

## The psychological dynamics that make people xenophobic

by Innocenzo Fiore\*

“In my opinion we haven't  
gone blind, I think we are  
blind. Blind men that see, but  
though seeing, cannot see”.  
(J.Saramago)

### *Introduction*

“Ensaio sobre a Cegueira” is a novel by José Saramago, published in Italy as “Cecità” (Blindness). It tells the story of a sudden epidemic that makes all the inhabitants of a nameless city, except for one woman, go blind. It is an allegorical work that refers to people's inability, at certain times in their history, to see the other person as being similar to themselves. In fact, the city where it is set is vague, the period is not stated, and the characters have no names. What happens in that place could happen anywhere, what happens at that time could happen at any time, what happens to those people could happen to any of us.

Saramago's novel is a pretext to start thinking about the phenomenon of xenophobia that is making itself felt in various parts of the world, particularly in Europe and even more, in Italy. The victims of xenophobic feelings are immigrants from the European Community (Albanian, Roumenian) and non-Community states<sup>1</sup>, as well as the Romany and Sinti ethnic groups. Looking closely at our country and continuing with Saramago's metaphor, obvious breeding grounds of xenophobic blindness are appearing in various parts of Italy, which if not dealt with, could spread with unpredictable consequences. This is going on in a political climate of intolerance which is expressed in certain government measures.

Xenophobic behavior can occur at any time and in any place; humanity has had to face it, probably right from its beginning<sup>2</sup>. Man's history is in fact characterised by periods when xenophobic behaviors are confined to a few individuals or groups, and by times when the xenophobic contagion, which these have kept alive, spreads rapidly until it has infected a great mass of people and finally the whole Polis. The Shoah was the greatest expression of collective blindness in all human history, and along with it, there was the “Porajmos”<sup>3</sup> of the gypsy people. The almost total lack of memory of this event, its historical minimisation, if not an actual denial, is in part responsible for what is happening today in our country against this ethnic group.

Today's xenophobic behaviors cannot however be compared to those of that time, because of the different political, social and cultural climate. At any rate, they deserve attention and are not to be underestimated, since the relevant psychological dynamics are in many respects very similar to those of yesterday, and the possibility of an uncontrollable spread must always be taken into account.

### *The psychodynamics of fear (of other)*

---

\* Psychologist – Psychotherapist – Group analyst

<sup>1</sup> The appearance of the word “extracomunitario” (non-communitarian) in everyday language has created a new ‘nationality’ due to not being a member of the European Community, actually generating an imaginary nation, ‘non-community’, the target of prejudices and stereotypes.

<sup>2</sup> According to Bocchi & Ceruti (1994), ethnic cleansing in Europe is not the exception but the norm.

<sup>3</sup> The term, in Romany language, means “devastation” or “big devouring” and denotes the Nazi attempt of exterminating Romany and Sinti population.

Like all human phenomena, xenophobia too has multiple causes: it is in fact a phenomenon that can rightly be called “complex”. It follows that the numerous studies conducted in different scientific domains, or within the same discipline using different theoretical models, are an indispensable “part”, though not “the whole”, that help us to understand it.

First of all, I will define the limits within which I will be using the term “xenophobia”, considering that the field of which this study is part is the social clinical field from a group analysis standpoint.

The etymological meaning of the term “xenophobia” is “fear of the strange” or also “fear of the unusual”, deriving from the Greek ξενοφοβία, *xenophobia*, and composed of ξένος, *xenos*, ‘stranger, unusual’ e φόβος, *phobos*, ‘fear’. The Italian “Treccani” dictionary defines it as “feeling of generic aversion for foreigners and for foreign things, manifested in attitudes and actions of intolerance and hostility towards the customs, culture, and inhabitants of other countries”. This definition, which is similar to those in other dictionaries, focuses on describing what is evident about xenophobia, first of all the feeling of aversion, the people it is expressed against (foreigners and foreign things) and the way it is expressed (actions of intolerance). Linking the etymology with the definition of the word “xenophobia”, it can be argued that the feeling of aversion is the evident manifestation of another feeling that precedes it, fear. The aversion, in other words, expressed by a group, by a community towards the foreign, or towards what is unusual in the manifestation, or rather, the communication of a fear: people are xenophobic because they are afraid of the foreign, and more in general of what is unusual.

Phobias (fears) are disorders that the American Psychiatric Association, in its statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-IV) places on Axis I among the Anxiety disorders. It is well-known that underlying the DSM-IV there is the idea of constructing a language shared by clinicians and researchers and this is why a descriptive a-theoretical approach is used in the manual. This involves leaving aside the “sense” to be given to psychopathology which, in contrast, is typical of psychodynamic research. On a strictly descriptive level, therefore, xenophobia certainly finds a place among the Anxiety disorders; however, it is necessary to go further to understand and make sense of a phenomenon that, as we have said, accompanies the (known) history of humanity.

Are fear and anxiety similar states of mind? There is one scientific tradition that tries to differentiate the two terms by seeing fear as the state of mind deriving from the perception of a *real* external danger and anxiety as a state of mind similar to fear but without the external danger. On this point, Freud distinguished a real anxiety from a neurotic one, attributing to the former the sense of a state of mind justified by external events, and to the latter, one still justified by a danger but this time an unconscious danger. Eugenio Borgna gives a description of anxiety and fear considering the different phenomenologies; the first indicates a “sudden, or continued, feeling of confusion and foreboding (of imminent disaster) which contains something indeterminate and free-floating. Fear, on the other hand, bears witness to a state of mind, an emotional expression, directed more to a real, concrete situation marked (...), by the connotation of danger and risk but *not* obscure and *not* unknown” (1997, p. 25). Anxiety is therefore an emotion, devoid of meaning, which tirelessly emerges from within, unlike fear which is a meaningful reaction before a situation of recognisable risk.

In the case of phobic experience, the difference between anxiety and fear, based on whether or not there is a danger, vanishes since anxiety is manifested anyway because of a danger, albeit unconscious, which the Ego shifts onto an external object, so as to prevent “unacceptable thoughts and feelings from reaching the conscious awareness” (Gabbard, 1995, p. 235). Psychodynamic research, from Freud onwards, showed that the phobic object (the thing that instils fear) is deprived of its characteristics of reality following an intense, organised intrapsychic activity through

which the phobic person transfers onto it *other* characteristics that *justify* the fear and the consequent reaction<sup>4</sup>. Since the foreigner is phobic object, it is onto him that the individual inner world is therefore transferred and also, as Di Maria argues, the interpersonal unconscious of groups and communities (Di Maria & Lavanco, 1999). The foreigner is thus excluded by bearing the brunt of the unbearable inner phantasms projected onto him by individuals, groups and communities in order to free themselves. Taken away from his real dimension and condemned to live as a *meaning given by others*, the foreigner acquires the guise of the “scapegoat”.

Since classical times different states of mind have been projected onto an innocuous animal, the goat, with the result that the goat has become an ambiguous symbol because in part it is considered a symbol of fertility and in part a symbol of lust and in Christian symbolism the image of the devil himself. In Christian iconography, in fact, the devil has the appearance of a goat and for instance in Michelangelo’s “Universal Judgement”, the evil are depicted as goats. As a sacrificial figure, the scapegoat appears in the Old Testament<sup>5</sup>; during a ceremony the sins of the people of Israel were transferred onto it. At the end of the rite, the goat chosen to be the scapegoat was forced to wander until its death in the desert, taking with it the sins of others, who in this way felt liberated.

The anthropological analysis carried out by René Girard identifies the existence of the phenomenon of the scapegoat since time immemorial. It emerges every time the equilibrium of a community is challenged by internal problems that people do not know how to face, or do not want to. Up to a certain time the sacrificial victim took on the guilt attributed to it, but from the Gospels onwards the scapegoat is the innocent that gets revenge and becomes the lamb of God. This inversion, says Girard, will not stop the persecution which in fact could assume incredible proportions, as is shown by modern and contemporary history; at the same time, the sense of shame will grow. Something has been broken forever in the cycle of violence (Girard, 1987).

All the mechanisms put in place to make the victim monstrous or diabolical<sup>6</sup>, in order to justify his persecution, will not be enough to placate the *guilt* of he who has sacrificed one or more innocents<sup>7</sup>. The persecution and the sacrifice of the designated victim, can for a moment give the illusion of the “solution to the problem” and it may be accompanied by an immediate relief. With time, the real problems that have not been faced and from which one defended oneself by starting the persecution, will now re-emerge; the relief will be replaced by a double anguish, that of having to face what one did not want to face before and that deriving from the sense of guilt at having sacrificed an innocent victim. In “nature”, in fact, a human being cannot sacrifice another without paying the price<sup>8</sup>. Clinical experience shows that in those social

---

4 The reaction to the phobic object can be attack, flight or paralysis. In the case of xenophobia the most common behaviors are attack, especially in groups and in crowds where, as I explain below, there is a feeling of invincible force. However, there are also a great many people who express their fear by avoiding contact with the foreigner.

5 “(07) Then he will take the two goats and will present them to the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. (08) Aaron will draw lots for the two goats: one will be for the Lord and the other will be the scapegoat. (09) Aaron will go to the goat that is destined to the Lord and he will offer it in sacrifice for sin; (10) but the goat that has been destined to be the scapegoat, will be presented alive before the Lord, for expiation to be done, and for it to be sent into the desert as a scapegoat. (21) Aaron will place both hands on the head of the live goat and will confess on it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, all their transgressions, all their sins, and he will heap them on the goat’s head; he will then send it into the desert with a man chosen for the task. (22) The goat will carry with it all their iniquities into the lonely land; and that man will let it go in the desert” (Leviticus, 16).

6 This is a widely studied process that goes by the name of “dehumanisation of the victims”, which will be dealt with in more detail below.

7 “When the Paraclete comes, said Jesus, it will bear witness and reveal the sense of my innocent death and of every innocent death, from the beginning to the end of the world” (Girard, 1987, p. 325).

