Реторика, визуална реторика и визуална аргументация
Rhetoric, Visual Rhetoric and Visual Argumentation

The construction of the enemy. The strategic use of rhetorical devices in new Italian populisms

Paola Giorgis
Foreign Language Teacher, Independent Scholar
E-mail: paola.giorgis@womaned.org

"The best propaganda is that which, as it were,
works invisibly, penetrates the whole of life
without the public having any knowledge
of the propagandistic initiative"

(Joseph Goebbels, March 1933)

Abstract: In this contribution, I will discuss how words contribute to the (re)production of the Other – and of the Other as the Enemy – relying on studies in Critical Rhetoric and Manipulation. Starting from some historical and literary examples which show how far words can be used, manipulated and mobilized to create different forms of 'Otherness', I will then particularly analyse some of the words and expressions used by the Italian new populisms and right-wing movements against the immigrants. I will also examine how, though being a specific target, immigrants are not the sole target of scapegoating, as discriminating and intimidating words and expressions are mobilized against several other individuals, groups, and communities such as the Jews, the Roma people, women, LGBT individuals, people living at the margins, often releasing impulses and forces which turn into acts of violence. The purpose of this contribution is to foreground the cogent necessity for educators, scholars, and activists to contribute to the development of a counter-discourse able to problematize such divisive and strategic rhetoric constructions by raising a critical awareness of how words are used in everyday speech as well as in political propaganda.

Keywords: the (re)production of Otherness; rhetorical strategies; manipulation; populisms; right-wing movements.

1. Premises and contents

In political debates and in social media we are witnessing an unprecedented resurgence of the re-construction of dichotomic representations and divisive narratives on individuals, groups and social facts – with the major consequence that hate speech often converts into hate crime (Müller & Schwarz 2018). [1] I assume that such ideological polarization results in a deliberate construction of Otherness (Praxmarer 2014-2016) [2], a process of categorization which can easily fall into the stereotyping of cultural features as static and homogeneous traits of some groups, and in the targeting of such groups ('the Others') as the direct responsible of complex phenomena and processes – e.g., global migrations, the increase of general impoverishment, the cutback of social welfare, etc.

Many historical and literary examples show how far words can be used, mobilized, and manipulated to create specific narratives which have the power to shape individual and collective representations and interpretations of reality. In this contribution, I will discuss how words and language contribute to the (re) production of the Other – and of the Other as the Enemy – drawing from past and contemporary examples, and relying on both literary and linguistic sources, such as Klemperer (1947) [3], Orwell (1938; 1949) [4], Eco (1995; 2016 [2011]) [5], Srikanth (2012) [6], Maillat and Oswald (2009; 2013) [7], Wodak (2015) [8] who, from different perspectives and with different intents, have discussed how indoctrination and manipulation are enacted through language. Drawing from their studies, I will mainly examine words and expressions used by the Italian new populisms and right-wing movements against the immigrants. Yet, not solely against them, as the resurgence of violent acts which are often fuelled by words target all minority groups and every form of diversity.

2. The construction of the Enemy: A brief interdisciplinary survey [9]

Two epitomical books, Victor Klemperer's *LTI – Linguae Tertii Imperii – The Language of the Third Reich* [1947], (2000) [10], and George Orwell's *1984* [1949], (2003) [11], show how words can be manipulated and mobilized to create a specific narrative of the Other which, in turn, can be easily transformed into a narrative of the Other as the Enemy. They both discuss how totalitarian systems (be it real, as in Klemperer, or fictional as in Orwell) use language, creating new words or twisting the old ones to manipulate and frame the people's minds and feelings as well as their apprehension and reading of reality, with the consequence that such narratives turn into actual deeds – from private acts of aggression to organized mass crimes. While for Klemperer keeping a diary to analyse the language of the Third Reich was, in his own words, "an act of self-defence" [12] at a time when

he, a Jewish university professor in Nazi Germany, was being deprived of all – his job, his house, his dignity, Orwell's novel is a desperate warning on the risks of an all-encompassing totalitarianism of the future. There are indeed striking similarities between the two works, as the linguistic mechanisms they unveil are very much the same, such as: repetition of words used as slogans; cutting down and the simplification of words and concepts; utilization of euphemisms, contractions and abbreviations; rewriting of geography and history to fit the new ideology; appeal to emotions and sentimentalism to replace knowledge with faith; manipulation of the media and of the propaganda machine; creation of new words, or reversal of the meaning of old ones (Giorgis 2018). [13]

Another illuminating example of how words can manufacture reality and orientate interpretations comes from another classic by George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* [1938] (2013) [14], where he lucidly analyses the reconstructions of the same events during the Spanish Civil War. A combatant and an eye-witness himself, both at the front and in the streets of Barcelona, Orwell examines and combs through one by one the contemporary accounts in the newspapers and in the war reports to show how the facts happened differ from the facts narrated, how such narratives were fabricated to create different enemies and serve different, if not opposite, ideologies. Orwell indeed reflects, and thus obliges us to reflect, on how the same events were reported to suit and confirm antithetical ideological orientations: for the Right, the Spanish Civil War was about Christian patriots fighting against bloody-thirsty Bolsheviks, while for the Left it was about committed Republicans who attempted to quell a military coup. According to Orwell, by reducing the accounts to a conflict between fascism and democracy, what both narratives deliberately missed was the fact that the Spanish Civil War was in reality the beginning of a revolution. Indeed, the collectivisation of lands, transports, and factories, as well as the creation of popular committees of local institutions and popular police forces, was something that both the Soviet Union and western democracies could not allow to happen. Therefore, Orwell bitterly concludes, if a revolution had to be crushed, it was much more convenient to pretend that it had never occurred, and to ignore the facts by presenting prefabricated narratives that, in turn, identified prefabricated enemies (Orwell, [1938] 2013, Appendix I, Appendix II). [15]

