anguish make it impossible for them to entirely give into temptation. Like Giulio, an obsessive-compulsive patient in his forties, who said *It takes a fair amount of bravery to be evil!* Certainly an impossible task for him. Giulio craved for Lara, *a raunchy, curvy woman* who embodied his ideal sexual partner. Knowing he was attracted to her, she kept provoking him. *Everyone in the office knows that she is ready to have one-night stands with anyone just for fun*, said Giulio, so her offer was not just a joke, but *how do I dare cheat on Angela? I am so tempted, but I can't, I would be a monster.*

Giulio could not easily overcome his sense of guilt, since Angela gave him shelter and consolation after the rough end to his marriage, which had drained him both emotionally and financially. Although they have been living together for three years, Giulio never felt compelled to pay for house expenses, only to feel then uncomfortable for *being no more than a guest*. Far from being a considerate housemate, Giulio was also a disappointing lover, having started to avoid any sexual contact a couple of months after moving to her place. *She is a wonderful woman, with very delicate features.* — he says — *She is a real angel, she is perfect to build a family with and grow old together, but I'm not attracted to her sexually*.

It is not hard to understand how guilt could be an overwhelming obstacle for him (Figure 3), no matter how accessible the goal and how disruptive the desire. Cheating on Angela required the bravery of being a bad person!

Obstacle

Guilt

Threat

Being a bad person
(betraying an innocent)

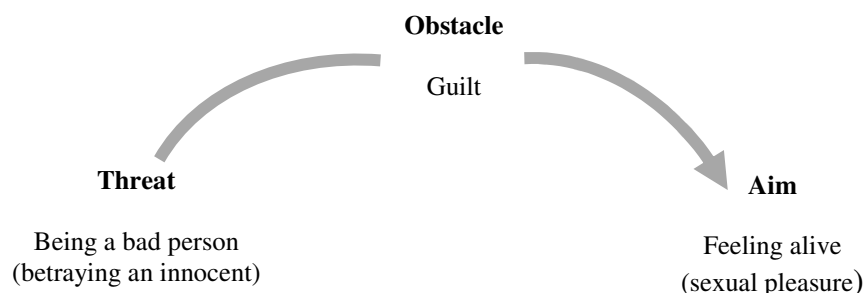**Aim**

Feeling alive
(sexual pleasure)

FIGURE 3
A shade of courage: Breaking the siege of guilt.

Sometimes, obsessive-compulsive patients, so prone to the seduction of evil, but also so chained to guilt, find a way out by experiencing evil indirectly. This is what happened to Francesco, a dull bank employee with a life infested by obsessions and compulsions. To avoid protracting his hand washing ritual for too long, he started washing his hands at the public drinking fountains: *this way I can stop washing them. I can't stay at the fountain for hours like I do at home. It's too cold in winter and anyway there are people watching. Embarrassment helps me stop.* He was not in therapy for his symptoms though, but for his wife. She had been dating with men she met on the Internet for a long time now, and she did not even try to hide it. Instead, she made the clear statement that she did not intend to quit: *I am not giving up on these men. I like them, they make me feel good.* Francesco partially justified her, for being tired of a life of sacrifice, oppressed by the weight of two disabled children and a husband with severe limitations. He saw her as mentally ill and would like to have convinced her to enter therapy. On the other hand, he considered her a slut, *she is like her father who used to cheat on his own wife with whoever. I should have seen that coming…* But Francesco admired her courage. Beneath the invectives and disapproval of her behavior there was an ambivalent admiration for her bravery. She was able to break the siege of guilt and satisfy her desire! *How can she throw away everything she has been taught?! We met in a local parish, she was teaching catechism to children. Her mother was a saint, very religious… she was religious too. Doesn't your conscience prick? I asked her at times, and she laughed at me. She has the heart of a lion! I would really like to go and enjoy myself but I'd never be able to even if I wanted to.* It was also clear from the wealth of detail in the descriptions of his wife's behavior, that Francesco got some sort of vicarious satisfaction, indirectly experiencing adventures he was not able to pursue himself. As he confesses later during the course of therapy, he not only used to read his wife's e-mails to her lovers, but also asked her to tell him about her affairs.