8 This statement will be justified later.

networks (family, groups, organisations) where there is the phenomenon of the scapegoat, otherwise indicated as the designated patient, it is the entire network that is problematic and that as a defence, it projects its problematic nature on one of its members who will become the scapegoat<sup>9</sup>. Clinical experience also shows that, to be successful, the therapeutic intervention must concern the whole network and not just the designated patient. It is also well-known that the network reacts, at times violently, when an attempt is made to involve it, showing that the problem does not concern one person but all of them.

In conclusion, it can be said that the phobic object, in whatever case, is a scapegoat, paying for faults that are not its own. This dynamic is paradoxically identical both in the case of individual phobias and in social cases like xenophobia. In both cases, inner conflicts are shifted towards the outside in the hope of getting rid of them. The elimination of the phobic object from the field of perception is a tireless task that all those affected by a phobia perform in their daily life. The same thing happens in a community affected by xenophobia that uses its resources in the persecution of its phobic object, the “foreigner”, in order to exclude him from its field of perception instead of dealing with the real problems afflicting it.

### *Xenophobic psychism*

For xenophobic behavior to be manifested in such a way that it affects society, there must be one or more groups of people with a phobia towards another group of individuals seen as “different”.

In the xenophobic phenomenology the group is the protagonist of the whole affair, while the individual stays in the background. The xenophobic group has a xenophobic history, it is made up of individuals whose development history is characterised by a deep malaise in the group, and with its presence it takes in, contains and at times “acts” on the designated victims. The xenophobic group has a rational objective and an unconscious one.

The rational objective is to persecute the phobic object by every possible means; direct conflict however is quite rare. The life of the group is normally carried on as in the Bastiani fortress in the novel “The Desert of the Tartars”, a fortress at the furthest edge of the national possessions, forgotten by all. Here the life of the group is carried on, in the stubborn repetition of empty rituals, as well as the life of the individuals, in their ineluctable, progressive degradation, in the obstinate but vain expectation of the enemy to fight. The xenophobic group lives in this atmosphere of perennial waiting and the life of the group is carried on in a constant “rumination” on the danger represented by the foreigner for the group and for the values it feels it embodies. Each individual is the bearer of a *personal matrix* which in its persecutory part is shared with the other members of the group, so the group network made up of the members’ interaction is first of all occupied by the persecutory idea of each member’s personal matrix. The theme of persecution is the *pre-text* for the formation of the group and the *text* from which the dynamic matrix of the group originates and develops. The xenophobic group’s view of the world is filtered by fear of the foreigner and/or of the unusual, so every event in the news is an opportunity for the group to confirm and strengthen the rightness of that view. In some cases the xenophobic group carries out destructive behaviors which, in the period we live in, have the stadium as their preferred setting.

In stadiums, battles are simulated, albeit to a certain degree (Dal Lago, 1990). They reveal, usually in a controlled way, old transpersonal, municipal, regional and national

---

<sup>9</sup> The way the scapegoat is chosen is exemplified as follows: it has long been known that when miners went down into the mine they used to take a bird in a cage. Its characteristics made it the smallest and weakest of the group, and if firedamp had formed it would be the first to die and with its death it would save the others.

hatreds (Morris, 1981) and so on down the list of local affiliations. These hatreds are kept alive by the stories on ancient wrongs suffered, which find their confirmation in the here and now of a foul not granted or of a penalty kick given to the rival team. These hatreds come down through centuries, dwelling in the transpersonal matrix of individuals, groups and communities, and have reached the present day waiting for a chance to manifest themselves. The banners at the stadium, the way of talking about and describing the opponents, are the visualisation of a mild xenophobic activity which however can sometimes degenerate and show its true face. The stadium is the preferred place for the study of xenophobia, because it is here that the terms “foreigner” and “unusual” are shown not to concern only those who live beyond the borders of a nation, but in general terms, whoever lives *beyond*; beyond the confines of a region, a town, a neighborhood, a family. Xenophobia is therefore the sentiment connected to the *other person* as an inhabitant of what is beyond us, independently of the skin color, nationality, religion and so on, and can in an instant assume the characteristics of the phobic object.

The group’s unconscious goal comes from the individual’s unconscious motivation to be associated with the group. As has already been mentioned, it is reasonable to suppose that individuals belonging to xenophobic groups have some developmental weakness, more specifically, the failure of the *family network* to limit the physiological anxieties of development, including the *fear of strangers*, and of a family *matrix* containing persecutory themes which have saturated the sense of life. Each individual therefore brings to the group and entrusts to it an uncontrolled and uncontrollable anxiety and, at the same time, a sense of life with the persecutory theme concerning the unknown. For its members the group plays a therapeutic role, because by taking on the anxiety of its members it partially frees them and at the same time, as it accepts the persecutory theme, it will make each member feel able to deal with the thing they fear at certain times and in certain situations. The group allows each member to respond to the anxiety generated by the phobic object, by not being paralysed or fleeing but by attacking. The result is the increase in self-esteem through the actions of the group.

Xenophobic phenomenology, however, would still be confined to marginal sectors of the population and would not be manifested in the horrifying ways shown by history or by the news of our times, if these groups were not joined by a “*mass*” of cheering citizens. In this case, xenophobic phenomenology is characterised by the presence of groups that do the dirty work (killing, torturing, raping, burning etc.) and of a spontaneously formed “*mass*” of people that incite and support them and sometimes participate directly.

### *The malaise of the Polis*

According to the indicators shared by western society in measuring their *well-being*, Italy is an economically sick country. In the terminology of economics (which for the Polis, in today’s world, plays the same descriptive, diagnostic and curative role that biology, psychology and medicine play for human beings), this illness is called recession, which stands for going backwards, receding towards a state of lesser development.

The economy is a powerful symbolic organiser of individual and social affectivity through which the present state of malaise of the Polis is visualised<sup>10</sup>. This involves its

---

10 Western thought links its concept of well-being to that of economic well-being, that is, to the idea that the Polis is well if its economy is going well. It is a good idea to try and turn this naive cause and effect relation upside-down, putting forward the doubt that human beings may not feel bad because the economy is going badly, but that the economy goes badly because human beings feel bad. This implies that the malaise of the Polis is much more complex than the admittedly complex economic phenomenology, though everything is reductively traced back to the economy.

inhabitants, especially the young, whose behaviors, as usual, are indicators of the healthy and unhealthy product of the social network of which they are part. They seem to be corroded by nihilism, by the negation of every value (Galimberti, 2007), by a state of mind typified by “sad passions” or by a pervasive sense of impotence and uncertainty that leads them to turn inwards and to see the world as a threat (Benasayag & Schmit, 2003).

This Polis does not seem able to grasp the depth of its *malaise* and the result is the incapacity to generate a treatment that can shoulder the burden. Consequently, the *malaise* can only grow and be strengthened. An explanation of why this happens is that the Polis, like an individual, to avoid seeing what has supposedly been seen, erects defences. The defence mechanism adopted is *denial*, the refusal to look at the unhealthy in oneself, the danger that threatens. This is accompanied by *projection*, attributing the rot within to the outside world.

As well as unsolved economic problems<sup>11</sup>, which we are always blamed with, Italy is afflicted by other deep-rooted problems including that of being home to the most ruthless criminal organisations (*mafia, camorra, 'ndrangheta, sacra corona unita*) and of having an extremely high corruption rate<sup>12</sup>. The Polis seems unable to deal with and solve either of these. In fact the so-called “southern question” is always high on the agenda. The two “questions” have ended up infecting the “*environmental policy*” matrix (Di Maria & Lavanco, 1991; Lo Verso, 1993) becoming an invariant part of it. Politics in this situation is not a way of dealing with the problems of the Polis, but of doing business (Fiore, 1997). The result is that *being involved in politics* is saturated by *being involved in business* which, being a single *involvement*, is an *unhealthy involvement*, which we find in daily life in the form of scandals large and small. In *being involved in politics*, the capacity to perceive and give answers to *what is missing*, becomes detached from being involved in politics, the capacity to *imagine the future* (Fiore, 1994, 2000). Then the Polis falls back on the contingent, in a present with no hope, no future, and as in an autoimmune disease, attacks itself. It happens in fact that the parts of the matrix (*environmental and political*) unable to fulfil their role of making sense of living together in the community, generate a destructive conflict that has as its target parts of itself: the *institutional matrix*. This is expressed in concrete terms in the institutions, which are custodians and interpreters of that sense.

The mood of insecurity of the inhabitants of the Polis, deriving from this conflict, is mentally comparable to that of the child when he sees his parents busy destroying each other. The parental role is to create and maintain a space for living together, the existence of which is indispensable for the family matrix to emerge and unfold, as well as the transpersonal affective dimension which plays the natural role of affectively nurturing the various members of the family. Since the family matrix is a space of welcoming and affective containment, it plays the role of placating the physiological anxieties that its members are experiencing. The destructive conflict no longer allows it to play this role, but instead foments the anxiety and transforms it from physiological into pathological. Since this anxiety is from the matrix, will invade the mind as part of it, thus becoming both internal and external to it. The result on the level of individual phenomenology is an anxiety that will be shown through various psychopathological figures (Borgna, 1997) whose origin always lies in the history of each person's relations and relationships, in the experiences of fragmentation and/or death experienced following the breaking of ties with the family network.

---

11 In the European ranking of GDP per capita, Italy is behind almost all the countries of the pre-enlargement EU, except Greece and Portugal (“*Repubblica*”, 23-06-2008)

12 According to the annual report of the non government organisation “Transparency International”, the annual index of the perception of corruption (Cpi), based on a scale going from 0 to 10, in 2007 gave a score of 5,2. With this score, Italy is in 41st place in a ranking that includes Hungary, Cyprus, Taiwan, Macao, Malta, Portugal, Estonia, Slovenia, Uruguay, Spain, Barbados, and Chile and that is topped by Denmark, Finland and New Zealand (www.transparency.org).