Closer to our times, Umberto Eco presents his reflections on the construction of the enemy ([2011] 2016) [16] combining, as in his usual register, sophisticated cultural references with a great dose of irony. First of all, Eco affirms that, all throughout history, when no enemy was at sight, s/he had to be created to reinforce a sense of identity grounded on the dichotomic vision 'Us' *versus* 'Them', 'our

values' *versus* 'their values'. Indeed, the construction of the enemy also serves a fundamental political function, as it allows to hold off all dissents by creating fears, nurturing disgust for the enemy, and authorizing security measures – up to the worst of them all, war. Then, offering examples from historical and literary sources, Eco sustains that since ancient times the construction of the enemy has followed similar patterns. The enemy is repellent in all her/his manifestations: s/he is ugly, stinks, has a terrible accent, and performs hideous acts. Eco also provides a historical survey of the recurrent prototypical figures of the enemy: the Jews, the Black people, the poor, the women, the heretics, the sick. Against all these groups which embody different forms of diversity, all throughout the centuries there have been – and still are – episodes of discrimination and violence, from individual acts to organized mass crimes. Eco does not fail to mention the category of the immigrant, the 'new' ubiquitous enemy, the perfect scapegoat of a society which is undergoing a radical transformation. Finally, Eco reflects on how fragile is the construction of identity when it is solely based on the construction of the enemy, and makes an appeal to ethics, suggesting that we can challenge mutual *clichés* by trying to acknowledge and understand our mutual diversities – yet, in his usual salty tone, Eco (2016) concludes by saying that only poets, saints, and traitors are really willing to understand the enemy. [17]

In her book *Constructing the Enemy – Empathy/Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law* (2012), Rajini Srikanth in turn discusses how the Other has been constructed as the Enemy in US narratives throughout the centuries: first, the enemies were the Native Americans, then the resistant or rebellious slaves; then it was the turn of various groups of Asian immigrants, culminating in the 1942 internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans; then, the Communists in the 1950s and, nowadays, the Muslim Americans or nationals of Muslim descent. Her historical survey mainly tracks similarities between the internment of Japanese Americans of the 1940s and the Guantanamo prisoners after 9/11, sustaining that: "The commonalities lie in both groups' – the internees and the detainees – being stripped of their human complexity and becoming reduced to the reductive category of 'enemy' and 'terrorist'". [18] And, incidentally, in her account she does not fail to remind how yesterday's friends are today's enemies (as for the Talibans, who were once allies used in an anti-Soviet function, and then became the enemy), evidence which further foregrounds how Otherness is not only culturally constructed, but historically and politically situated.

As Srikant also points out, an effective strategy for creating the Enemy consists in the de-humanization of the Other. A recent example comes from a speech delivered by a veteran of the British Army at the Annual Meeting of the

Veterans for Peace. [19] The young man overtly declares that language plays a fundamental role in military training e.g., through the use of words which dehumanize people. This young soldier says that, in Afghanistan, he did not think he was shooting at a person or at a family, but at a 'target'. Through a substitution of words ('target' instead of 'person'), human beings were deprived of their humanity, becoming less than things, but just a target to aim at. Therefore, how words are used and manipulated is *the* key factor which creates specific narratives that have the power to shape the individuals' representation and interpretation of reality, constructing different forms of Otherness and diverting one's dissatisfaction, aggressiveness, frustration or indifference against several 'Others'.

3. Into words
a. A General Overview

Not solely Italian phenomena, the rise of new populisms and the resurgence of nationalisms and of right-wing movements and parties have been widely studied and discussed (e.g., Wodak & Richardson 2013 [20]; Wodak 2015. [21]). There are indeed several complex reasons at the grounds of these phenomena, such as for example the impact of neoliberalism and globalization on the mis- or under-recognition of the instances of the lower classes which have been progressively abandoned by their former political reference area of the Left, and the dissatisfaction of the middle classes who have been experiencing a series of economic crises which have pushed them back along the social ladder. Indeed, tracking the lines of the characteristics of what he called 'Ur-Fascism', Umberto Eco thus wrote in 1995: "Ur-Fascism derives from individual or social frustration. This is why one of the most typical features of the historical fascism was the appeal to *a frustrated middle class*, a class suffering from economic crisis or feelings of political humiliation and frightened by the pressure of the lower social groups" (*New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995 issue; italics in the original). [22] The destabilizing impact of globalization has coincided historically – and not incidentally – with the phenomenon of global migrations, a factor which has further increased social contrasts which have become the fertile soil for the rise of new populisms and right-wing movements.

Beyond all diversities, there are some common features which characterize these movements, such as that the creation and the exploitation of people's fears to justify a sharp limitation of rights, the increase of emergency and 'security' measures, and the fuelling on the people's discontent and dissatisfaction to divert them on an easy target, the Other, who can easily be turned into the Enemy, the scapegoat of all evils and problems. In her linguistic, cross-national and historical

account of right-wing populisms, Ruth Wodak (2015) points out that there are indeed several common threads which run through all of these movements, such as the creation of a scapegoat; the creation of fear which legitimizes politics of exclusion, discrimination, and the enactment of security measures; and a wide use of the social media to blur the boundaries between what is real and what is fictional. [23]

Indeed, all sorts of traditional and social media vastly contribute to play on – and orientate –strategically the public opinion's emotions and reactions. Speaking about migrants, they often use metaphors and shocking headlines coming from the semantic areas of war, invasion, emergency, or they foreground pseudo-scientific evidence to convey their discriminating messages. We are therefore witnessing the deliberate construction of a discourse which installs fear of the Other and, at the same time, dehumanizes him/her with the intent to desensitize public opinion and direct their anxieties and discontent against a specific category of individuals. People can be easily indoctrinated to despise and hate certain groups, and as Hannah Arendt (1963) poignantly showed, even the most ordinary person can be induced to perpetrate hideous mass crimes. [24] From words to deeds the step is always much too short, as several recent studies have also proved (e.g., Müller and Schwarz 2018) [25], documenting the increase of hate crimes following the proliferation of hate speech.

b. The Italian Context

In the national political elections of March 2018, the former separatist party La Lega Nord [The Northern League] had been appropriately renamed La Lega per Salvini [The League for Salvini] to reinforce the identification of the party with its leader, Matteo Salvini, and widen the electoral field by englobing the voters from the centre and the south of the country. In such elections, La Lega per Salvini won the relative majority and formed a coalition government with Movimento 5 Stelle [Five Stars Movement]. As the balance needle between the two leaders, Matteo Salvini and Luigi Di Maio respectively, Giuseppe Conte was appointed as Prime Minister. Yet, with a well-constructed strategy of rude nationalist ministry, Matteo Salvini soon occupied most of the media interests and spaces so that even quality newspapers such as *The Guardian* continued to report him as the Italian Prime Minister – while he was the Italian Interior Minister. His mandate and his figure were further reinforced by the results of both the European elections (26 May 2019) and the ballots in several Italian municipalities (9 June 2019), where his party won over several administrations which had been historically ruled by the Centre-Left and the Left. After one-year government,