Also the expression of aggressiveness and violence, as forbidden as sexual impulses within this semantic, can be experienced in a vicarious way. The episode that involved Schopenhauer, whose philosophical principles are curiously close to the premises leading obsessive-compulsive behavior (Ugazio, 2013), is emblematic. During the Frankfurt riots of 1848, Schopenhauer invited the soldiers to use his balcony to shoot at the insurgents, and, with an exquisite blend between courtesy and perfidy, offered them his opera glasses to help them aim targets better (Lauxtermann, 2000).

Being brave enough to cross moral boundaries, puts the obsessive-compulsive patients' whole identity at risk, in addition to giving rise to devastating feelings of guilt. And sometimes, another shade of courage — the firmness of sacrifice — is required in order to re-establish one's own integrity of their selves and to gain redemption. This is the tragic case of Giovanni, a University student who committed suicide to restore the purity of his heart: *Yesterday I couldn't find the courage to do it* (commit suicide), *but now I know I will.* These are the opening words of the letter in which Giovanni explains his decision to his parents, after two tormented weeks. His mother, who had always been very close to him, noticed that he was gloomy and in anguish progressively withdrawing, and wanted to talk to him, but never found the right time to do it. Her attention was completely focused on her husband, who never answered her phone calls and appeared more elusive and disengaged than ever. This time, it was not her husband's usual one-night stands. She suspected that he had fallen in love with a colleague and had started to live with her during the working week in the town where they were working together, two hundred miles away from the family home.

Meanwhile what was tormenting Giovanni? He had just had his first sexual experience with a prostitute, after a binge drinking night spent with his friends. He had protected sex, as he wrote in the letter, but this did not matter. Since that night, he could not find peace, as he could not forgive himself for being so reckless. He was scared of having contracted HIV, thus somehow infecting his family. Giovanni never underwent any proper medical exam. What mattered to him was not so much the supposed and unverified punishment — the HIV — but the unacceptable nature of his behavior. *I was an idiot to lose my honor like this*, he wrote. No medical response could give him back the purity he had lost. *The matter* — he concluded — *is unsolvable*. The only way out was to hang himself and punish that guilty body of his (Figure 4).

Obstacle

Desire to live

Threat/price

Death
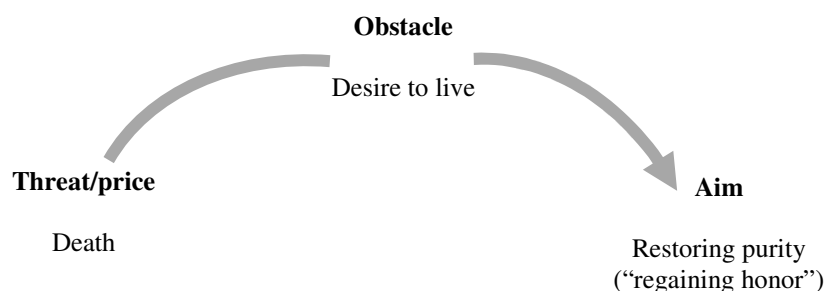
Aim

Restoring purity
("regaining honor")

FIGURE 4
A shade of courage: The ultimate sacrifice.

If Giovanni brings the firmness of sacrifice to its extreme consequences, his father Calogero provides a no less impressive display of the bravery it takes to break the siege of guilt. When he initially asked for therapy, ten days after his son's suicide, he was overwhelmed by guilt. Everyone in the family held him responsible for Giovanni's death, as they seemed to believe that Giovanni killed himself because he could not stand the disgust he felt at having behaved like his father. Initially, Calogero was devastated. He could not conceive as to why his son had rejected life for such an irrelevant episode. Always hungry for life, he was sincerely shattered by the suicide, even though he never had a real relationship with his son, so different from him. The siege of guilt did not last for long. Two months later, he was the one accusing his dead son and his wife. It was Giovanni's fault — he never loved life — and his wife's fault, who, rather than taking care of their son was too busy obsessing on the whereabouts of her husband. Her jealousy destroyed his image in the eyes of their son. Also at home, both daughters recounted how Calogero furiously railed against his dead son on more than one occasion. They heard him screaming things like *you are a blockhead, you did well killing yourself! You never loved life!* When he finally visited his son's grave, he started kicking the headstone. Two months later, Calogero seemed to have completely overcome the tragedy. He gave his son's clothes away to charity and converted Giovanni's room into the office he had always wanted. He decided to spend a week skiing with the family, where his wife caught him yet again in the sauna with another woman.