The Institutions' inability to shoulder the problem and the destructive conflict involving them, creates anxiety in the inhabitants of the Polis who through *involvement in politics* are called upon to take care of them. This (apparent) care is oriented towards the search for reassurance at all costs<sup>13</sup>. In concrete terms this is obtained by altering the delicate balance regulating the powers between the Institutions, giving support to whoever wants to shift it in favor of one side.

This way of being "blindly" *involved in politics* is the usual way the Polis at various times have tried to cure their *malaise* and which has usually given rise to dictatorships. From a social-psycho-dynamic point of view, dictatorships are produced by the matrix of the Polis in pain, and more specifically, by the *environmental political* aspect that has lost its imaginative capacity (Fiore, 1994). Dictatorships originate from an extreme defensive position of the Polis regarding its internal *malaise* which is projected externally, as is happening in Italy today, onto a scapegoat. They also originate from a need for reassurance in the anxiety generated by the breakdown of the institutional net and the consequent failure to find the containing functions provided by that net. In this situation, the institutional vacuum is filled by the figure of a *messianic leader* who presents himself as the saviour of the Polis. His way of *being involved in politics* is collusive with the defensive system of the Polis which he accepts and reinforces and therefore, like the priest in the Jewish rite, he shares the choice of a scapegoat on which to transfer the stigma of evil, thus sanctioning its persecution. Persecutions, writes Girard, "are carried out preferably during periods of crisis which weaken the normal institutions and favor the formation of crowds, that is of people spontaneously coming together, with the risk that they will entirely replace the weakened institutions or exert a decisive pressure on them"<sup>14</sup> (Girard, 1987, p. 29). The price paid by the Polis to its leader to free it from evil (anxiety) is to make him the way he wants to be, a strong institution to which all the others must bow. The political phenomenology in this situation changes rapidly. In fact, while in democracies the relationship between citizens and Polis is mediated by the institutions, in contrast, in dictatorships there is a direct relationship between the leader and his subjects. The consequences of this change involve a loss of power for places of reasoned relations, and a strengthening of the 'public square' and of the media marketplaces where crowds gather with their particular psychological functioning. It is in this relational configuration, that reason, as we will show later, is easily overtaken by the moods that are typical of human beings when they are afraid.

What happens today has always happened, which does not stop us from trying to makes sense yet again of why the human being both individually and in all his relational configurations, deals with *malaise* in the same way, denying it and projecting it onto others. From its very beginnings, psychoanalysis has never shirked its responsibility of denouncing, in its research, individual and collective responsibilities in creating and hiding *malaise*. Freud's studies, both on individual and collective psychopathology, are a concrete example, taken up and furthered by the generations that followed him. Of this, group-analysis, based on the study of relating, has an ethical, secular, non-violent vision (Fiore, 2007), and beyond any biological and/or drive-related reductionism, considers psychopathology a consequence of its *malaise*.

---

13 The best image to give an idea of "reassurance at all costs" is the ostrich, which when chased by a predator, hides its head under the sand to calm its fear of death.

14 Italy's current political and social situation is defined as being serious by many observers due to the degradation of our Institutions which do not have the confidence of the majority of Italians ("*Repubblica*" 21-01-2008). EU institutions, moreover, are worried about the emergence of xenophobic phenomena and by certain government measures, like the taking of Rom children's fingerprints, which seems to support them. On this point, see the article by Gad Lerner, entitled "That ethnic census of seventy years ago" with the following disturbing beginning: "It began with an unexpected ethnic census, in the middle of summer seventy years ago, the shameful story of the Italian racial laws" ("*Repubblica*", 05-07-2008, p. 1).

## *Stories of ordinary xenophobia*

In this part of the article, I will deal with the behavior of the mass in relation to the question of xenophobia, and more specifically, of the psychological dynamics underlying the process of a multitude of individuals gathering together. I will therefore deal with the *mass* and the *mass before it becomes a mass*. Xenophobic phenomenology at times of maximum visibility, when it is characterised by the presence of “spontaneous masses”, gains the presence of a multitude of people who could be described with adjectives like “common”, “respectable”, “god-fearing”, “mild” who at a certain point experience intense xenophobic feelings - similar in quality and quantity to those of individuals belonging to xenophobic groups - which push them to take part in acts of violence or to support them.

The Italian news has recently reported breeding grounds of xenophobia, which is spreading rapidly: the favorite targets are non-EU citizens and yet again Romany and Sinti. In Naples, as in Rome and Milan, there are assaults, nomad encampments are burnt, woman and children, old and young, are terrorised, forced to flee leaving their miserable belongings. The images released by the various TV networks are hard to look at, because they force us to see the human being in his extreme, opposing states: the victims' pain and suffering on the one hand, the attackers' hatred and destructive fury on the other. It is difficult to deny or minimise what is happening. We are in fact looking at clearly xenophobic behaviors concerning a substantial part of the Italian citizenry.

Merely as an example, I shall quote the entire news report on the fire in some nomad encampments in Naples, written by Marco Imarisio in “*Corriere della Sera*” on Thursday 15 May 2008<sup>15</sup>:

At first it is only a column of smoke, a sign that nobody connects to the swarm of mopeds shooting across the via Argine, each carrying a passenger. The explosion arrives a while later, it is the gas cylinders kept in a hut wreathed in flames. The flames reach the top of the light poles, the smoke becomes a toxic black cloud, fed on garbage and burning plastic. The Romany shacks in via Malibrand are an enormous pyre. Ponticelli, at 1.30 pm, the showdown with the “gypsies” is final, merciless. The traffic goes mad, there is the wailing of sirens, fire-engines, blackened paper floating in the air. The Policemen guarding the encampment look at each other, bewildered. They were out the front, the mopeds arrived at the back. They throw out their arms, these things happen, it's not all that serious, the Romany had left during the night anyway. «It would've been better if they'd been here», says a man in a black Adidas tracksuit, regretfully. «They all ought to be killed». He is speaking from inside his ‘Punto’, and on the dashboard the picture of a saint can clearly be seen, «Santa Maria dell'Arco, protect me». The first show, for there will be others, is on in front of the municipal Park, the only green area, with a cycle path attached, in this neighbourhood on the eastern margin of Naples, where the horizon ends at the old public housing flats, the product of the building speculation dear to Achille Lauro. A man with greying hair and a denim jacket on his shoulders is the most enthusiastic. «Those that work honestly can stay, but for the others precautions have to be taken, even with fire». Fire purifies, cleans up the land «from this shit that never wash», adds a boy with mirror glasses, greased hair, trendy T-shirt with a heart drawn on it, the one made by Vieri and Maldini. Seeing there's no democracy and the State doesn't protect us, he says, «ethnic cleansing becomes necessary» and who knows if he really understands the meaning of that term. When the televisions arrive, the reality becomes a performance, The big woman with the shopping bag who a minute ago had been clapping and shouting at the firemen — «let them burn, otherwise they'll be back»—suddenly takes on a contrite face. «Madonna mia what a disaster, the poor devils, just as well there are no children in there». The boy with the big mirror-glasses suddenly becomes wise «It was right to get rid of them, but not like this». The TV camera is turned off, he bursts out laughing. Under a tree on the other side of the road there is a group of young people observing the scene. They are looking at everyone and everything, but nobody looks at them. They seem invisible. Their scooters are parked on the sidewalk. The leader is a boy with a tight black T-shirt, his hair cut very short on the sides of his head.

---

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.corriere.it/cronache/08\\_maggio\\_15/imarisio\\_camorra\\_rom\\_pulizia\\_etnica\\_2fe33d40-2241-1dd-8bc7-00144f486ba6.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/cronache/08_maggio_15/imarisio_camorra_rom_pulizia_etnica_2fe33d40-2241-1dd-8bc7-00144f486ba6.shtml)

Everyone present knows who he is and they know exactly how he is related. He's one of the nephews of the cousin of the "mayor" of Ponticelli, that *Ciro Sarno* who even from prison, continues to be the Lord of the neighborhood, head of a *Camorra* clan whose strength lies in their roots in the neighborhood. When he sees the confusion is at its peak, he nods to the others. They start their mopeds. Then minutes later, from the adjacent camp, the one opposite the twelve-storey buildings called the Five Towers, another cloud of dense black smoke goes up. The encampment is marked off by a mountain of rubbish and tyres. They are the first to burn, with the smoke enveloping the council flats. The little group of admirers moves, just 200 metres away there is another fire to applaud. The boys on the mopeds vanish. The radio of a policecar says that there are also flames in the two camps in *via Virginia Woolf*, on the border of the municipality of *Cercola*. On the wet grass there are a couple of rudimentary fire bombs. The *Romany* got out in a hurry. In the huts there are still pots on the cookers, and the children's school bags. At the entrance to one of these houses in sheets of iron and chipboard, held together by a spongy gum, there is a framed painting containing the blown up photo of a smiling child, dressed as *Punchinello*. *Florin*, carnival 2008, the celebration of the *Ponticelli* primary school. At 2.50 it starts to pour, a beating rain that puts everything out. «It would've been better to finish off the job », says an ancient man whilst seeking shelter under the roof in the *Town Park*. Half an hour later, in the *De Gasperi* neighborhood a lot of young faces are seen getting on and off mopeds. This is the *Sarno's* fortress, a group of houses surrounded by an old wall, with a single road in and one out, with lookouts pretending to read the paper on a bench who are actually paid to report on who goes out and above all who comes in. But this manhunt cannot be explained just by the *Camorra* alone. It would be consoling, but it is not like that. Under the *Naples-Salerno* overpass there are the last three still inhabited *Romany* camps. From the concrete blocks of the motorway, surges of brown water fall onto the shacks, fenced in by a row of wooden panels. A group of women and children that live in the most decrepit houses, the ones in *via delle Madonnelle*, come across the square and approach. «Come out or we'll kill you », «We're ready with sticks ». The police intervene, with an inspector trying to make these furious women see sense. You are good people, he says, on Sunday you go to church, and now you want to throw these poor kids out onto the street? «Yeah!» is the chorused answer. From the broken off wooden panels a girl sticks out her head, covered with a rain-soaked scarf. She's trembling with cold and fear. Almost as a protection, she holds a baby of a few months to her breast. She hails one of the angriest women, a solid woman wearing a grey fur jacket. She knows her. «We're leaving tonight. Please don't hurt us». The woman listens in silence. Then she takes a step towards the *Romany* woman and spits. She misses the target, and it hits the baby in the face. The inspector, who was in the line of the spit, freezes the woman with a look. All the others applaud. Full steam ahead towards the *Medieval*, each at his own pace.