Salvini had not managed to address any structural problem such as the economic recession and a high rate of unemployment; yet, he continued to be vastly appreciated (and voted) by the majority of the Italians. His communication strategy has been long-time organized and managed by a group called 'La Bestia' [The Beast] which has been monitoring and analysing sentiments, adapting new messages to them (e.g., reinforcing sentiments of fear or hate) as well as to the social media in which they will appear (more informative on Twitter, more emotional on Facebook, etc.), (Forti 2018). [26] By feeding public opinion with what they mostly want to hear and, at the same time, exploiting the specific characteristics of each social media to tailor each message to reach different audiences, Salvini and La Bestia have deliberately been using of several manipulation strategies (Maillat & Oswald 2009) [27], targeting the interpretation and the vision of the world to maximize their goals.

Indeed, all throughout 2018 and for a great part of 2019 [28], both Salvini's figure and his well-oiled propaganda machine had seemed to enjoy a perpetual honey-moon with many Italians. On the social media, there were incessant displays of Salvini's selfies in which he appropriates and embodies the most typical Italian *topoi*: religion, food and compliance to authority. He was kissing rosaries at political rallies, wearing jumpers belonging to some Italian police forces, and posting daily photos while eating Nutella, spaghetti, *arancini* or a slice of pizza, and drinking a glass of Italian wine. Such exhibited poses raised some fierce signs of disapproval, as for example from the Vatican that reminded that the use of Catholic symbols is reserved to religious ceremonies or private acts of prayer; but they also elicited some suspects on whether Salvini had become a testimonial for some Italian food brands. Still, what he was actually doing was a constant promotion of himself as incarnating the true 'Italianness', a fact fully acknowledged by his audience when chanting the motto '*Salvini uno di noi*' [Salvini, one of us] during his rallies.

Yet, it is mainly through words that, incessantly, Salvini and his team, as well as other populist and right-wing movements, have been keeping the propaganda machine in good function. The use of violent expressions combined with his macho attitude have often raised comparisons with Mussolini and some elements of the Fascist propaganda. Interestingly enough, Salvini has been repeating that he is annoyed by the constant comparisons between him and Mussolini: he often states that both Fascism and Communism belong to the past, and that he does not have time for such ideologies as he is working hard for his country. [29] Though apparently offended by (and sometimes nervously reacting to) such a comparison, he himself openly plays with it. For example, when criticized by

political opponents, he explicitly quotes Mussolini expressions such as "*Molti nemici, molto onore*" [many enemies, much honour], or "*Me ne frego*" [I don't give a damn]; he mimics Mussolini's assumption of responsibility for Matteotti's murder [30], when, as Interior Minister, he proudly vindicated his responsibility for closing the harbours to migrants: "*Se proteggere gli italiani da un'invasione è reato, sono felice di essere processato*" [If protecting the Italians from an invasion is a crime, I am happy to be taken to court], or when he presents himself as a '*uomo del fare*' [a man who does things] in contrast with the idle élites (the Left parties and the European Community) who content themselves with talking. Yet, connections with Mussolini and Fascism do not end here. He explicitly represses dissent, as when he had the Italian political police, Digos, raid in a public high school in Palermo and remove for fifteen days from duty (and salary) a teacher who had not be vigilant about her students' video presentation in which they compared Salvini's Security Laws to Mussolini's Racial Laws (May 2019) [31]; or when he had police forces pull out banners which contained sentences like "*Non sei il benvenuto*" [You are not welcomed] on the occasion of his electoral tour for the European elections (several episodes in May 2019); or, finally, when he published his autobiography with a publisher close to the Italian far-right movement Casa Pound. Therefore, though playing the outraged when associated with Fascism, Salvini indeed has repeatedly been casting more than explicit winks at these references and at this audience [32], as it was also demonstrated by his erosion of the votes of the most traditional Italian right parties in the European elections of May 26th, 2019. In January 2020, in part to rebut the accusations of fascism against him, but mainly to promote the strong pro-Israel legacy of his party, Salvini organized a conference against anti-semitism to which he invited the Jewish former deportee and Senator Liliana Segre, who is the president of the 'Segre Commission against Hate and Racism'. With her usual grace and assertiveness, Senator Segre refused the invitation on the grounds that she would have willingly participated in a conference against all forms of racism, including that against the immigrants. No other representative of the Italian or Roman Jewish community attended the event, thus deflating Salvini's attempt to smuggle the syllogism that being a pro-Jewish (a pro-Israel, actually) means to be an anti-fascist.

c. The Words

Within such premises, I will now examine some of the words and expressions used by the propaganda machine of Salvini and of other Italian populists or right-wing movements, analysing the rhetorical strategies used in such communications. I will analyse them not only descriptively but also trying

to understand "*why* discriminatory discourse is so effective" (Hart 2013) [33] by sustaining that Salvini and the new Italian populisms use rhetorical strategies combining rhetorical figures and argumentation fallacies to achieve a boosted effect. Such strategies, which are widely spread by both traditional and social media, rely on two main biases: Confirmation Bias and Misinformation Bias. According to the Confirmation Bias Theory (Pohl 2004) [34], people tend to look for, and trust, opinions which confirm their owns, discarding those which suggest different readings of reality which do not fit with theirs. Yet, the rhetorical strategies used by the new Italian populisms are not only meant to persuade, but also to manipulate public opinion working on the Misinformation Bias, that is by planting new ideas or memories as well as modifying some old ones. I therefore argue that, by working on both *confirmation* and *misinformation*, such rhetorical strategies are able to modify the cognitive environment of the addressees and weaken their epistemic vigilance, creating a self-nurturing and self-expanding vicious circle which contributes to the construction of different forms of Othering, in turn leading to discriminatory – if not violent – practices.