APPEARING DAUNTLESS WITHIN THE SEMANTIC OF POWER

My wife is a dauntless woman, said a patient during a family therapy session, proudly looking at his partner in front of a puzzled therapist. From the therapist's perspective, this was an

unexpected statement, but not so for the family. Both children joined the father in giving an admiring look to their mother, who smiled, pleased, in return. No doubt, a Purple Heart had just been awarded, but what for? The act of courage they were all celebrating was the woman's skillfulness of living with her children, for five years, within the husband's family clan. A prestigious, yet demanding job, had taken her husband 300 miles away. Although strained by the pressure of a judging clan, the woman defended her territory for five long years, without losing her composure, and gaining everyone's respect. This particular shade of courage, typical of the semantic of power, is admirably captured by Hemingway's statement "courage is grace under pressure."

When all that matters in a conversation is winning or losing, and the goal is to increase one's own status (or at least not to lose it) as it happens within the semantic of power, holding your position, withstanding judgment and expectations, may represent the ultimate challenge. This woman who for five years was subject to envious attacks by members of the clan due to her husband's professional success, clearly displays the more common shade of courage existing in this semantic dimension: the courage it takes to uphold a dominant position, facing others' hostility. In these families, if you win, you win alone, and no consensual acknowledgment can be expected from others. For people like this who yearn for approval, it is a real trial by fire.

This is what happened to Katia, when she had to choose between family approval and following her own dream. When we met her in therapy, Katia was twenty-six years old and her dream was to become an actress, thus following in her mother's footsteps. Katia's mother was a theatre actress whose career never reached the heights she expected. After her first attempts as a movie critic, Katia was accepted by a prestigious acting academy. That day, she informed her mother that she intended to move to London, in order to follow the program.

No matter how good I was, or how far I could go, as a critic, in my heart I knew I had to be an actress. As soon as I was admitted, I spoke to my mother. She was furious. An actor — she said — needs to master their own body and emotions, and I was not that person. She told me I was fragile, vulnerable, not ready to use my body and emotions as a tool. She threw my bulimia in my face as proof that I still had to deal with my weaknesses, and I was not strong enough for that challenge.

I tried to ignore her but her words were fixed in my mind. I went to London to start the first semester, but I did not last the first two weeks. I started eating and vomiting all night long. My mother never called, but I thought my father would. He didn't. Even my brother, who had always been so close to me, didn't phone me.

The day of my first piece I could hardly stand on my feet. I immediately felt all my classmates were staring at me: they were realizing that something was wrong with me. I tried to ignore them, but my anxiety grew stronger, and I fainted.

Facing her mother's hostile feelings seemed to be an insurmountable obstacle for Katia (Figure 5). Since the courage of winning alone involves the possibility of losing significant confirmative bonds, it may represent too much of a challenge for people positioning themselves within the semantic of power.

There is another form of courage, subtle and much harder to understand for people not sharing this semantic. It is the courage to give up status, accept shame and stand tall against the disapproval of others. This is the kind of courage that Tennessee Williams's (1955/2004) *Cat on a hot tin roof* main character, Brick, seems to ultimately lack. Whilst blatantly counteracting all family values of industriousness and success, Brick cannot infringe up at the bottom the family rule of defending the respectable façade. When facing the threat represented by admitting the real nature of

his friendship with Skipper and accepting the shame linked to homosexuality, Brick steps back and rather lets the friend die, carrying the embarrassing secret to the grave. By doing so, Brick becomes one of the many "liars" of his family. As his father says to him during one of their dramatic confrontations, "this disgust with mendacity is disgust with yourself. You! — you dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it! — before you'd face the truth with him!" (Act II).