I have quoted the whole news article because I will use it as "testimony" to explain the crowd phenomenology that I will put forward below: in fact, what is described above is a ritual that has been repeated, with slight modifications, since the beginning of time.

### *The psychology of crowds*

Sociological and psychological studies on crowd behavior still refer to two fundamental articles written twenty-six years apart: *Gustave Le Bon's* "The Crowd" and *Sigmund Freud's* "Group psychology and the analysis of the Ego". The reason why these works have remained the compulsory reference points for research into crowd dynamics for so long undoubtedly lies in the accuracy of the description of their phenomenology. In addition to this in the *Freudian* essay there is the analysis of the ties uniting individuals in a crowd with their leaders. However, while the two essays are still insuperable in terms of "how" a crowd behaves, the same cannot be said for "why", since this is based on a predisposition (the drive theory in *Freudian* metapsychology) challenged by contemporary scientific research. This predisposition has actually changed from being a trait of the scientific culture of the time to a pessimistic *institution of meaning* that has pervaded and continues to pervade the individual and collective representation of the nature of human beings.

## *The psychology of crowds according to Le Bon*

The first aspect that Le Bon clarifies and that will have repercussions on the psychology of groups is the difference between crowd and psychological crowd. A number of people gathered in a square by chance with no aim constitute a crowd but not a psychological crowd. To become such, there must be several events that will lead the people to be initially a *crowd being organised* and then an *organised psychological crowd*, focusing on one aim. The process of forming a psychological crowd begins with a gradual *thinning*<sup>16</sup> of the individual conscience and at the same time the *orientation* of each person's feelings and thoughts towards a common goal<sup>17</sup>. Physical nearness is not indispensable for the creation of a psychological mass, it is the emotions that count in their orientation towards a single goal. The result of this is that even thousands of separate individuals, under the influence of violent emotions in a single direction, can take on the characteristics of a psychological mass. It has happened in certain historical periods, argues Le Bon, that an entire people has become a crowd under this influence or that, without there being any visible nearness. This may therefore also apply to the "media masses". It can be argued, in fact, that thousands of individuals in front of their television sets, gripped by violent emotions aroused by the images on the screen, make up a psychological crowd. Radio, television and the internet are all tools of contemporary living which can cause thousands or millions of people to unite in a short time.

The shared goal is the necessary condition determining the creation of a psychic *network* among individuals. In this respect the psychological crowd is undoubtedly a network, whether it is mediatic or not, made up of many people united by a single aim. It is a psychic network characterised by fragile links that produces its own phenomenology marked by extreme, radical emotions.

The traits of the individuals<sup>18</sup> making up a crowd have no effect in terms of its constitution because the mere fact of being transformed into a crowd, of being crucial links in this specific network, makes them part of a *collective spirit*<sup>19</sup> which, writes Le Bon, "makes them feel, think and act in a completely different way from how they would operate singly" (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 49)<sup>20</sup>. In the collective spirit, men's intellectual aptitudes and therefore also their individuality are annulled, the heterogeneous vanishes into the homogeneous, the unconscious dominates the conscious, the irrational prevails over the rational, stupidity over intelligence. For this reason crowds are not able to perform acts "that require higher intelligence" (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 52). They accumulate not the intelligence but the mediocrity of the world and therefore "It is not the whole world together (...) that has more spirit than Voltaire. Voltaire certainly has more spirit than the world, if «the whole world» represents the crowd" (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 52). This kind of network, of crowd, has an original character that does not come from the sum-total or from the

---

16 The process of the numbing of the conscience and the contemporary orientation of feelings was later to be explained by Freud as a state of hypnotic trance caused by the leader's words. As regards the theme being discussed here, it is always possible in the previous phases of the establishment of xenophobic crowds, to identify an incessant propaganda designed to show the phobic object in a bad light.

17 The hypothesis supporting this work is that the numbing of conscience and the contemporary orientation of feelings is other-induced, linked to factors outside the individual.

18 In other words, independently of whether one is an entrepreneur or a worker, student or professor, self-employed professional or clerk, atheist or believer, rich or poor, intelligent or stupid and so on.

19 For Freud, as we say below, this concept was to be linked to the psychic characteristics of the primordial horde.

20 In most Internet chats, the participants use another name (nickname), which equates to dropping their own identity and adopting another that will allow them to 'reveal themselves' with more confidence. Chats, which are short-lived social networks, are set up and dissolve quickly, clearly showing the emotional characteristics mentioned in the text.

average of the participants' characters, but from the combination and creation of new characters, as happens in chemical phenomena.

Why does the individual behave in one way when he is isolated and in a different way when he is in a crowd? To answer this question, Le Bon uses the concept of the unconscious, whose characteristics are quite similar to those suggested by Freud. For Le Bon, the unconscious is a container of the spirit of the race, representing its most ancient, instinctive part. Every human being conveys the spirit of the race, which sits quietly hidden in the unconscious, until it bursts out in the crowd, simultaneously with that of the others. All human beings are similar in the unconscious elements making up their psyche, while they differ in the conscious elements, which are subjected to the influence of education. This leads Le Bon to say that: "Between a famous mathematician and his bootmaker there may be an abyss in terms of intellectual relationship, but from the point of view of character and beliefs, the difference is often non-existent or very slight" (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 51).

In a crowd it is possible to identify three basic psychological traits. The first is a *feeling of invincible power* deriving from the number: the bigger the crowd, the more invincible its individual members feel. This leads individuals to give in to instincts<sup>21</sup> that in isolation they would be able to restrain. The fact that the bigger the crowd, the greater the sense of anonymity, makes both the crowd and the individuals irresponsible.

The second psychological trait of the crowd, and the network, is *mental contagion*. The individuals in the crowd are vulnerable; every feeling, every act is so contagious that "the individual sacrifices his personal interest to the collective interest" (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 53).

Lastly, the third trait is *suggestibility*. Every individual immersed in a crowd is easily influenced and this suggestibility is contagious. "The individual, finding himself plunged into a crowd in ferment, falls (...) into a special state, very similar to the state of thrall of the hypnotised subject in the hands of his hypnotiser" (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 53). The conscious personality vanishes, willpower and discernment disappear. In this situation, the feelings and thoughts of the individual in a crowd are easily steered in the direction desired by the hypnotiser. In conclusion, crowds are easy to manipulate.

#### *Freud's crowd psychology*

Freud's essay, "Group psychology and the analysis of the Ego", published in 1921, can be divided into two parts plus an introduction that I will discuss last.

The first part is a repetition of "The Crowd" by Le Bon, with whom Freud shares some assumptions, specifically the idea that the individual in a mass tends to act in a different way from usual. Freud adopts the individual/mass juxtaposition, which he sees as corresponding to the polarities of waking/dream states, consciousness/unconscious, reason/drive.

In the second part of the essay, Freud analyses the affective ties that keep individuals united in a mass. To do this, he uses the example of the church and the army, "two highly organised, lasting, artificial masses" (Freud, 1921, p. 283). He brings out the libidinal nature of the ties between the individual members, distinguishing the ties between peers from those of each person with the leader. In the mass, he writes, "the individuals behave as if they were homogeneous, tolerating the others' peculiar way of being, considering themselves the same as the other people and not feeling any feelings of aversion towards them. Based on our theoretical conceptions, such a limitation of narcissism can be produced by only one factor: the libidinal tie with other people. Self love finds a limit only in external love, in love directed at objects" (Freud, 1921, p. 291). Each person's tie with the leader is linked by Freud to identification,

---

21 Le Bon, like Freud, refers to a "dispositional" theory of instincts, which is challenged in this essay.

which is “the first manifestation of an emotive tie with another person” (Freud, 1921, p. 293). The individual in the mass tends to configure his own Ego “as the Ego of a person taken as a model” (Freud, 1921, p. 303), which means that the Ego is also composed of a part called the “ideal of the Ego”. A mass is therefore made up of “a certain number of individuals that have put a single object in the place of their ideal of the Ego and that have therefore identified with each other’s Ego” (Freud, 1921, p. 304).

In view of what Freud states, a closer examination can be made of the description of the crowd as a psychic network generated by the shared goal, in the following way: the network is made up of nodes and threads, the first being individuals, and the second the affective ties that keep them united with each other. These derive from the identification with each other after they have recognised their shared object of love, the leader, in the other person.

In Freud’s essay, if we read closely, there is an element of confusion that, for the purposes of our article, needs to be shown to be dealing with the dynamics underlying formation of xenophobic masses. Freud, in fact, at a certain point changes the object of study, transforming what is not the mass into the mass. The church and the army are actually not masses but organisations and the justification for this statement will now be discussed.

Analysing the church, the army and the mass along a temporal axis, a substantial difference is quickly seen: the first two are enduring, the second is momentary, being organised and disorganised in a short time. Looking at how they start, the church and the army may once have been masses, but later they were *established*, creating solid hierarchies, to which the members refer. The crowd, on the other hand, has no hierarchies and both the ties that form between the participants, and those with the leaders, are intense but also short-lived, unlike those that form in the army and in the church that are presumed to be more solid and enduring. Above all, unlike the mass, the church and the army have generated a history and therefore also rites and traditions to celebrate it.

The mass, like the church and the army, is formed *in favor of*<sup>22</sup> or *against* something, but with some basic differences. With the mass, there is no *rational motivation* underlying its establishment and its operation, and if there is a motivation it is emotional, while in the second two there is<sup>23</sup>. In the army, for example, one is *rationally trained* to oppose someone, while in a crowd there is no training, certainly not any rational training. Its movement in one direction or another is spontaneous and immediate due to the feeling of invincibility that characterises it.