Propaganda of Italian New Populism	Rhetorical strategies and argumentation fallacies
"*Per i migranti la pacchia è finita. È ora di fare le valigie*" [For the migrants the fun is over. Time to pack up and go], Matteo Salvini, several public occasions (2-3/06 2018; 29/11, 2018). Please note that the Italian colloquial word '*pacchia*' does not only refer to the concept of 'fun', but also to a short-cut and easy way to reach one's goals. "*Non possiamo più regalare altri soldi agli immigrati che vagano per l'Italia*" [We cannot continue to give away money to the migrants who ramble around Italy], (Matteo Salvini, 22/09/2018) in a twitter which was followed by several comments who strongly reinforced the statement by saying "Italians first", "We have already given too much money to migrants", and the like.	These utterances work on both the Confirmation and the Misinformation Bias. On the one hand, they confirm some vague pre-existing *vox populi,* those portraying the migrants as people enjoying a sort of perpetual holiday in Italy (*ad populum* fallacy). On the other hand, they plant false information, as the one about 'giving money to migrants'. Indeed, money is not actually given to migrants themselves but to associations who are involved with their integration, offering migrants accommodation, language courses, and job training. Some of these associations are thoroughly committed and do a dedicated job, but others have created mafia-like organizations taking public money for their own business of money-laundering and corruption, as well documented in the scandal *Mafia Capitale* (November 2015).

several acts against the NGOs who rescue migrants at sea were included the *Decreto Sicurezza bis* [Security Law], June 2019. The NGOs are accused of favouring illegal immigration and being accomplices of human traffickers.	extension of the argumentation against the migrants to those who help these groups: analogy argumentation, drawing analogies by saying that what is true for A is true for B too.
"*Secondo uno studio, il 3% dei musulmani ritiene che l'ISIS sia il vero Islam, e poiché abbiamo un milione e mezzo di musulmani in Italia, vuol dire che ci sono 50.000 potenziali terroristi*" [According to a study, 3% per cent of Muslims sustain that ISIS is the real Islam, and as in Italy there are 1,500,000 Muslims, we have 50,000 potential terrorists], Matteo Salvini, June 2015.	use of hyperboles for the out-group; the use of hyperbole is also connected to the creation of fear (*ad baculum* fallacy).
'*operazione di polizia*' [police operation] for expulsion; '*riqualificazione urbana*' [urban regeneration] to indicate gentrification and the removal of some usually marginalized and minority groups from some areas of the city, to push them even more at the margins.	use of euphemisms for the in-group combined with labelling = labels that force the interpretation towards a different, usually 'milder' meaning, if not towards the opposite meaning, as with the expression 'Peace Missions' to indicate military interventions.
"*Se concediamo lo* ius soli *ai figli degli immigrati ci sarà una sostituzione etnica*" [If we grant *ius soli* to the children of immigrants, there will be an ethnic replacement], Forza Italia and Lega Nord on the *ius soli* debate, June 2017.	slippery slope: if we allow A we will end up with Z; moving the focus from the argument A to reach its extreme Z as a causal and necessary consequence.

"migrants spread diseases and HIV" an utterance which is attributed to some 'scientific data' which constantly recurs in public discourse, but which has been demonstrated to be utterly false, as the migrants are more apt not to spread but rather to develop illnesses due to their immune system weakened by deprivation, poor living conditions, etc.	use of specific and recurring metaphors or terms taken from the apparently neutral and objective terminology of exact sciences – such as natural sciences, mathematics, medicine and the like – to justify or even celebrate acts of discrimination and violence against a certain group of people; *ad verecudiam* fallacy = the experts, the scientists, etc. say so.
"the migrants are the cause of the economic crisis and of the impoverishment of the country" an utterance which constantly recurs in public discourse, but which has been demonstrated to be utterly false (*Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 2018/07/20);	credibility comes with repetition; repetition relies on the Validity Effect (repetition reinforces the message and makes it 'true') and on the Mere-Exposure Effect (the more one is exposed to something, the more s/he will like it);
"*frocio, negro di merda*" [faggot, shit nigger], several comments on social media to address the migrants.	repetition, e.g., of offensive and violent words or expressions which, by being over-repeated, reach a sort of 'invisibility effect': there is a paradoxical effect, as the use of repetition both emphasises and depotentiates the intrinsic violence of the words.
"the migrants are parasites as they exploit social benefits and the welfare system", a recurring utterance which, again, has proved to be false, as migrants contribute to the national wealth and PIL (e.g., through tax paying) much more than they receive;	appeal to emotions, to (supposed) shared and common values of the in-group (the Italians) combined with Myside Bias (emotionally or culturally loaded bias);
"the migrants take away the jobs and the houses from the natives"; "the migrants are the cause of the economic crisis and of the impoverishment of the country".	deflection: put the blame on others, find a scapegoat; create fear: a rhetorical move which transforms the victims into a threat ('you have to defend yourself, your family, your nation from a threat'); *ad baculum* fallacy.

"*Non sei a scuola? Bravo, hai fatto bene, hai fatto bene*!" [You didn't go to school? Bravo, well done, well done!], (5/06/2019, Matteo Salvini at a morning rally where he spotted a young supporter).	appeal to ignorance *versus* education
A person who participated to one of Salvini's rallies exhibited a t-shirt with the writing "*Ama il prossimo tuo*" [Love thy neighbour]. He was beaten by Salvini's bodyguards, but then Salvini himself stopped them by saying: "*Lasciatelo da solo, poverino, un applauso al comunista*" [Leave him alone, poor guy, let's applaud the communist], 10/06/2019.	ridicule, intimidation, or repression of dissent

The strategic intentionality of such rhetorical devices which manipulate – or even create – facts to manufacture a determined interpretation of reality is a recurring presence all throughout history. All regimes, in various periods and countries, have always had well present the importance of establishing and keeping in good function the propaganda machine, in order to reinforce one's ideological positioning by detecting and targeting a specific enemy, as in the notorious cases of the Nazi and the Fascist against the Jews (see Klemperer [1947] (2000) [35]; Pezzetti and Berger 2017 [36]). However, the past seems to resound into the present. Several historians and journalists track analogies between the political and economic situation of the 1930s and the present one: a permanent electoral campaign, the economic crisis, the dissatisfaction of the middle class, hate and fear which permeate public discourse, the private and public debt, a demagogic and irresponsible management of the public finance, the repression of dissent, the increase of security measures (Ginzberg 2019). [37] Besides the voices of scholars and intellectuals, Pope Francis, who incessantly condemns those who instrumentally depict migration as an invasion, in a speech held in Bari in February 2020, openly compared the contemporary rhetoric of Italian populisms disseminating hate against immigrants to that of the 1930s against the Jews and other minorities (Tizian, *La Repubblica*, 24/02/2020). [38] Indeed, all these stances are warnings and reminders that divisive and manipulative rhetorical strategies are not the prerogative of totalitarian systems, but also of democracies

when they deliberately transform the democratic debate into a polarized arena, where the opponents' power grows proportionally to the different forms of 'Otherness' they choose to target, following and at the same time fuelling the sentiment of the public opinion.