Obstacle

Need for approval

Threat

Others' malice
(clan's, mother's… envy)

Aim

One-upmanship
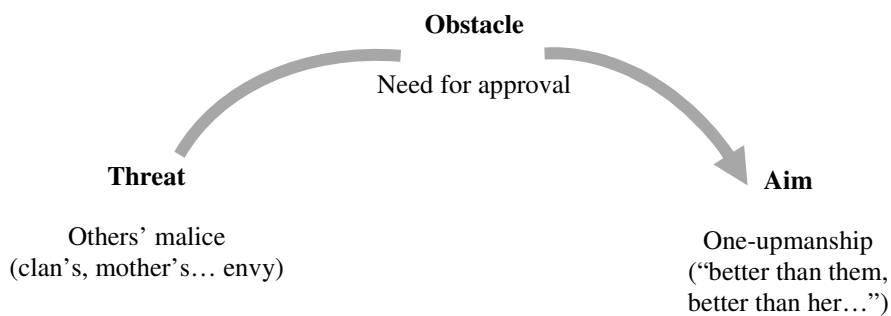("better than them,
better than her…")

FIGURE 5
A shade of courage: Winning alone.

Brick's dilemma has more than one link with Eva's, about becoming a "queen of the suburbs" in order to counteract her husband's attempt to keep her in check.

I am fed up with him! I need to find the courage to leave him and move to the outskirts. With all the money he'll have to give me for the separation, I could be a queen in Giambellino (a suburban area of Milan, Italy)*, much more than in our penthouse right in the heart of Milan. I know how to handle people, not like him! In the blink of an eye, I would be surrounded by friends! Real friends. Simple, genuine people, not like all those windbags I am forced to go round with because of him! I could finally get rid of all those mortifying diets, humiliating visits to the "vulvologist"* (so she calls her gynecologist)*, vaginal lubes… all for a man I don't want in my bed anymore! If only I could be that dauntless… what a stunning setback for him, his wife in Giambellino!*

What kind of courage was Eva talking about? Again, it was the courage of accepting a clear social descent and withstanding the shame of the loss of status in order to establish assertiveness (Figure 6). Eva was willing to, at least, consider destroying everything she and her husband had lived for to avoid bowing her head down in front of her husband who performed what she called "an ignoble overturning of power" within the couple. For years, Eva's charismatic personality granted her the undisputed leadership of the family, but the unexpected revelation of her husband's secret relationship had succeeded where all his money and prestigious career had failed, subverting the couple's power balance. Who would have predicted that her husband, always so eager to comply with others' expectations, could have acted so dauntlessly, exposing himself to gossip and criticism with this betrayal? Eva felt now checkmated and powerless, unless she was able to "embrace the defeat" in order to win. By accepting to lose her status, she could have given tit for tat, but shame is an insurmountable obstacle between her and the fantasized act of courage.

No matter how tempting, accepting to lose status it is really a hard and unlikely choice for members of families in which the semantic of power dominates. More often, some member

who finds himself disregarded or underrated may find the courage to concoct some vengeance against those who humiliated them.
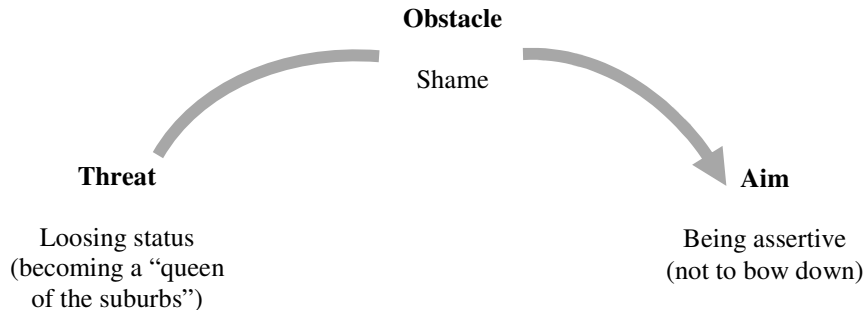

FIGURE 6
A shade of courage: Embracing the defeat.

This is exactly what happens in Nemirovsky's (1930/2008) short novel *The ball*, in which a not particularly sharp teenager is able to enact a subtle, ruthless revenge against her hated mother. Worried that her daughter could grab the spotlight from her, the ambitious woman bans Antoinette from the ball that would have introduced the family to Paris high society. In front of such a stinging humiliation, Antoinette finds the courage for a fierce retaliation, as she throws all invitations into the Seine, leaving her mother waiting for guests that will never show up.