The degree to which the crowd’s conscience is reduced, as in the case of the burning of the Romany camps, or in a stadium crowd, cannot in any way be compared to that of the church congregation or of the army in battle. Suggestibility and emotive contagion are experiences that can occur in organisations but that do not underlie their existence, unlike what happens in crowds.

Essentially, a crowd is a very different thing from an organisation, since it is formed with no other purpose than to “commit a crime, worship an idol or, in the case of positive acts, raise mountains” (Enriquez, 1986, p. 81). Consequently, the Freud-Le Bon description of the crowd is only valid when applied to mass movements, the great “collective demonstrations of the ‘secular mass’ kind, which aim to honor idols or to let it be understood that they could be destroyed by the word alone (in other words, those

---

22 The psychological crowd, in fact, does not only manifest criminal behaviors; it may in some circumstances, express sentiments that are even better than those felt by an individual outside it. Everything, argues Le Bon, “depends on the way it is subjected to suggestion (...). Admittedly often they are criminals, but they are also often heroic” (Le Bon, 1895, Ital. ed., 2004, p. 57). Crowds, however, are “a little reckless” even when they are letting themselves be led towards acts of heroism. Freud too recognises that the crowd can at times promote altruistic, heroic acts of solidarity.

23 See the concept of “rational presupposition” as the basis of the life of organisations, expounded by Carli & Panizza (1981).

where *words reign* and can therefore exert their power, or those that aim at *immediate, unreflective action*, which is more or less violent: assaults, lynchings, mass marches)” (Enriquez, 1986, p. 81). In the other cases where words have been subjected to reflection, where reason dominates emotion, we find ourselves before an organisation, in which the phenomenology of the crowd is replaced by one of its own with clearly defined characteristics.

In some moments of human history, and the one we are going through may become one of these, the *institutions of hatred*<sup>24</sup> will try to provoke phenomena “designed to transform society, which is usually structured in classes, categories or social groups, in an anonymous crowd, a “lonely crowd”, into a real «mass», considered easier to manipulate by established groups” (Enriquez, 1986, p. 81).

The introduction to Freud’s essay, which I have deliberately left to the end to analyse, is as Enriquez says, perhaps with a slight exaggeration, a bomb, because it “poses the question of the contrast between individual psychology and social psychology” (Enriquez, 1986, p. 67)<sup>25</sup>. Freud actually writes, “The contrast between individual psychology and social or mass psychology, a contrast that at first may seem to us to be very important, when examined more closely loses most of its rigidity. Individual psychology focuses on the single man and aims to discover how he pursues the satisfaction of his drives: and yet it is only rarely in exceptional circumstances that individual psychology manages to disregard the relations of this individual with other individuals. In the individual’s psychic life, the other person is regularly present as a model, as an object, as a rescuer, as an enemy, and therefore in this wider, but undoubtedly legitimate sense, right from the start, individual psychology is at the same time social psychology” (Freud, 1921, p. 261).

In actual fact, the beginning of the text lets us envisage the decisive presence of the social dimension, namely of relating, in individual psychic life, thus foreshadowing the relational paradigm at the center of today’s psychodynamic research. The initial statements, in particular, have some consequences: that the mind’s organisation depends on the environment and is related to the history of its identifications; that individual behavior is a function of the environment, with the result that a change in the environment involves a change in individual behavior; that behaviors, including pathological<sup>26</sup> ones, are individuals’ response to the environment they live in. As we can see, this is a diametrically opposed vision to that of individual drives. This environment and the relation with it are placed on the edges of the establishment of psychic life, so both individual and collective psychic events are due to the hereditary drives that characterise the human species as an animal species. In sharp contrast with the thinking of the time, Freud in “Group Psychology and the analysis of the Ego” abandoned the *dispositional* perspective (psychic life starts from drives) and embraced the *situational* perspective (psychic life starts from relating)<sup>27</sup>.

With “Group Psychology and the analysis of the Ego” Freud certainly went beyond the nature/nurture, innate/acquired contrast, and in a period marked by reductionism, introduced *elements of complexity* to the study of the human mind. Unfortunately he

---

24 By this I am referring to individuals and groups that have taken on the role of custodians of the persecutionary sentiment. Their activity consists of keeping it alive and spreading it through the manipulation of communication, thus triggering the emotions that react to it, such as hatred, anger, destructive fury towards the scapegoat.

25 Introducing this issue in this article is justified by the effect that the choice of one approach or the other has on the analysis of the phenomenon of xenophobia.

26 Among these one can certainly include xenophobia.

27 The process of going beyond the dispositional theory in fact began with the challenge to the energy model of instinctive actions that linked Freud to Lorenz. As regards psychoanalysis this certainly happened after Freud’s death when there started to be, around the nineteen-fifties, challenges to the idea of drives underlying the whole theory and consequently the energy and economic viewpoint.

did not follow up the consequences of this insight<sup>28</sup>. His metapsychology would continue to rotate around the individualistic drive paradigm and the original insights present at the outset of the essay were to remain long forgotten before being taken up by others and examined more deeply.

*The pessimistic view of "human nature"*

Both Le Bon's and Freud's essays can, up to a point, provide a convincing description of the phenomena that are manifested in a crowd, in our case, in a xenophobic crowd. In the masses that participate in punitive raids today on nomad encampments and in the applauding, approving masses that support them one can discern the psychological characteristics identified by Le Bon and Freud. First of all, the Ego's state of hypovigilance, resembling a state of hypnotic trance, which enables individuals of different educational backgrounds to direct their thoughts and feelings against Romany and immigrants; then the feeling of invincible power that grows in proportion to the number of individuals in a xenophobic crowd and that will allow them to overcome all prohibitions, both internal (moral and ethical) and external (police). The feeling of invincible power will make each individual, however "respectable", in the mass, change into a potential murderer<sup>29</sup> or, for the applauding, approving spectators, accomplices to murder.

However, while on the one hand the analysis of how a crowd acts, of the ties that keep together individuals, as well as individuals and their leader, can be considered of current interest, on the other the analysis of the dynamics of the individual's regression in a crowd, the primitive state expressed in *collective spirit, primordial horde* is not only anachronistic but also an expression of the pessimistic representation of the human being which, being reified, has ended up becoming an institution. The institution of the pessimistic "given" of human nature is the aspect that is of most interest for the present article.

Both Freud and Le Bon based their analyses on what can without doubt be called an *antisocial* conception of the nature of the human being. This conception was found throughout the culture of the time, being revealed in the language of daily life as well as in that of the cultured. In Freud's case, for example, it would have an effect on metapsychology.

A clear exposition of this way of conceiving human nature is found in the works of Hobbes, prior to Freud's period, and in particular in "*Leviathan*". For Hobbes, the human being is not given to *spontaneously* joining with other men, solidarity is not a natural gift, and the true state of nature is division, egoism, and barbarity. The state of nature is the isolation of the human being from other human beings, where each man acts for himself. This state results in the human environment being a place of war of every man against every other man. This natural condition of insecurity and anguish, innate to every human being, is overcome by reason. This gives rise to an *artificial solidarity based on calculation and convenience*, from which the institutions emerge.

Freud, in syntony with Hobbes, argues that civilisation is the result of giving up the narcissistic satisfaction of needs (Freud, 1929). The more civilised human beings become, the more they are forced to frustrate their drives with the paradoxical result that the advance of civilisation corresponds to greater unhappiness. In Freudian thought coexistence and solidarity are products of civilisation, and therefore are not natural. They are the result of taking away the libidinal energy destined to the

---

28 According to Napolitani, "all Freud's work shows a persistent and unresolved contrast: on the one hand his project (...) of discovering, for human happenings, laws that were essentially identical to the natural ones that regulate the life of every living thing; (...). On the other hand, (...) in Freud there are signs of a structurally relational hypothesis, so psychic happenings are based on the reminiscence, elaborated and reactivated to varying degrees, of historical events, therefore strictly cultural" (Napolitani, 1987, p. 56).

29 Sometimes as a real murderer.

satisfaction of drives; once available, it can be invested in relating to other people. Everything related to the relationship with the other is not primary and natural, but secondary and cultural, the result of renouncing drives. Hence it can be deduced that human beings establish relations not by nature but by culture, essentially because they are forced to. The human being's state of nature is certainly one of need; in this state the other person's need is only a tool for the satisfaction on one's own narcissism. The other person, whoever he may be, is initially always an enemy<sup>30</sup>. For this reason, the relational configuration is hordalic (Freud, 1921), characterised by human monads in search of immediate satisfaction of their needs. In the psychoanalytical model, ontogenesis is a recapitulation of human philogenesis. At birth the infant's psychic apparatus works according to the *primary process*, whose main regulator is that of *pleasure*; only through education (a real process of civilization), which has the task of slowing down or shifting the satisfaction of needs, will the psychic apparatus start to operate according to the *secondary process*, which is mainly regulated by *reality*<sup>31</sup>. The hordalic nature (the Id) dwells in the human psyche, or in more radical terms it underlies the human psyche, since both the Ego and the Superego are differentiated from it. The operating mechanism is hydraulic, based on accumulation and draining: a long frustrated need is overloaded with energy, and when it reaches the maximum threshold of tolerability it tends to discharge. In this way it makes itself visible, only to become invisible again once all the accumulated energy has been freed<sup>32</sup>. Crowds are therefore relational states in which the mob state, long frustrated by civilisation<sup>33</sup>, finally emerges. This happens because the Id which has accumulated energy, is able under those conditions to overturn the Ego's defences and the Superego's prohibitions.

Xenophobic behavior (fear of the other person) is therefore justified by the antisocial nature of the human being, who is opposed to solidarity and not given to living together. The institutions are created, first of all, after heinous crimes, like the killing of the father<sup>34</sup> by the primitive mob that wants to take his place, and they take on the double role of reminding of the crime committed and forbidding it to be committed again. Civilisation is therefore an accumulation and transformation of the institutions that can occur peacefully, as in democracies. Its progress forces human beings to live together and the more civilisation advances, the more the mob instinct is frustrated in the attempt to satisfy its needs. That is why it emerges now and then from the cracks in the wall of civilisation and shows itself on the social stage in all its monstrosity.