Though representing the main scapegoat, the migrants are not the one and only target of both hate speech and hate crime: once opened, the Pandora box of hate and discrimination releases impulses and forces which spread in several directions. Assaults on Jews and Jewish cemeteries; intimidating writings on the front door of former deportees in Nazi concentration camps; hostile acts against LGBTS individuals; pickets and aggressions against Roma people [39]; an escalation of violence against women; attacks against disabled people or people living at the margins such as the homeless: this is just a short list of a diversified resurgence of violent acts against minority groups or every form of diversity, which are often fuelled by words. "*Calpesta l'ebreo*" [Step on the Jew], "*Qui abita un ebreo*" [Here lives a Jew], "*Troia Negra*" [Nigger Bitch], are the menacing writings completed by svastikas and other Nazi symbols which appeared in January 2020 respectively at the entrance of a school nearby Rome, on several front doors of former Jewish deportees in different Italian cities, on the floor of a shop run by a woman of Moroccan origins nearby Brescia. As a Police officer said, these are not generic messages or svastikas drawn on the walls, but intimidating messages directed towards a particular person or group which are specifically targeted as representatives of a particular kind of minority or diversity – the afore mentioned Jewish Senator Segre herself has been repeatedly menaced and is obliged to live under guard. Other forms of targeted discriminations are for example the 'Banglatours', search-and-strike attacks to individuals of Bengali origins perpetrated by some militants belonging to the far right-movement Forza Nuova [New Force]; or as the repeated assaults to homeless, disabled people, and individuals living at the margins; the aggressions to homosexuals, or the homophobic writing "*Frocio vattene!*" [Faggot go away!] on the doorbell of an Italian choreographer. As for the women, besides the general escalation of *femminicidi* (women's murders), there is the troubling increase of repeated sexist insults and threats to several renowned women (politicians, journalists, scientists, etc.): posts on social media invite them to stay home and do the housework, or depict them as sexual objects, or even reach the point of instigating their rape.

As seen, the dichotomic representation 'Us' versus 'Them' offers a wide variety of declinations of 'Them'. Yet, new populisms, nationalisms and neo-fascist movements actually play on a double register of contraposition, both within the in-group ('the people' versus 'the élite') and with the out-group ('us, the

locals' versus 'them, the others'). As for the 'in-group', 'the people' results as the construction of an undifferentiated generic group, where every in-group diversity is ignored and where unity is established through the ideology of a common language, a national belonging and (supposed) shared values; conversely, 'the élites' (journalists, intellectuals, etc.) are the groups that cannot be trusted as they are 'the enemies of the people'. Two Italian linguists, Giuseppe Antonelli and Luca Serianni, have analysed the Newspeak of Italian contemporary political debate devising some recurring strategies such as the use of localisms, dialects, swearwords and even errors, employed by politicians to show the public opinion that they do not belong to an élite, but that they are ordinary people speaking the colloquial language of ordinary people (in Minardi 2018). [40] As for the 'out-group', the 'Refugee Crisis' draws "on new and traditional forms of discriminatory rhetoric or outright racism, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia … [reproducing] key patterns of xeno-racist discursive scapegoating and othering" which also legitimize several special security measures (Krzyzanowski, Triandafyllidou & Wodak 2018). [41]

As highlighted before, a key element in such a propagation of hate and discrimination is played by and through the social media. To counterbalance such drift on specific issues regarding immigration, the association Carta di Roma has set a deontological protocol which promotes correct information by operating a rigorous fact-checking through the involvement of the media, several national and international associations and academia. In its studies, Carta di Roma has demonstrated that social media amplify all processes of misinformation and mystification due to their specific characteristics, such as anonymity, difficulty of tracking back the sources, easiness, and speed of spread (https://www.cartadiroma. org). Yet, as it was proved by the already quoted study by Müller and Schwarz (2018) [42], misinformation and mystification do not confine themselves to words, as the web amplifies processes of indoctrination which can easily turn hate speech into hate crime.

Such an appalling picture shows how it is very convenient and functional for some to create divisive narratives of discrimination and different forms of racism by constructing 'the Other' (different 'Others', actually) as the scapegoat of all evils. As Toni Morrison (1975) poignantly said, "The very serious function of racism … is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work". [43] Therefore, I think it is urgent and necessary that as educators, scholars, and activists we do 'our work', contributing to develop a counter-discourse by raising an awareness on how words are used, manipulated and mobilized in every day speech as well as in propaganda, in order to avoid repeating, in other forms, the errors of the

past. In such an endeavour, studies in rhetoric and communication can indeed help to unveil the strategic intentionality of the rhetorical devices and moves. Yet, I believe that studies are not enough, as they reach only a part of the population, such as scholars, researchers, academics, who are in the privileged position of adopting critical tools to decipher manipulating messages. Indeed, I believe that such analyses should be conducted in all levels of schools, adapting them to the different ages and audiences, but still offering a critical training in reading words and messages, in order to develop a critical awareness of how words are used and manipulated to reach specific goals and create specific narratives. Such an endeavour could be carried out by introducing a new subject in school, that of Critical Linguistics. Besides the literary appreciation and the critical analysis of literary texts, I think there should be a specific cross-disciplinary school subject dedicated to the critical analysis of words, their uses, the contexts in which they are utilized, by whom, and for which purposes. Some teachers already encourage their students to a critical understanding of public communications and messages, but I think that such practice should be institutionally recognized and regulated at all school levels, offering a basic critical linguistic training to all students, and in particular to the younger ones. The aim would be to offer pupils and students tools to decipher manipulating messages, but also to appreciate how words convey meanings at different levels and how they reflect different values. As in Cornelia Ilie's words (2012): "It is through language that we are able to convey, challenge and negotiate meanings, as well as form concepts, in order to make sense of and structure the world around us. Words that are central to a culture represent the key to understanding how a society takes on new meanings and how these changes reflect values of society." [44]