FEELING RESOLUTE WITHIN THE SEMANTIC OF BELONGING

I could never forgive myself for coming back home, I have been such a coward, said Anna. Although fifteen years have passed, she still had to carry this terrible burden. She felt she did not deserve to be loved by anyone, so she trapped herself into an unsatisfying relationship and almost every night she drank too much.

What was the act of cowardice that disturbed her so much? It was what she called her "dirty bargain," when she traded dignity for shelter (Figure 7). Soon after her mother's death due to cancer, Anna started suspecting that her dad was having a relationship with her aunt (her mother's second sister). Both her father and aunt denied it, but finally, during the summer holidays, she managed to catch them red handed.
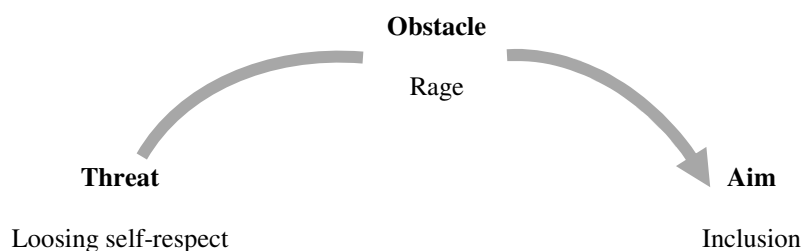

FIGURE 7
A shade of courage: Bearing the shame.

She did not tell anyone and initially started to call her aunt "mum," apparently enthusiastic of having a reconstructed family. Unable to bear the feeling of having betrayed her mother and terribly angry with her father and her aunt, Anna later ran away from home. She started living as a punk, in a small room with her friends and ten stray dogs, drinking heavily and trying different kinds of drugs.

I started feeling like those stray dogs we had adopted, no future, no goals in life, just the need for a roof over my head and a tin of food at the end of the day. Since the day I left home, nobody came looking for me. I mean, I had disappeared and the rest of my family simply went on, careless. My sister, that bootlicker, was so proud of being those two liars' dolly! Everyone seemed to have forgotten about me. For a while, I really thought I could live like that, like a stray dog, but with dignity. Then, I started regretting the things I had lost. My school, my friends, my clothes… I came back, tail between my legs, ready to accept my father's lies and a false mother.

Anna really felt that this act of cowardice had left a mark on her love life. Her current marriage, no less than the previous one, granted her an enviable belonging, but they both came with the price of a compromise that undermined her self-esteem. The courage Anna regrets not having displayed is the one we find in many people with mood disorders. It is the courage of accepting the fate of a stray dog in order to retain their dignity (Figure 8).

Obstacle

Hope

Threat

Being excluded
(loosing the family)

Aim
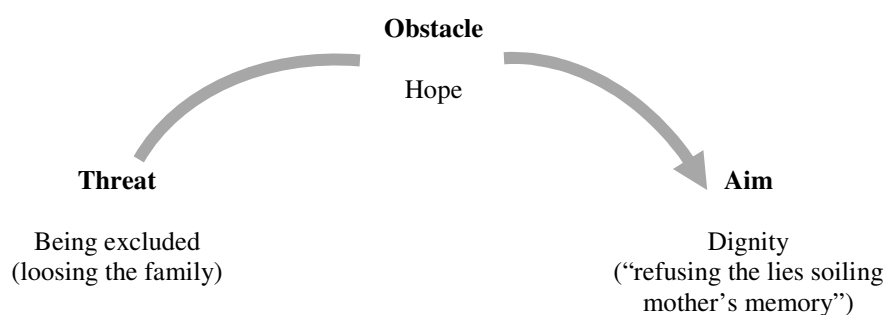
Dignity
("refusing the lies soiling
mother's memory")

FIGURE 8
A shade of courage: Accepting the fate of a stray dog.

Josè displayed this kind of courage, but there is no better outcome for him. The story of Josè starts with an abandonment. When he was two years old, both his parents died in a car accident. His uncle Miguel, and business partner of his father, took him in his own family where his cousins of approximately the same age became his real "brothers." On the other hand, his birth brothers were adopted by other relatives. As soon as they became adults, Josè's brothers took Miguel to court with the infamous accusation of subtracting a substantial part of the orphans' inheritance. They asked Josè to join the legal battle against their uncle. Despite acknowledging the legitimacy of his brothers' claims, he could not stand against the man he learned to recognize as a father. His denial turned into a painful breakdown in his relationship with his birth brothers. At the same time, he felt he could not accept belonging to his uncle's family anymore. He refused Miguel's adoption proposal, and left Brazil, to live in Italy all by himself. A courageous resolution for an eighteen year-old boy! The description of Josè's departure from Brazil resembles the goodbye to Procida that ends Elsa Morante's (1957/1991) masterpiece *Arturo's island*.