---

30 The psychoanalytical model with an extreme version of paranoid human nature is that of Klein. At birth the infant goes through a psychotic experience (schizo-paranoid position), and its relationship with objects is first of all with bad objects.

31 The transpersonal thinking that is evident in common language, expresses this point of view conceiving and describing the child as a savage to be civilised. Despite the work of civilisation, the belief remains that the savage still lives in each human being and is ready to show itself in certain situations.

32 The aim of this work is not to criticise Freud's energy-drives model, but to show that it is part of the common way of explaining human behaviors.

33 This view, which has the right to be inserted in dispositional models of human aggressiveness, argues that wars are the result of an accumulation of destructive energy. This view is clearly expressed in the Einstein-Freud letters, entitled "Why war?", where at a certain point in reply to Einstein's question, Freud writes: "You are surprised that it is so easy to inflame men to war, and you presume that there is actually something in them, a drive towards hatred and destruction, which is ready to take up such an instigation. Again I cannot but agree unreservedly with you. We believe in the existence of this instinct in men and in the last few years we have in fact tried to study its manifestations" (Freud, 1932, p. 297).

34 In this sense, the killing of the father is present in a symbolic form all through human history from the beginning right up to our times. Two examples are the French Revolution of 1789 in which Louis XVI was killed and the Russian Revolution in 1917 when Czar Nicola II, called little father by his subjects, was killed.

Post-Freudian thinking is characterised by an in-depth rethinking of the whole conceptual basis of psychoanalysis, with a gradual abandonment of drive reductionism in favor of relational complexity. The Kleinian model itself is an example of this with the introduction of the theory of object relations (drives emerge within the relationship). This process of revision occurred in a cultural context that in all its expressions, saw the drawbacks in causal reductionism and moved towards a reading of the world's phenomena in terms of complexity (Bocchi & Ceruti, 1988; Morin, 1982, 2001)

Today in the scientific community there is a generally agreed critique of the drive paradigm and in particular of the so-called energy conceptions of instinct found throughout Freudian metapsychology and clearly visible in the so-called *economic point of view*. At the center of psychic life today we find relations, no longer drives. The studies responsible for this paradigm shift were those by Bowlby, Foulkes, Winnicott, Bion, Loewald, Kohut, Fairbairn, Sullivan and many others. These studies were recently added to by Mitchell (2000) and form the basis of intersubjective psychology (Orange, Atwood, & Storolow, 1999), which is in turn supported by *infant research*. This has shown that a primitive form of intersubjectivity exists right from the earliest months of life and that the infant-nursing mother affective exchange ontogenically precedes the sharing of other mental states (Lavelli, 2007). Mental life begins, proceeds and concludes in relating to others. It is the result of a co-creation, of a continuous dialog with the mind of others, which Stern calls *intersubjective matrix* (Stern, 2005). On this point he writes: "The idea of a monopersonal psychology or of purely intrapsychic phenomena (...), is no longer sustainable. In the recent past psychoanalysis has made a sharp shift from a monopersonal to a bipersonal psychology. I suggest going even further. In the past, we used to think of intersubjectivity as a sort of epiphenomenon manifested occasionally when two separate, independent minds interact. The time has now come to consider the intersubjective matrix, in our vision of culture and psychotherapy, as the essential melting pot from which the individual's mind evolves. The two minds create intersubjectivity and intersubjectivity models the two minds. The center of gravity has shifted from the intrapsychic to the intersubjective" (Stern, 2005, p. 65).

There is a great deal of data in support of the *social nature of the human being* and of the presence of an intersubjective matrix, coming both from psychodynamic research and from other research areas like neuroscience. As far as psychodynamic research is concerned, we have mentioned some clinician-researchers who have made and are still making the history of psychoanalysis<sup>35</sup>. As concerns neuroscience, specifically the branch that deals with the characteristics of the brain, its formation and its filio-ontogenetic development, the fundamental, historic research by Eccles (1989) cannot be ignored, giving a model of the brain with characteristics defined as *plastic*. According to this model, the brain of the human being at birth possesses a limited number of neural connections that form what can be called a basic nerve network, suited to reacting to some limited environmental stimuli. The majority of the neural connections that enlarge the network, making it more and more complex and suitable to responding to the complexity of the environment, will be formed in the course of a lifetime. It has also been proved that the quality and characteristics of the neuron network is closely related to the environment of adaptation. The neural connections are characterised by plasticity along a rigidity-flexibility axis. Some circuits in practice are highly stable while others change due to environmental stimuli. The model of the human brain's plasticity can only be the result of a long developmental process in which the relationship, in the form of welcoming and caring for the infant, forms the basis of its survival and that of the whole species. There are areas of the brain like *mirror neurons* which use a biological basis to explain complex affective phenomena

---

35 For more depth, see their scientific work

like emotional contagion, empathy, sympathy, identification and intersubjectivity, which only have meaning in a relational perspective. Many psychiatric disorders feature the lack of empathy, the incapacity to adopt others' point of view. This is so in autism, narcissistic, borderline and antisocial personalities (Stern, 2005). These cases are the extreme tip of a psychopathology that originates from suffering in the relationship between the human being and the adaptation environment. It is revealed unambiguously when the social nature, being unexpressed or violated, appears either individually or collectively in the form of suffering.

*Commonplaces on nature and on the behavior of the human being*

Despite the paradigm shift, the drive model and the way drives work are still present in the form of commonplaces. This way of conceiving human nature actually constitutes an *unconscious authoritarian given* that is part of the *collective human Self* in which we recognise ourselves. Being an unconscious authoritarian given, it is difficult to pass through and dwells in each person's mind as a stable representation (Fiore, 2000). The idea of man and his nature is from the transpersonal matrix which is meaning itself, constituted *a priori*, within which each human being is immersed from birth. The transpersonal matrix establishes meanings concerning the "nature" of the human being, found mainly on the communicative and political levels of the matrix. Expectations are established regarding the way of conceiving human beings and relations between them, openings and defences are constructed, which generate Institutions that are in syntony with it. The State, from this point of view, is an institution created in contrast to man's mob nature, an *institution opposed to and not in favor of man*. The way of conceiving the human kind generates persecutionary ideas, nurtured by the institutions of hatred that have their basis and support in them. The result is that in the Polis there is an excess of policies of *diffidence* rather than of *living together*.

It is a commonplace to think that xenophobic behavior is the result of an aggressive instinct<sup>36</sup> that the human being cannot control, and with which one has to resign oneself and coexist. To counter this commonplace which was challenged by scientific research, an international group of scientists (psychologists, ethologists, neurobiologists, psychiatrists, sociologists and anthropologists) met in 1986 at the University of Seville and drafted a document under the title of the "Seville Declaration on Violence". It argues that human violence is basically produced by sociocultural factors<sup>37</sup>.

---

36 Some of the bibliographical references are related to studies removed from dynamic psychology with which I have no problem engaging in dialog when they are useful to extend and/or complete the field of my knowledge. I am referring to the studies by Hinde (1974, 2000), Zimbardo (1970), Milgram (2003) and Bandura (1990) which have had a decisive importance in the writing of this section. On this point, I wish to call the reader's attention to the experiment carried out by Zimbardo et al., in 1971, entitled "the Stanford Prison Experiment", a description of which can be found, written recently by the same author on the web at: [www.prisonexp.org](http://www.prisonexp.org).

37 "We the authors of this Declaration are scientists from various countries, from the north, south, east and west. This Declaration has been signed and published by many associations of scientists from all over the world, including anthropologists, ethologists (scholars of animal behavior), physiologists, politologists, psychiatrists, psychologists and sociologists. We have used modern scientific methods to study the problem of war and violence. Naturally knowledge is never final and one day we will know more than we know today. But we have the duty to express our views on the basis of the latest scientific data. Some say that violence and war cannot cease because they are part of our biological nature. We say that this is not true. Once it used to be said that slavery and maltreatment in the name of race and sex were part of our natural biological characteristics. Some even claimed to be able to scientifically prove such statements. Now we know that they were wrong. Slavery no longer exists and now the world is making an effort to put an end to maltreatment in the name of race and sex" ([www.istc.cnr.it/seville/dichsev\\_s.htm](http://www.istc.cnr.it/seville/dichsev_s.htm)).

Robert Hinde (2000) makes a pointless distinction between *aggression* or *aggressive behaviour* and *aggressiveness*<sup>38</sup>. The first are descriptive terms referring to actions directly or indirectly oriented towards damaging others, while the second, *aggressiveness*, refers to the basic capacity, tendency or motivation to harm others. To become aggressive behavior, this tendency, which certainly belongs to the human race, needs external stimuli (socio-cultural factors) without which it remains in a latent state.

The fact that we all have the predisposition to behave aggressively is confirmed by the daily news which report the many ways it can appear: murders, thefts, robberies, violence on women and children, etc. However, these events are highlighted because they are not usual. Normally people are sensitive and concerned about others (Hinde, 2000). Through the mass media we get an idea of the world and of who lives in it and as they present us with a monstrous world, we end up thinking that the world and those who live in it are monstrous. In actual fact, most of the time, our daily experience tells us that the whole world is not like what is described. We all have the potential to behave with consideration for others, to be *pro*, just as we all have the potential to be *against*. The crucial question is then what makes us go one way or the other?

Hinde specifies three important factors that can steer us in one direction rather than the other. First of all, individuals tend to be less inclined towards aggression if they have been raised by parents that are sensitive to their needs and to controlling them in a reasonable way. On the other hand, individuals raised in a strict family, harsh and insensitive, or by “lax” parents, tend to be selfish and aggressive.

Secondly, being *pro* or *against* is influenced by the circumstances. If the situation is difficult, if the individuals do not have enough to live on, then competitive tendencies including aggressiveness, become predominant. As is to be expected, parents living in difficult conditions find it harder to be sensitive carers for their children and may therefore encourage them to be *self-seeking* (Hinde, 2000).