4. A note of hope in a dark sea: 'Le Sardine' Movement

If words can be used to attack and divide, they can also be used to heal and unite. With the main purpose of deflaming public violent speech and favour a new form of participation to politics, in November 2019 an Italian grassroot political movement, Le Sardine [The Sardines] [45], succeeded in realizing what the Left and the Centre-Left had long time failed: to revive people's interest in politics. Their main proponents were a group of young people who began to gather in their local piazza of Bologna, soon to spread in more than 90 cities in Italy. In only three months (November 2019-January 2020) they managed to challenge the paradigm of the Italian political debate: instead of selfies and posts, they brought back to the Italian piazzas thousands of people of all ages,

favouring direct participation in the public debate; instead of division, they promoted solidarity; and instead of violent and aggressive words, they explicitly aimed to change the language of politics. Yet, The Sardines are in good company with other associations, NGOs, militant activists, feminist groups, and civic movements who, from different perspectives, enact solidarity to counterbalance the waves of division and discrimination.

Notwithstanding The Sardines' neat success and unexpected spread, and though particularly two episodes have downsized Salvini's ambitions of being the 'one-man-show' of the Italian politics [46], it cannot be said that the Right has lost its consent. Indeed, some political polls of late February 2020 showed that while La Lega per Salvini was progressively losing portions of supporters, they were actually moving to the far-right party Fratelli d'Italia [Brothers of Italy] [47] or even to extreme far-right movements such as Forza Nuova. The latter widely utilize social media to instigate and disseminate divisive and violent messages. Indeed, a report of DIS (Dipartimento Informazioni per la Sicurezza [Information Department for Security]) presented to the Italian Parliament in early March 2020, revealed a growing use of instigating online Neo-nazi propaganda made by national extreme far-right movements and their international connections (Ziniti, *La Repubblica*, 2/03/2020). [48] The report put into evidence that young people in particular are easily attracted and indoctrinated by such messages and can be easily induced to take action. Such an evidence motivates us to continue to guard words as a stronghold against the propagation of divisive and racist discourses, and as a way to encourage the development of civic public debate based on participation and solidarity.

An aside

While I am concluding these lines in late March 2020, we are in the midst of the outbreak of Covid-19, a pandemic which is affecting hundreds of thousands of people around the world – and, that, after China, has struck with a sudden and violent fury Italy in particular. Besides the unpredictable development of such a dramatic situation, it would be interesting in the future to analyse critically and cross-culturally how such a global emergency has been described in the media, how it has been exploited by some political parties for their propaganda, and which words and expressions have been used to orientate or manipulate public opinion and the people's emotions (e.g., the constant use of terms coming from the semantic area of war: "we are fighting", "we are at war", we will win this war", etc.). Indeed, when the storm is hopefully over, such a global sanitary, social, and economic emergency will be an interesting case to study from many

different perspectives, as it will probably reshape anthropologically, socially, and politically the world as we have known it so far.

By now, what is emerging in Italy is the paradox of forcedly isolated individuals who feel the need to create new rituals of solidarity and community – applauding nurses and doctors from the windows, singing songs from the balconies, bringing help and food to previously unknown neighbours. But other aspects are emerging too. Such as the poor figures of the right parties and nationalist leaders who, being deprived of their favourite narratives and enemies, are frantically struggling for attention constructing politicized narratives of the situation and flooding their socials with contradictory messages. In the early days of the epidemic, they fiercely promoted an attitude of denial (continue 'business as usual', enjoy crowded *aperitivi* in the city centres, etc.), only to make a drastic U turn in the following days, when they suddenly became the new paladins of the 'Stay Home' campaign. Then, further on in the days when the pandemic had become evident to all, spreading social discontent, as well as several fake news and conspiracy theories, such as the one that the virus was purposely created in a Chinese laboratory, only to be immediately disproved by scientists and virologists (Nardelli, D'Urso 26/03/2020). [49] Their pathetic attempts to be back on the frontstage deliberately create more confusion in an already confused and complex situation – and, at some point, they should be called upon to answer to that. And yet, it is hopefully becoming clear to the general public that besides stirring up the spirits and spreading fake news they have very little to say and to offer. Indeed, a real threat has silenced them, the professional fear-makers, showing that, while we were closing our borders to immigrants, the virus was easily travelling across nations proving to be the real no-border visitor, and that we will need much more than a populist or nationalist propaganda to stop it.

But all these elements and considerations will be studied and dealt with in the future. For now, just take care and stay home, healthy, and safe!

References and Notes

[1] Müller, K. & Schwarz, C. (2018). *Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime*. November 30, 2018. SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3082972 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3082972. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

[2] Praxmarer, P. (2014-2016). "Otherness". *Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue*, No. 39. http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

[3] Klemperer, V. [1947], (2000). *LTI. The Language of the Third Reich*. London; New York: Continuum.

[4] Orwell, G. (2003). [1949]. *1984*. With a Foreword by Thomas Pynchon. London; New York: Penguin.

[5] Eco, U. (1995). Ur-Fascism. *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995 issue.

Eco, U. (2016). [2011]. *Costruire il nemico e altri scritti occasionali* [Constructing the enemy and

other occasional writings]. Milano: Bompiani.

[6] Srikanth, R. (2012). *Constructing the Enemy. Empathy/Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

[7] Maillat, D. & Oswald, S. (2009). Defining Manipulative Discourse: The Pragmatics of Cognitive Illusions. *International Review of Pragmatics*. I, 2009: 1-23.

[8] Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Discourses Mean*. London: SAGE.

[9] Some parts of this sub-chapter are adapted from Giorgis (2018). and Giorgis forthcoming. Giorgis, P. (2018). *Meeting Foreignness. Foreign Language and Foreign Language Education as Critical and Intercultural Experiences*. Boulder CO, New York NY: Lexington, Rowman & Littlefield.

[10] Klemperer, V. [1947], (2000). *LTI. The Language of the Third Reich*. London; New York: Continuum.

[11] Orwell, G. (2013). [1938]. *Homage to Catalonia*. London; New York: Penguin.

[12] Klemperer, V. [1947], (2000). *LTI. The Language of the Third Reich*. London; New York: Continuum, 8.