As Parks (2014, 2015) maintains, Morante's — just like Dickens'— novels are dominated by the semantic of belonging. Morante, who has been severely depressed during her life, describes Arturo's decision to join World War II inside this semantic. Disappointed by the ignoble conduct of his father and accused of incestuous behavior by his stepmother, Arturo breaks with his whole world: his dad, that he had long adored and idealized, his stepmother, his fiancé and even Procida, his bewitched island. The day of his sixteenth birthday, Arturo decides to leave, joining a war he hardly ever heard of before, but he is still reluctant to act on his decision. Unexpectedly, it is not fear holding him back, although he is still a boy: "I felt a mad temptation to dash down the street in the hope of catching up the cab and being with him for at least a little while longer. But even while this temptation was rending my heart I stayed where I was, letting the minutes slip by till all hope was over" (p. 353).

It is the unfounded hope of cancelling the most painful breakdown, the one with his father, that keeps him locked in his room "to put off, for a few hours at least, the irrevocable step that threatened me. I didn't want to cry, but I cried. I wished I could forget W. G. [Wilhem Gerace, his father], as I forgot some insignificant person I'd met just once in a café or at street corner. But through my tears I found myself calling 'Pa,' like a child of two" (p. 354).

With tears comes hope again, a sort of "magical certainty" that his father, remembering his birthday, will eventually come back to greet him and maybe spend some time together. His father does not show up, "but hope still clung to me like a parasite and refused to leave" (p. 356). When he finally accepts that his father is not coming, Arturo decides to spend his last hours at the island, hidden in a warehouse, and there "as free and alone as some wretched vagabond" (p. 365).

Despite the incredible courage displayed by joining the World War being nothing more than a child, Arturo does not flatter himself with the idea of being brave. At best, he feels resolute in leaving everything behind in order to save his dignity. Likewise, Josè did not describe his departure from Brazil as a courageous act. It was rather perceived as a necessary measure against indignity. Nonetheless, the courage within them was acknowledged by others who tried to stop them. Despite their conflicts, Arturo's stepmother tries to stop him, Josè's cousins, his uncle and his aunt try everything they can to hold him back, except, of course, the only thing that could have stopped him, returning the stolen goods to his brother.

As these examples show within this semantic the courageous act often takes the form of a clear cut with one's world. It comes therefore as no surprise that hope, much more than fear, can be an entangling antagonist to courage, drawing on these individuals' need for love and belonging.

Hope is consequently perceived by people inside this semantic as a dangerous emotion, since it may lead to the loss of dignity. It is the kind of trap Pip falls into, in Dickens's (1860-1861/1992) novel *Great expectations*. In his quest to find his own place into the Gentlemen's society, and fascinated by the sophisticated world of Estella and Miss Havisham, Pip turns his back on his roots, denying people who had cared for him in his attempt to be accepted by the world he desperately wants to belong to. It is not the mere desire to climb the social ladder that inspires him, but rather the need for a dignified membership.

Believing Miss Havisham to be responsible for his fortune, he sees that money as a clear sign of an established, respectable belonging. When he finds out that his increasing richness does not come from the lady he admired, but from a despised convict he helped long ago, he feels shattered:

> I remained too stunned to think; and it was not until I began to think, that I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces. Miss Havisham's intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me (…) But, sharpest and deepest pain of all, it was for the convict, guilty of I knew not what crimes, and liable to be taken out of those rooms where I sat thinking, and hanged at the Old Bailey door, that I had deserted Joe. (p. 215)

He therefore realizes he cannot accept the convict's money anymore, but at the same time he cannot just turn him away to save his own position and reputation. Being undeserved and based on deceit, it would strip away Pip's dignity. He then decides to stay at the convict's side until the end, losing all his money and health in the meanwhile. In order to enact this resolution, as happens to Josè and Arturo in the aforementioned examples, Pip has to face the obstacle represented by hope. Before accepting his fate, Pip has to give up the hope of being loved by Estella, and sever the last thread between him and the world he does not belong to anymore. The courage to refuse an undeserved belonging, despite all the comfort it may bring, unites José, Arturo, and Pip, and seems to represent the more characteristic shade of courage within this semantic.

