

The therapist and the group of deviant adolescents

Cristina Salottini

Abstract

I chose to talk about a sexual crime because I think it's particularly interesting following the working-through in the group of a crime against a person and not against property, that represents the most diffused kind of adolescent crimes.

It is also interesting, for describing the therapist's position difficulties, that she not only represents an adult in regard to the adolescents, but she also represents a woman in front of males.

Key words: deviant adolescents, group, institution, services for the juvenile justice

The group's interventions with adolescents which are accused of crime, that I will talk about, take place inside the Services for the juvenile justice in the psychological activities, which are part of wider institutional intervention. These activities' aims are the deviant gesture's comprehension, the working-through of the subjective meaning of the crime and of the justice's intervention.

These interventions are usually addressed to the single adolescents and their families, but they can also take in consideration a group, mainly in those situations in which the crime has been committed in group.

It is then clear how the institutional context is basic in determining the setting's characteristics and the relationship between the therapist and the adolescents.

If on one side this constitutes its limit on the other it is also an important occasion because it allows the activation of an elaboration function in regard of deviant behaviour's meaning, on a development level, in a moment in which the contact with the justice's system and the public reactions towards the crime, demand to the adolescent a deep and often dramatic reconsideration of the meaning of his own acting and of his own self image.

The intervention is then prescriptive, with a non voluntary consent to the encounters that have a limited number.

We explain to the teenagers that the penal code, when the crime is committed by minors, considers the knowledge of the personal situation of each youngster, in order to understand the problematic areas that are in the background of their actions.

Our aim is the one of making the crime -that is usually committed in a "non thought way"- "thinkable" and, at the same time, to point out that the adult's interest -besides the one of a crime's judgement and its punishment- is the one of accompanying the adolescent in this moment, helping the resumption of his development pathway, in order to avoid him to be flattened in the identity of offender, which would unavoidably promote new actions.

The changing in the modalities to think of oneself, starting from the reflection on the crime, can be very wide, although it doesn't necessary imply the development of a

general capability of insight, of self reflection and of a general redefinition of one's self-image, aims which are part of a longer therapeutic work.

Nevertheless it can be the premise for future psychotherapy interventions. As everyone knows it isn't easy that youngsters which commit crimes are interested in a reflective work, the normativity of the intervention can then support the birth of a therapeutic need.

Short interventions, that are characterized like a precocious intervention and that start from a situation with traumatic characteristics, have a big importance.

The therapist's difficult task is the one of activating a reflecting capability with teenagers that tend to act more than to think and also to build a work alliance in such a difficult context. Unavoidably we have to face emotions and attitudes of reticence and suspicion from them.

In order to solicit a resumption of the emotional functions that can support the encounter with one's own responsibility, -without being flattened by guilt, that would unavoidably encourage the flight towards easy negation mechanisms- the capability to develop an empathic "cooperation", that is not collusive nor has the tendency to find a justification, is very important for the therapist.

I think that only the encounter with an adult who is empathic enough, mainly in such a contest, can promote the adolescent's capability to get close to his own emotions and motivations, opening in this way a path to the perception of the victim's existence like a human being with his own emotions.

In case of crimes committed in group, first of all we have to recognize the meaning and the climate of the aggregation that promoted and supported the crime. This is possible because the intervention's institutional normativity permits to start from the natural group, the offenders' group.

Each teenager relates to himself, to his own motivations and to the events' "narration" that he says to himself and to the others, in a very different way when he is seen alone, face to face with an adult, rather than when he is heard together with his peers.

When youngsters are seen alone, they can, for example, show a level of self reflection and a capability of mentalisation that, once they are in a group, seems to be lost in the stiffness of the roles that each one of them carries in a defensive way when he is with others.

But it can also happen, like it often happens, that the loss of responsibility in regard of one's own behaviour – that is maintained individually- is modulated in a less stiff way and is easier to change in a group, thanks to the reciprocal mirroring that permits to see in the others and better tolerate one's own unacceptable aspects.