[13] Giorgis, P. (2018). *Meeting Foreignness. Foreign Language and Foreign Language Education as Critical and Intercultural Experiences*. Boulder CO, New York NY: Lexington, Rowman & Littlefield, 40–43.

[14] Orwell, G. (2013). [1938]. *Homage to Catalonia*. London; New York: Penguin.

[15] Orwell, G. (2013). [1938]. *Homage to Catalonia*. London; New York: Penguin.

[16] Eco, U. (2016). [2011]. *Costruire il nemico e altri scritti occasionali* [Constructing the enemy and other occasional writings]. Milano: Bompiani.

[17] Eco, U. (2016). [2011]. *Costruire il nemico e altri scritti occasionali* [Constructing the enemy and other occasional writings]. Milano: Bompiani, 9–36.

[18] Srikanth, R. (2012). *Constructing the Enemy. Empathy/Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law*, 18.

[19] The specific video I discuss here, which had been online been until July 2018, has now apparently been removed. Here are the references and the link to the video I refer to: Sharrocks, W. (2016). *Construction of the Enemy*. Speech delivered at The Veterans for Peace UK Annual Gathering, London, Dec. 2016 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzMD5EcaqsI

There are though many other similar videos at the link of the Veterans for Peace UK: http://vfpuk.org/.

[20] Wodak, R. & Richardson, J. (eds.). (2013). *Analysing Fascist Discourse – European Fascism in Talk and Text*. London: Routledge.

[21] Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Discourses Mean*. London: SAGE.

[22] Eco, U. (1995). Ur-Fascism. *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995 issue.

[23] Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Discourses Mean*. London: SAGE, 1-26.

[24] Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Viking Press.

[25] Müller, K. & Schwarz, C. (2018). *Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime*. November 30, 2018. SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3082972 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3082972. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

[26] Forti, S. (2018). "La bestia", ovvero come funziona la propaganda di Salvini ["The Beast", or how it works Salvini's propaganda]. *Rolling Stones*, 13/07/2018.

[27] Maillat, D. & Oswald, S. (2013). Biases and constraints in communication: Argumentation, persuasion and manipulation. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 137: 140.

[28] See further on about two Salvini's pivotal forced pit-stops in August 2019 and January 2020.

[29] An example of such kind of rhetoric regards Salvini's decision (in 2019) of not attending any ceremony on April 25th (a benchmark which celebrates the liberation of Italy from Nazi-Fascism) by claiming that that date is too much linked to the past.

[30] Giacomo Matteotti, an Italian MP who had accused the Fascist party of electoral fraud and who was assassinated by Mussolini's hit men. In a famous speech at the *Camera* (Italian Low Chamber) on January 3rd, 1925, Mussolini vindicated the political, moral and historical responsibility for several episodes of violence, included Matteotti's assassination. Such a speech is considered by historians as marking the beginning of Fascism as a regime.

[31] Salvini's Security Laws to Mussolini's Racial Laws (May 2019). https://video.corriere.it/prof-sospesa-palermo-ecco-video-studenti-che-ha-provocato-punizione-docente/19b4ba16-7880-11e9-8596-c65b94f06070. Retrieved om 10.04.2020.

[32] For a well-documented and detailed account of all the overt and covert links between La Lega per Salvini and the extreme far-right movements in Italy and abroad, see Gatti 2019. Besides all national and international connections, three main points cement La Lega and the far-right movement Casa Pound: no euro, no immigration, and the rhetoric of 'Italians first' (Gatti 2019: 163).

[33] Hart, C. (2013). Argumentation meets adapted cognition: Manipulation in media discourse on immigration. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 59: 200.

[34] Pohl, R. (ed.). (2004). *Cognitive Illusions. A Handbook on Fallacies and Biases in Thinking Judgement and Memory*. Hove; New York: Taylor & Francis.

[35] Klemperer, V. (2000). [1947]. *LTI. The Language of the Third Reich*. London; New York: Continuum.

[36] Pezzetti, M. & Berger, S. (2017). Catalogue of the exhibition: *La razza nemica. La propaganda antisemita nazista e fascista*. [The enemy race. Nazi and Fascist Antisemitic Propaganda]. Rome, Casina dei Vallati, January 30-May 7. Roma: Gangemi.

[37] Ginzberg, S. (2019). *Sindrome 1933* [Syndrome 1933]. Milano: Feltrinelli.

[38] Tizian, G. (2020). Il Fascista alla porta [The Fascista at the door]. *L'Espresso*. 16(02): 14-25.

[39] In 2018 as a Ministry of Interior Salvini had called for a census of the Roma population in Italy. Though he then partially tempered such request, it could not have been carried out in any case as the Italian Law specifically prohibits any form of census based on ethnic origins.

[40] Minardi, S. (2018). *Oggi dialetto, domain sberleffo. Colloquio con Giuseppe Antonelli e Luca
Serianni* [Today dialects, tomorrow quirks. Dialogue with Giuseppe Antonelli and Luca Serianni]. *L'Espresso*, 18/11/2018, n. 47: 24-25.

[41] Krzyzaowski, M., Triandafyllidou, A. & Wodak, R. (2018). The Mediatization and the Politicization of the "Refugee Crisis" in Europe. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*. 16(1-2): 3.

[42] Müller, K. & Schwarz, C. (2018). *Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime*. November 30, 2018. Available at: SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3082972 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3082972. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

[43] Morrison, T. (2017). *The Origins of Others*. With a Preface by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[44] Ilie, C. (2012). Which freedom? The challenges of key word conceptualisations in a cross-linguistic perspective (pp. 19-35). In: S. Caruana, L. Coposescu & S. Scaglione. *Migration, Multilingualism and Schooling in Southern Europe*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 20.

[45] The name 'Le Sardine' points to several references: the proponents' intentions is to pack the Italian squares as the sardines in a shoal; one of the slogans says: "*Siamo sardine e non abbocchiamo*" [We are sardines and we don't take the bait], referring to the 'bait' of the populist propaganda; and last but not least, it has to be noted that sardines are a very popular, cheap Mediterranean fish, and therefore such a name probably wants to vindicate also the simplicity and the plebian origin of the movement. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sardines_movement.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/27/the-guardian-view-on-italys-sardine-movement-politics-with-panache-can-defeat-the-hard-right. Retrieved on 20.04.2020.
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/28/italy-progressives-sardines-salvini-election-far-right, Retrieved on 05.05.2020.