CONCLUSIONS

There are many different forms of courage in tune with the subject's world of meanings. We have presented four of them, coherent with the semantics of freedom, goodness, power, and belonging, as Ugazio (2013) named them. Widespread in Western culture, these semantics characterize some of the most common psychopathologies (Castiglioni et al., 2014; Faccio et al. 2012; Ugazio & Fellin, 2016; Ugazio, Negri et al., 2015; Veronese et al., 2013). The values, the definitions of the self and of other, the ways of relating and the emotions typical of each semantic, also shape courage, modifying its anatomy. The aim, threat, and obstacle change radically in each of the shades of courage we discussed above.

This is the thesis we have set out and illustrated here with clinical and literary examples. It is a conjectural thesis, born out of clinical practice, nothing more than a hypothesis in search of empirical evidence. Our patients' narrative about their own lives and others' gave us the idea that courage is a multidimensional construct, our patients' courageous acts convinced us that when we speak about courage we speak about different emotions in tune with the dominant semantic of those patients.

There is no shortage of opportunities to verify the proposed hypotheses, all the more that instruments like the Family Semantic Grid (FSG; Ugazio & Castelli, 2015; Ugazio, Negri, Fellin, & Di Pasquale, 2009) are available and able to identify the semantics characterizing the therapeutic conversation, as well as other types of conversations. Already applied in various studies (Ugazio & Fellin, 2016; Ugazio, Negri et al., 2015), the different forms of the FSG enable researchers to grasp the meanings expressed by patients and other actors both in their narrated stories and in their verbal and non verbal interactions with therapists or other players. Other tools can be employed and they are actually used in other studies (Castiglioni, Faccio, Veronese, & Bell, 2013; Castiglioni et al., 2014; Faccio et al., 2012; Procter, 2014; Procter & Procter, 2008; Veronese et al., 2013).

In spite of the limitations pointed out, we think that our thesis deepens the nature of courage and challenges a common belief: the idea that courage is a resource and a factor of resilience in facing negative and traumatic experiences (Seligman, 2005). This is certainly true in a great number of cases, but not in all. As many of our examples show, there is a less explored side of the coin. Courage may also represent a powerful constraint, forcing the subjects into a course of action that endangers their well-being. Within the semantic of belonging courage may lead to painful breakdowns in the individual's vital relationships. The dramatic desertification that courage brings into José, Arturo, and Pip's lives well represent this risk. Thanks to their courageous acts, they maintain their dignity, but the price paid is tremendously high. Not to mention Giovanni, for whom firmness of sacrifice and search for purity become a choice of death. Also the strong appreciation of courage in the semantic of freedom can be a powerful factor of risk. Those who take a position within the valued pole end up risking their own life to prove their fearlessness. D. H. Lawrence exemplifies this with his own life. Heedless of his physical frailty and of his bad health, he dies at the age of forty-four. Those who position themselves within the opposite pole, and are instead prudent, are damaged in their self-esteem. Courage, being an unreachable aim, poses a threat to their self-esteem.

Our hypothesis, therefore, suggests to therapists that working with the patient to reduce the frightening nature of the threat or to help the patient to maintain control over obstructing emotions, it is not enough, nor always useful. The goal itself needs to be questioned sometimes. Although it defends some value and often protects the identity of the subject, courage is not always good for those who display it.

REFERENCES

Castiglioni, M., Faccio, E., Veronese, G., & Bell, R. C. (2013). The semantics of power among people with eating disorders. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *26*, 62-76. doi:10.1080/10720537.2013.740263

Castiglioni, M., Veronese, G., Pepe, A., & Villegas, M. (2014). The semantics of freedom in agoraphobic patients: An empirical study. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *27*, 120-136. doi:10.1080/10720537.2013.806874

Chesterton, G. K. (2013). The paradoxes of Christianity, Orthodoxy. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers. (Original work published 1908).