The third factor is that people are influenced by the culture of the time they live in.

So in a harsh environment like that experienced by the pioneers in the 19th century as they pushed westwards in America, assertiveness and independence, as well as certain aggressive behaviors, were considered virtues.

These three factors can reinforce each other, so people behave egoistically and assertively both because they have been led in that direction, and because they are forced by the circumstances, and also because such behavior is culturally respected (Hinde, 2000).

These are naturally only tendencies, and other factors are certainly involved. However, the quality of the social environment, “is the most important factor affecting later aggressiveness” (Hinde, 2000).

There is not the slightest doubt that in the social environment it is necessary to identify the conditions to let xenophobic aggressiveness emerge through precise media signals<sup>39</sup> that trigger fear and the feelings connected to it. It follows that xenophobic aggressiveness is not the destiny of the species, but something that is aroused from the outside, from the environment. It is the various Polis with their policies that can steer towards tolerance or xenophobia.

---

38 In this differentiation it is possible to see that put forward by Erich Fromm in “Anatomy of Human Destructiveness”, between aggressiveness and destructiveness.

39 One of these signals is “how” a news item is reported by the mass media. For instance the rape of a woman is communicated in a different way if it is performed by an Italian or by a foreigner; in the first case they normally write or say, “Young man rapes a woman from Milan”, rather than “Roumanian rapes a woman in Milan”. As we can see, the second case suggests an association between the criminal act and the nationality, making the reader think that you rape because you are Roumanian. Working on this association, with dogged constancy, as the mass media have done in recent years, an idea is constructed that people are criminals because they are Romanian, but also Romany, Sinti, or ‘non-EU’. A similar manipulation of information was carried out by the local media “when we were the emigrants”, and still continue today at our expense to reinforce certain stereotypes about Italians in public opinion.

Every human being shares with his fellows the fact of belonging to the species, which is manifested in the recognition of the other person as being similar to himself. This recognition is part of the basic matrix and in it there are the transpersonal meanings which establish, in the mind, ethnic, community, group, and family similarity/difference. Transpersonal meanings are part of the social networks one belongs to, which play the role of maintaining memory and at the same time transmitting it from generation to generation. Around the transpersonal meanings and the way they are transmitted, the human being constructs his own ethnic, community, group and family identity.

There are internal and external prohibitions that prevent a human being from *going against* his social nature, from attacking or killing one of his fellows. Before a prohibition can be broken, the mind must be prepared to do it, it must erect defences that serve to motivate the *going against* and to protect him from the consequences. However, while on the one hand the defences will prove to be adequate as long as the *going against* happens, on the other they will prove to be inadequate for protecting the mind from the consequences of the event.

Overcoming these prohibitions occurs under the influence of specific environmental factors, the most fundamental of which are the *deindividuation* and *dehumanisation of the victim*. The process of deindividuation has been amply described in this article; it is what happens to an individual when he is immersed in a crowd and the internalised prohibitions (Super-Ego) are weakened and behaviors otherwise stigmatised become possible. However, I think it wise to add a few comments on this point.

Deindividuation was described by Freud as going backwards on the ladder of civilisation. I think it is a relational experience that is manifested in different ways and does not always convey aggressivity towards someone. Deindividuation, for instance, happens in the particular relational experience of falling in love and in certain mystical experiences; I think that it is the quality of the relationship that determines the quality of the deindividuation and because of this a human being can go in one direction rather than another. The experience of deindividuation is closely connected to group situations and directly dependent on the numerical size of the group. The bigger it is, the more likely it is for deindividuation situations to emerge<sup>40</sup>. In enlarged groups (Profita, Ruvolo & Lo Mauro, 2007) the participants' main fear is that of losing the boundaries, of the mind losing its place. Participants react to this fear with anger and mutual aggressiveness or by closing in on themselves. The fact that the relational experience of deindividuation is feared and sought after is shown by the use of drugs, which is an active attempt to achieve deindividuation.

The dehumanisation of the victim is the second environmental factor that is indispensable if one is to fail to recognise the other person as similar to oneself and proceed to persecute him. It is linked to the phobic and scapegoat dynamics dealt with in this article. Here I will focus on showing the responsibility of the Polis in exacerbating fear and transforming the human being into a diabolical goat. A xenophobic policy on the part of the Polis is always at the root of xenophobic manifestations and in my view these are nothing but undeclared wars; in our case these are against Romany, Sinti, Romanians, EU and non-EU migrants.

The dehumanisation of the other person starts from the way 'enemy' is defined. This derives from the institutions of hatred which spread the fear of the enemy. The other person must become a phobic object (creator of fear) which is always monstrous for the phobic person. This is why the other person cannot be a father, mother, have children, parents, friends, a partner; a monster does not have affects, cannot love,

---

40 Certain mystical-religious phenomena of de-individuation are favored by contexts with a large number of group members.

suffer or feel joy. All the data that should lead to recognising him/her as human must be cancelled out<sup>41</sup>, thus suspending the experience of intersubjectivity.

Xenophobic persecutions are nurtured by the *aggressor-victim* dynamic, because of the importance placed on certain phenomena of common crime so as to more or less consciously foment and support the idea of being threatened and besieged. It is clear that for the mind it is unbearable to attack another human being without seeing him as an aggressor<sup>42</sup>. Aggressive behavior is connected to the perception of danger for oneself and/or one's dear ones, without which it would not be manifested. It can therefore be seen that signals of danger have lost their objective nature and have become culturalised. For this reason, in order to *go against*, a persecutory image is needed and to do this present wrongs are magnified or even invented or, like the wolf in the fairytale, one resorts to the ancestral wrongs. The idea of enemy dwells in a people's transpersonal matrix, and as soon as one is born, one is saturated in it. Think of the history of the Balkans and of the experiment of different ethnic groups living together which was called Yugoslavia and of its collapse following the re-emergence of spectres of persecution that had never been extinguished.

Dehumanisation proceeds on various fronts, one of which is to feed legends, which in themselves have never been confirmed, like the one about the Romany stealing children, while another is that of showing the living conditions of the people one wants to persecute, the contrast between miserable shacks and comfortable houses in fact makes the person living in the former inhuman<sup>43</sup>, if not bestial. The degraded physical, hygienic and behavioral conditions of those who are forced to live on the margin of the world make it easy to dehumanise them and consequently persecute them.

#### *The consequences of 'going against'*

If the preparation of persecution shows us that going against a human being is not natural, then its conclusion, with the weight of suffering that it brings, confirms this. As there are no studies on the results of xenophobic behavior, one can get an idea of them by reading the news on the effects of war, whose dynamics as I have mentioned can, at least in the early stage of justification, be linked to those of xenophobia. What they record almost unanimously is the trauma for veterans of coming home from war and the difficulty of re-entering daily life. What awaits them is marginalization, unemployment, isolation and psychic disorders. Because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, one homeless person out of four in the USA is a veteran and is on average younger than in the past. More and more veterans are turning to refuges in search of help, work or simply a meal. The Veteran Affairs department has identified 1,500 homeless people among the veterans and among these over 400 have been placed in federal assistance programs (Semprini, 2007).

Like the character of Nick in the film "The Deerhunter" by Michael Cimino, the violence committed remains festering within, the violence legitimated by the battlefield no longer has restraints and is now expressed inside and outside the home and also against oneself.

In recent years in America there has been an increase in post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)<sup>44</sup> among veterans of the Vietnam war. According to a study carried

---

41 The beautiful song by Fabrizio De Andre, "Piero's war", shows at a certain point, the sense of confusion of he who finally sees the enemy and recognises his similarity to himself, and the risk he runs by looking at him: "(...) and while you marched with your soul on your shoulders, you saw a man at the bottom of the valley, who was exactly like you, but his uniform was another color".

42 This dynamic is clearly expressed in Fedro's fable, "Lupus et Agnus".

43 The mass media often use the expression "living in inhuman conditions", when referring to the victims of current persecutions.

44 The history of the post traumatic stress disorder is closely connected to war. PTSD is rather an old syndrome, also being widespread among soldiers that returned home after the Civil

out by the American Department of State for Veterans Affairs (DVA) 15,2% of male and 8,2% of female Vietnam veterans has serious or chronic PTSD while 30,9% of males and 26,9% of females has experienced it at least once. The same study reports other frequent disorders among veterans including the most obvious, alcoholism, generalised anxiety disorder and depression (Price, 2007). Other research, this time concerning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, shows that about a third of this group of veterans has needed psychological support, while a good 20% were affected by PTSD. A psychic disorder was diagnosed in at least 32,000 (31%) of the 103,788 returned soldiers, 13% of which concern PTSD (Seal, Bertenthal, Miner, Sen & Marmar, 2007).

This brief survey on the effects of war shows that once men and women who have been trained to kill and for whom the enemy has been dehumanised, return from war, in most cases they get sick. The distance attacks of modern warfare which is so different from the hand to hand combat of wars of the past, which gave soldiers the time to “*look into the eyes of the dying man*”, cannot protect one from the stress of killing. It must therefore be agreed that the preparation for war is only valid up to a point and that the commandment “*thou shalt not kill*” dwells in the deepest parts of the human psyche.

### Conclusion

In this article I have tried to show that the human being is not born xenophobic but becomes so through complex social dynamics. Xenophobia dwells in the transpersonal affective matrix in which the human being is immersed from birth, certainly in its most historicised part around which are based ethnic, community, group and family identities which have nothing to do with the basic matrix representing the unvarying, shared part of every human being.

Environmental signals, including mediatic ones, have the role of steering towards xenophobic persecution, reviving ancient transpersonal persecutory spectres<sup>45</sup>, with the aim of promoting *feelings against*, like hatred, anger, revenge, etc., and at the same time, fomenting the fear of being attacked. This is the state of mind that lends itself to breaking down the most deep-seated prohibitions linked to *going against*. The generalisation of these feelings and of fear in the Polis form a blind mass ready to hurl itself, feeling invincible, against the innocent phobic object.