[46] In August 2019 Salvini attempted a sort of summer coup from his *buen retiro* at the

Papeete beach, asking the Italians to give him full power. He was stopped by President Mattarella who did not dissolve Parliament. Then, in January 2020, Salvini was defeated in the local elections in Emilia-Romagna, a region historically ruled by the Left, which he was though confident to win over. Gaining in such an area would have meant a political and personal success for him but, again, his ambitions were scaled back.

[47] Such a name explicitly refers to the first words of the Italian anthem: "*Fratelli d'Italia, l'Italia s'è desta…*" [Brothers of Italy, Italy has awaken…].

[48] Ziniti, A. (2020). L'allarme dei Servizi segreti: Il rischio dei neonazi e la tenuta democratica minacciata dalla propaganda istigatoria [The Intelligence Warns: the risk of the Neo-nazi and the democratic solidity menaced by instigating propaganda]. *La Repubblica*, 02/03/2020.

[49] Nardelli, M. & D'Urso, J. (2020). https://www.buzzfeed.com/albertonardelli/coronavirus-matteo-salvini-giorgia-meloni-conspiracy. 26/03/2020. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

Bibliography

Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Viking Press.

Eco, U. (1995). Ur-Fascism. *New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995 issue.

Eco, U. (2016). [2011]. *Costruire il nemico e altri scritti occasionali* [Constructing the enemy and other occasional writings]. Milano: Bompiani.

Forti, S. (2018). "La bestia", ovvero come funziona la propaganda di Salvini ["The Beast", or how it works Salvini's propaganda]. *Rolling Stones*, 13/07/2018.

Gatti, C. (2019). *I demoni di Salvini. I Postnazisti e la Lega* [Salvini's demons. Postnazists and the Lega]. Milano: Chiarelettere.

Ginzberg, S. (2019). *Sindrome 1933* [Syndrome 1933]. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Giorgis. Forthcoming. *The cultural (re)production of Otherness. Critical Cultural Linguistics: How language conceptualizes and (re)produces Otherness – and how such processes can be problematized and challenged.*

Giorgis, P. (2018). *Meeting Foreignness. Foreign Language and Foreign Language Education as Critical and Intercultural Experiences*. Boulder CO, New York NY: Lexington, Rowman & Littlefield.

Hart, C. (2013). Argumentation meets adapted cognition: Manipulation in media discourse on immigration. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 59: 200-209.

Ilie, C. (2012). Which freedom? The challenges of key word conceptualisations in a cross-linguistic perspective (pp. 19-35). In: S. Caruana, L. Coposescu & S. Scaglione. *Migration, Multilingualism and Schooling in Southern Europe*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Klemperer, V. (2000). [1947]. *LTI. The Language of the Third Reich*. London; New York: Continuum.

Krzyzaowski, M., Triandafyllidou, A. & Wodak, R. (2018). The Mediatization and the Politicization of the "Refugee Crisis" in Europe. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies.* 16 (1–2): 1–14.

Maillat, D. & Oswald, S. (2009). Defining Manipulative Discourse: The Pragmatics of Cognitive Illusions. *International Review of Pragmatics*. I, 2009: 1–23.

Maillat, D. & Oswald, S. (2013). Biases and constraints in communication: Argumentation, persuasion and manipulation. *Journal of Pragmatics.* 137: 140.

Minardi, S. (2018). *Oggi dialetto, domain sberleffo. Colloquio con Giuseppe Antonelli e Luca Serianni* [Today dialects, tomorrow quirks. Dialogue with Giuseppe Antonelli and Luca Serianni]. *L'Espresso*, 18/11/2018, n. 47: 24-25.

Morrison, T. (1975). Black Studies Center public dialogue. Pt. 2. *Special Collections: Oregon Public Speakers*. 90. Portland State University; St. John, Primus; Callahan, John; Callahan, Judy; and Baker, Lloyd. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/orspeakers/90. Retrieved on 20.05.2020.

Morrison, T. (2017). *The Origins of Others*. With a Preface by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Müller, K. & Schwarz, C. (2018). *Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime*. November 30, 2018.: SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3082972 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3082972. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

Nardelli, M. & D'Urso, J. (2020). https://www.buzzfeed.com/albertonardelli/coronavirus-matteo-salvini-giorgia-meloni-conspiracy. 26/03/2020. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

Orwell, G. (2013). [1938]. *Homage to Catalonia*. London; New York: Penguin.

Orwell, G. (2003). [1949]. *1984*. With a Foreword by Thomas Pynchon. London; New York: Penguin.

Pezzetti, M. & Berger, S. (2017). Catalogue of the exhibition: *La razza nemica. La propaganda antisemita nazista e fascista*. [The enemy race. Nazi and Fascist Antisemitic Propaganda]. Rome, Casina dei Vallati, January 30-May 7. Roma: Gangemi.

Praxmarer, P. (2014-2016). "Otherness". *Key Concepts in Intercultural Dialogue*, No. 39. http://centerforinterculturaldialogue.org. Retrieved on 06.05.2020.

Pohl, R. (ed.). (2004). *Cognitive Illusions. A Handbook on Fallacies and Biases in Thinking Judgement and Memory*. Hove; New York: Taylor & Francis.

Rodari, P. (2020). Papa: "Mi fanno paura i discorsi di alcuni leader populisti, seminavano odio già negli anni Trenta del secolo scorso" [The Pope: "I am scared by the statements of some populist leaders, they dissemanated hate already in 1930s]. *La Repubblica*, 24/02/2020.

Srikanth, R. (2012). *Constructing the Enemy. Empathy/Antipathy in U.S. Literature and Law*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Tizian, G. (2020). Il Fascista alla porta [The Fascista at the door]. *L'Espresso*. 16 (02): 14–25.

Wodak, R. & Richardson, J. (eds.). (2013). *Analysing Fascist Discourse – European Fascism in Talk and Text*. London: Routledge.

Wodak, R. (2015). *The Politics of Fear. What Right-Wing Discourses Mean*. London: SAGE.

Ziniti, A. (2020). L'allarme dei Servizi segreti: Il rischio dei neonazi e la tenuta democratica minacciata dalla propaganda istigatoria [The Intelligence Warns: the risk of the Neo-nazi and the democratic solidity menaced by instigating propaganda]. *La Repubblica*, 02/03/2020.