Dickens, C. (1992), *Great expectations.* London, UK: Wordsworth Editions. (Original work published 1860-1861).

Faccio, E., Belloni, E., Castelnuovo, G. (2012). The power semantics in self and other repertory grid representation: A comparison between obese and normal-weight adult women. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *3*, 1-7. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00517

Guidano, V. F. (1987). *Complexity of the self: A developmental approach to psychopathology and therapy.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Guidano, V. F. (1991). *The self in process: Toward a post-rationalist cognitive therapy.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Hardy, T. (2015). *Far from the madding crowd.* New York, NY: Penguin Random House. (Original work published 1874).

Lauxtermann, P. F. (2000). *Schopenhauer's broken world-view.* Dordretch, The Netherlands: Springer Netherlands. doi:10.1007/978-94-015-9369-4

Maddi, S. R. (2004). Hardiness: An operationalization of existential courage. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *44*, 279-298. doi:10.1177/0022167804266101

Morante, E. (1991). *Arturo's island,* (I. Quigley, Trans.). London, UK: Pan Books. (Original work published 1957).

Nemirovsky, I. (2008). The ball. In Nemirovsky, I. (S. Smith, Trans.), *David Golder, The ball, Snow in autumn, The Courilof affair* (pp. 143-186). New York, NY: Penguin Random House. (Original work published 1930).

Parks, T. (2014). *Romanzi pieni di vita* [Novels full of life]. Bari, Italy: Laterza.

Parks, T. (2015). *The Novel: A survival skill.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Procter, H. (2014). Qualitative grids, the relationality corollary and the levels of interpersonal construing. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *27*, 243-262. doi:10.1080/10720537.2013.820655

Procter, H., & Procter, J. (2008). The use of qualitative grids to examine the development of the construct good and evil in Byron's play "Cain: A mystery". *Journal of Construct Psychology*, *21*, 343-354. doi:10.1080/10720530802255301

Pury, C. L., Kowalski, R. M., & Spearman, J. (2007). Distinctions between general and personal courage. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *2*, 99-114. doi:10.1080/17439760701237962

Rachman, S. J. (1990). *Fear and courage* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: W. H. Freeman and Co.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2005). Positive psychology, positive prevention, and positive therapy. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 3-9). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Shelp, E. E. (1984). Courage: A neglected virtue in the patient-physician relationship. *Social Science & Medicine*, *18*, 351-360. doi:10.1016/0277-9536(84)90125-4

Ugazio, V. (2013). *Semantic polarities and psychopathologies in the family*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Ugazio, V., & Castelli D. (2015). The Semantics Grid of the Dyadic Therapeutic Relationship (SG-DTR). *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, *22*, 135-159. doi:10.4473/TPM22.1.8

Ugazio, V., & Fellin, L. (2016). Family semantic polarities and positionings. A semantic analysis. In P. Rober & M. Borcsa (Eds.), *Research perspectives in couple therapy: Discursive qualitative methods* (pp. 125-148). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-23306-2_9

Ugazio, V., Negri, A., & Fellin, L. (2015). Freedom, goodness, power, and belonging: The semantics of phobic, obsessive-compulsive, eating, and mood disorders. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, *28*, 293-315. doi:10.1080/10720537.2014.951109

Ugazio, V., Negri, A., Fellin, L., & Di Pasquale, R. (2009). The Family Semantics Grid (FSG). The narrated polarities. A manual for the semantic analysis of therapeutic conversation and self-narratives. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, *16*, 165-192. doi:10.4473/TPM.16.4.1

Veronese, G., Procaccia, R., Romaioli, D., & Barola, G. (2013). Psychopathological organizations and attachment styles in patients with fear of flying: A case study. *Open Psychology Journal*, *6*, 20-27. doi:10.2174/1874350101306010020

Williams, T. (2004). *Cat on a hot tin roof.* New York, NY: New Directions Publishing. (Original work published 1955).

Woodard, C. R. (2004). Hardiness and the concept of courage. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *56*, 173-185. doi:10.1037/1065-9293.56.3.173

Woodard, C. R., & Pury, C. L. (2007). The construct of courage: Categorization and measurement. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *59*, 135-147. doi:10.1037/1065-9293.59.2.135