In the background of what I have written lies the belief that human beings have equal leanings towards good and evil and that they can never be sure to go in one direction rather than the other. While contemporary psychodynamic research has on the one hand freed us from the slavery of drives, on the other, it has pushed us into physical and psychic dependence on the world. We continue not to be the *masters of our own house*, not because we are slaves to drives, but because we depend on the world, on its matrix of sense, which at times offers us untrue truths that lead us in one direction rather than another. However, it is also true that as soon as he comes into the world the human being actively begins his exploration and knowledge gathering, which makes him heir and designer of the world. There is no humanity beyond this, since the human being is such insofar as he is capable of generating new meanings, starting from the ones he inherited. His history unfolds along a progression of giving sense to the world and to the relationship with the world, the sense of the fathers being transformed into that of the children. The maturity, in broad general terms, of a

---

War. Known at that time as “Da Costa’s syndrome”, from the name of the doctor who described it, it was reported by military doctors during and after the first and second world wars. However, it was later reported after the Vietnam war and it was after this war that the syndrome was codified as such.

45 Persecutory transpersonal phantasms are those that concern and contrast, for instance, Christians vs Muslims, Serbs vs Slovenes, Croates and Kosovars, but also blacks vs. whites, the rich vs. the poor and so on.

people or of a community as well as of an individual, is not a region exempt from the Ego and from the excesses of the Id, but it is the capacity of the people or of the community, as well as of the individual, to keep alive the process of signifying the world. When a people, a community, or an individual *becomes* xenophobic, it is not because its hordalic nature has emerged, but because it has stopped giving a sense, and has become dependent on the world and its spectres.

### References

Benasayag, M., & Schimit, G. (2003) *Les passions tristes: Souffrance psychique et crise sociale* [The sad passions: psychical suffering and moral crisis]. Paris: La Découverte.

Bocchi, G., & Ceruti, M. (Eds.), (1988). *La sfida della complessità* [The challenge of complexity]. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Bocchi, G., & Ceruti, M. (1994). *Solidarietà o barbarie* [Solidarity or barbarism]. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Borgna, E. (1997). *Le figure dell'ansia* [The patterns of anxiety]. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Castoriadis, C. (1975). *L'institution imaginaire de la société* [The imaginary institution of society]. Paris: Seuil.

Enriquez, E. (1983). *De la horde a l'Etat: Essai de psychanalyse du lien social*. Paris: Gallimard [From horde to state: Essay on the psychoanalysis of social bond] (Ital. Trans. Dall'Orda allo Stato, alle origini del legame sociale, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1986).

Dal Lago, A. (1990). *Descrizione di una battaglia* [A battle's description]. Bologna: Il Mulino.

Di Maria, F. (Ed.). (1999). *Barbaro e/o Straniero* [Barbarian and/or foreigner]. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Di Maria, F. (Ed.). (2000). *Psicologia della Convivenza* [Psychology of the cohabitation]. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Di Maria, F. (2002). *Psicologia del benessere sociale* [Social well-being psychology]. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Di Maria, F. (2005). *Psicologia per la politica* [Psychology for policy]. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Di Maria, F., & Lavanco, G. (1999). *Organizzazione interna, organizzazione esterna: Il modello interpretativo gruppo analitico* [Inner organization, external organization: the group-analytic interpretative model]. *Psicologia e Società*, 16 (38), 1-3.

Di Maria, F., & Lavanco, G. (1994). *Nel nome del gruppo* [In the name of the group]. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Eccles, J.C. (1989). *Evolution of the Brain: Creation of the Self*. London: Routledge.

Fiore, I. (1994). *L'immaginazione e il potere, la polis famiglia e la genesi dell'immaginario politico* [Imagination and power, polis family and the genesis of political imaginary]. In F. Di Maria & G. Lavanco (Eds.), *Nel nome del gruppo* (pp. 48-54). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Fiore, I. (1997). *Le radici inconsce dello psichismo mafioso* [The subconscious root of mafia psyche]. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Fiore, I. (2000). *Materiali psicodinamici per un pensiero sulla politica come programma naturale* [Psychodynamic materials for a thought about politics as natural program]. In F. Di Maria (Ed), *Psicologia della convivenza*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Fiore, I. (2007). Alle radici della fondazione laica della psicoanalisi [Roots of the laical foundation of psychoanalysis]. In S. Castorina (Ed), *La psicoanalisi laica, la lezione di Franco Fornari*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Fiore, I., & Lo Verso, G. (1994). Il soggetto e la politica: La prospettiva gruppoanalitica come contributo al modello interpretativo [Subject and politics: group-analytic perspective as a contribution to the interpretative model]. In E. Spaltro, G. Sangiorgi & A. Evangelisti (Eds.), *Il soggetto della politica*. Bologna: Patron.

Freud, F. (1913). *Totem And Taboo* (Ital. Trans. Totem e tabù, OSF, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino)

Freud, F. (1921). *Group Psychology And The Analysis Of The Ego* (Ital. Trans. Psicologia delle masse e analisi dell'io, OSF, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino).

Freud, S. (1929). *Civilization And Its Discontents* (Ital. Trans. Il disagio della civiltà, OSF, Boll, Civilization And Its Discontents Bollati Boringhieri, Torino).

Freud, S. (1932). Why War? (Ital. Trans. Perché la guerra? Carteggio Freud Einstein, OSF., Bollati Boringhieri, Torino).

Imarisio, M. (2008). In motorino con le molotov «È la nostra pulizia etnica» [In moped with Molotov: "It's our ethnic cleansing]. Corriere della Sera. Retrieved February 10, 2009 from: [http://www.corriere.it/cronache/08\\_maggio\\_15/imarisio\\_camorra\\_rom\\_pulizia\\_etnica\\_2fe33d40-2241-1dd-8bc7-00144f486ba6.shtml](http://www.corriere.it/cronache/08_maggio_15/imarisio_camorra_rom_pulizia_etnica_2fe33d40-2241-1dd-8bc7-00144f486ba6.shtml)

Gabbard, G.O. (1990). *Psychodynamic Psychiatry in Clinical Practice*. Washington, DC. : American Psychiatric Press (Ital. Trans. Psichiatria psicodinamica, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 1995).

Galimberti, U. (2007). L'ospite inquietante: Il nichilismo e i giovani [The worrying host: nihilism and young people]. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Girard, R. (1982). *Le bouc emissaire* [The scapegoat]. Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle (Ital. Trans. Il capro espiatorio, Adelphi, Milano, 1987).

Hinde, R.A. (1974). *Biological Bases of Human Social Behavior*. NY: Mc Graw-Hil.

Hinde, R.A. (2000). *Why are people willing to go to war*. Retrieved September 10, 2008 from: <http://www.preparingforpeace.org/hinde.htm>

Lavelli, M. (2007). *Intersoggettività origini e primi sviluppi* [Inter-subjectivity: origin and first development]. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Le Bon, G. (1895). *Psychologie des foules* [Psychology of crowds] (Ital. trans. Psicologia delle folle, Tea, Milano, 2004).

Longo, M. (1997). *Per una Psicoanalisi delle Masse mediatiche e della Grande Rete* [About a Psychoanalysis of media mass and big net]. Retrieved September 10, 2008 from: <http://www.psychomedia.it/pm/telecomm/telematic/psanmass.htm>

Lo Verso, G. (1993). *Le relazioni oggettuali* [The object relations]. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.

Mitchell, S. (2000). *Relationality: From Attachment to Intersubjectivity*. Hillsdale, NJ: Analytic Press.

Morin, E. (1982). *Science avec conscience* [Science with conscience]. Paris: Fayard.

Morin, E. (1977). *La Méthode 1. La Nature de la Nature* [Method 1: Nature of Nature]. Paris: Editions du Seuil.

- Morin, E. (2001). *La Méthode 5. L'Humanité de l'Humanité. Tome 1. L'identité humaine* [Method 5: Humanity of Humanity. Vol. 1 Human Identity]. Paris: Seuil.
- Morris, D. (1981). *The soccer tribe*. London: Cape.
- Napolitani, D. (1987). *Individualità e Gruppalità* [Individual and group]. Torino: Boringhieri.
- Orange, D.M., Atwood, G.E., & Storolow, R.D. (1997). *Working Intersubjectively*. Hillsdole, NJ: The Analytic Press.
- Price, J.L. (2007). Findings from the National Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Study. Retrieved September 10, 2008, from: [http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact\\_shts/fs\\_nvvr.html?opm=1&rr=rr45&srt=d&echor=true](http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact_shts/fs_nvvr.html?opm=1&rr=rr45&srt=d&echor=true)
- Saramago, J. (1996). *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira* [Blindness] (trad. It. *Cecità*. Milano: CDE).
- Seal, K.H., Bertenthal, D., Miner, C.R., Sen, S., & Marmar, C., (2007). Mental Health Disorders Among 103 788 US Veterans Returning From Iraq and Afghanistan Seen at Department of Veterans Affairs Facilities. *Arch Intern Med*, 167(5), 476-482.
- Semprini, F. (2007). *John, soldato in Iraq barbone in America* [John, soldier in Iraq bum in USA], La Stampa. Retrieved January 20, 2009 from: [www.lastampa.it/redazione/cmsSezioni/esteri/200711articoli/27449girata.asp](http://www.lastampa.it/redazione/cmsSezioni/esteri/200711articoli/27449girata.asp)
- Stern, D. (2004). *The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life*. NY: Norton (Ital. trans. *Il momento presente*, Raffaello Cortina, Milano, 2005).
- Profita, G., Ruvolo, G., & Lo Mauro V. (2007). *Transiti psichici e culturali* [Psychical and cultural transits]. Milano: Cortina.
- Redazionale (2008). *Pil pro capite, Italia terzultima* [Per capita GPD: Italy third last] Repubblica. Retrieved February 10, 2009 from: [www.repubblica.it/2008/06/sezioni/economia/conti-pubblici-73/italia-spagna/italia-spagna.html](http://www.repubblica.it/2008/06/sezioni/economia/conti-pubblici-73/italia-spagna/italia-spagna.html)