Anyway it is very important recognizing that, mainly in adolescence, the ways of expressing one self individually or in group, can be very different and therefore the process of self reflection often needs to be developed in both contexts.

The adult's function, in this case, is mostly a regulation function, he is the bearer of language, through which he tries to reconstruct the gesture's communicative

intention, giving space to the sufferance and the malaise that provoked it, without losing his authoritative role in this comprehension operation.

This authoritativeness, that is rooted in the law and that symbolically represents it, links with an attitude of attention towards emotional dynamics and developmental difficulties, that are at the origin of the deviant behaviour, both basic conditions for starting a transformative process that we can define with the formula “from pre-logic to logic.”

As Fonagy points out, teenagers that have the tendency to act have a lack in the reflective function, in the capability of catching their own mental states and needs, so with the difference between themselves and the other, and so, the other’s mental states, and how this comes from the fact that they have been themselves object of uncertain and unorganized links from their parental figures, which have underrated and mortified their subjectivity.

Only a long psychotherapeutic work could reactivate this function in a global way, but also a short institutional work that is aimed on the working-through of a single event, with a wide symbolic pregnancy, could permit the resumption of developmental functions, when these aren’t compromised too seriously, for these reasons the realization of this ambitious project is not easy and is not always possible.

Now I would like to describe a clinical situation in which it has been possible lightening up and enacting in a positive way, this mechanism that led to a deep reassessment of one’s own acting, and so of the idea of oneself in relation to the other inside a short time group process.

I chose to talk about a sexual crime because I think it’s particularly interesting following the working-through in the group of a crime against a person and not against property, that represents the most diffused kind of adolescent crimes.

It is also interesting, for describing the therapist’s position difficulties, that she not only represents an adult in regard to the adolescents, but she also represents a woman in front of males.

The sexual abuse committed by the adolescents is evidently a very traumatic act, obviously mostly for who suffers it, but also for who acts it.

In most of the adolescents’ cases the victim and the abuser know each other, they approximately have the same age, they share the same social and family reality, often their psychic dynamics are complementary.

We can say that often in adolescence, both the victim and the abuser share an ambiguous space: the victim represents for the abuser the place of the projection of one’s own most unacceptable aspects, the ones that have to do with one’s own impotence, with one’s own not self recognition. On the other hand the victim seems to adhere to the abuse’s dynamics, giving his own self repudiation, his own proper passive mortification.

The abuse in adolescents seems to reproduce that undifferentiating ambiguity dimension of which Silvia Amati talks about, following Bleger, in regard of the

climate that characterizes violence in authoritative regimes. The dimension of de-subjectification, the uncertain distinction between internal and external world, unites victims and executioners.

In adolescents I think that this aspect of “recognizability” one one’s self in the other is the key that leads the young abuser to erase, through the violent act, the perception of those aspects of common disvalue, that the other’s presence makes clearly intolerable.

This leads to the non-recognition of the other’s emotional reality that, therefore, assumes in a explicit way in adolescence, the characteristic of non recognition of one’s self and can therefore enact a “traumatic” failure of one’s proper development process.

In the sexual abuse this negation of the other and of one’s self, assumes moreover the shape of a sexed body’s negation and the aggression appears like an attempt to put one’s own body to silence, that in adolescence is felt like something which is dangerously well-known and, at the same time, like something foreign.

The aggression also has the function of maintaining, through what Blos calls adolescence concretization, the belonging in an illusory, pre-logic and preverbal system in which the action magically expels the intolerable aspects of one’s self and affirms his own dominion one one’s self and on the environment.

Anyway, for what concerns my experience, during the adolescence the seriousness that appears in some gestures on the human and juridical level doesn’t always match with an analogous pathological seriousness in the personality’s structures of the protagonists. But, these gestures are always signals of the generation alliance’s interruption and of the unsuccessful recognition and support from their (real and symbolic) fathers in regard of the sons’ needs of valorization and recognition of their emergent virility and social identity.

I shall quote Blos: “ The adolescent that addresses himself to concretization, not only uses the environment for the satisfaction of his infantile needs, but, at the same time, tries to free himself, through his actions, from his infantile objectual dependence, in a word he tends to activate the second process of individuation of adolescence.” Blos, 1996.

In the case that I would like to expose the teenagers, more than ten, have been seen individually from the health workers and what came out has been a global image of people that not only didn’t understand the meaning of their gesture, but that instead, pinned the blame of the whole episode on the victim, asserting that she agreed on it and so they have been the real victims of her about-term and denunciation.

This statement, that certainly sounds shameful, reflects the confusion on the relationships that is typical of these kind of situations, in which often there is a lack of one’s proper subjective perception of one’s own aggression, felt like a bearable and acceptable behaviour.

In this case the injustice feeling was also emphasized from rage, raised from very emphasized and, in a certain way, not true statements written on the news papers that, looking for strong and scandalous emotions, used this episode to give voice to

fantasies on groups of rude and rough adolescents that belong in a great measure to the adults' imagery.

Before meeting them in group for four weekly encounters, the information that I had on them was limited to some short profiles written by the health operators that saw them individually.

The teenagers, fifteen and sixteen years old, were almost all trainee manual workers that finished middle-school. Two of them went to high school and one of them didn't have a job. Their family situations were all without serious problematic areas, only one family was already known from the social-services.

The fifteen year old victim has been a class mate of some of her aggressors and was known by all of them, even for her disinhibited sexual behaviour.

In a Sunday afternoon in which everyone was taking a walk, two teen-agers – without premeditation- took the victim “abroad” and with her went towards another small park. Along the way they met other friends on (their) motor bikes that joined them.

At the end, reached their destination, the girl had oral intercourse with more than ten of them, one by one, while the others waited for their turn repaired behind a bush, in a sort of ceremony. Then they said goodbye to each other like if nothing happened.

Once at home the girl talked about it with her mother that denounced the boys.

Because of the Justice's intervention the boys have been brought to the Youth First Custody Center, reinforcing, in this way, through the common experience of the detention and of the preliminary investigations, the fact that they are a group.

So this wasn't a group structured by common habits, but they were a number of boys: some of them were linked by friendship, some others were only acquaintances that found each other in a relatively accidental way, joined by a sort of word-of mouth advertising in function of the crime.

Nevertheless the group dimension has been crucial in this situation: in the first place it made the acting possible, because without the group strength none of them would of thought to do such a similar action, then it gave its members the social definition, the herd's “stain” that afterwards became a support and mover for the working-through of the crime's emotional meaning.

The group initially came at the consultations -with a male colleague that had the recorder function and with me- in a very united and cohesive way, asserting that their action hasn't been neither coercive nor violent, but that really the supposed victim was consenting with it and that she volunteered willingly to pull this stunt with them.

This statement, that sounds immediately rudely defensive and like the result of a moral disengagement and a loss of responsibility, is also the witness of a fantasy that all of them shared at the crime's moment and that permitted them to put themselves in an imaginary universe of virile strength; the one that certain women are at the service of a male desire to which they adhere passively.

So, one of the first themes is the one of trying to understand the reasons for which the girl has volunteered for this tour de force. Not for money because it is soon clear that they didn't pay her.

Maybe for pleasure? On this hypothesis they work for a long time: maybe, since she did it, she liked doing it. Someone expresses in a rude way his opinions on the female desire, in an uncertain way between the will of showing that he considers it obvious and predictable and the one of exhibiting a big indifference.

Certainly, but then if at the end what is in the girl's head is not understood, thing that by the way is not interesting at all, how can we say that she surely agreed?

Even the hypothesis that she liked it because she was crazy didn't have any consequences, everyone agreed in saying that she isn't crazy. On the other hand they also did it for imitating pornographic movies and at the end except for one that supports the idea that she did it for pleasure, the others didn't like it so much.

If pleasure didn't take much space for them, we can also think that it has been the same for her. So it really seems that pleasure is not involved.

So why? Maybe for fear? No! All of them together and without hesitations say that no, they didn't scare her.

They talk about how the girl followed them; even stating to have "taken her abroad" on the motorbike, they insist on her possibilities of fleeing, if she wanted to: she didn't flee, so they conclude, she wanted to stay.

They, instead, have been put in jail, they have been brought in prison and their parents were ashamed while they all cried. They have been scared, it was full of dangerous non EU people, they have been threatened.

Seeing well, they reconstruct, these threats have not been explicit, but a Moroccan boy took of the laces from his shoes and this aroused the terror that he wanted to strangulate them. But then nothing happened, they played soccer and chatted.

Even with the policemen that brought them in jail, there wasn't any need for being locked up in the car, anyway they wouldn't of moved, it was like if they were paralysed.

They convey that fear is a strange feeling, it blocks the mind, it makes you see dangers even when they aren't there, it's something in the head.

Waiting for an episode that you know will happen and for which you can't do anything about, terrifies you like when they were all in a row, in front of the judge's door that had to decide the precautionary measures for each one of them. They entered one by one and when the one before got out the one after turned pale, and before entering himself he asked "what did he do to you?" and the answer was always the same one "permanency at home", but they were terrified that someone could send them in jail again.

This justice's rite, seems to re-propose the same crime's dynamic up-side-down, the scornful triumph "of one after the other" became a terrified wait.

It's just starting from the possibility of expressing one's own fear and of discussing it in the group like victims, that we can talk about the fear that the girl felt, even if they didn't think of threatening her with violence.

We can see that the therapist's intervention has been the one of facilitating a verbal confrontation, underlining the narration's incoherence, trying to find, together with

the group's members, a narrative common coherence, in which they could recognize themselves, for then arriving to talk about the emotions felt.

When we are all together, we feel we are more threatening - they say-. And then: "the group gives strength, in group we do things that we wouldn't do by ourselves, but it's also true that in group you have to do what someone else decides, for example you have to show that you have sex, other wise they say you're a pansy."

In the common thought a sense of a proper submission in regard of the group's pressure is introduced, group that is not only felt anymore like the fact of being all together joined by an only shared will.

One of them, maybe the most temperamental and maybe the most disturbed, voices the most auto-defensive position in an expulsive way (we are good and she is a tart), in such a caricatured stiff way that this position isn't shared by many group members, now more sensible to the solicitations that the identification game enacted.

The feeling of being object of the verbal bossiness of that friend , that tries to use them like confederates for not thinking, and having to bear him for solidarity, brings another one of them almost naturally to say, like if it was a game: "maybe like we have to bear you, even she did what she has done for submission". But then the game deepens in the statement that comes from many sides: "maybe the first time she did it because she wanted to, but then she didn't manage to back out. Maybe she wanted to do it with one of us and she found herself having to do it with all of us."

We talk about sexuality, of the unease felt after a sexual relationship "I don't think of being guilty of something, but I felt I did a boob, I felt it in the stomach" says one.

It seems that, in a relatively fast and easy way, identification processes with the victim started, victim that from the real group begins to be part of the internal group, "she is a bit them", like I think has always been, but now this mirroring, even if it isn't object of a conscious reflection, doesn't have to be denied anymore, because it's less threatening for the identity.

I suppose that the thinking function realizes itself in group even through the possibility of experimenting different mirroring in between the different group members, multiple mirroring that protects from the fear of merging with the other, in it's double's dimension of one's self.

This is possible because the therapist makes the third's function emotionally perceptible and usable, function of reality and protection from the anxiety of loosing boundaries in a merged groupal space, just like the one that promoted the crime has been.

Of course the relationships with the girls are complicated – they say - "girls are more mature than us, they know how to talk, even if they are two years younger than us, they are at our level, they are scary". A common thought takes shape that, with girls, or you are scary or you are scared, it isn't possible to have encounters in which there are reciprocal relationships.

There is who has a girlfriend and who doesn't, who's girl has broke up after the denunciation.

Personal communications multiply themselves in an animated discussion in which different opinions are expressed in a very different climate from the monolithic one with which the group started.

The subsequent encounter begins in a persecutory atmosphere, initially addressed towards me that I was felt like the judge's representative, the one that with subtle psychological arts tries to make them say what they wouldn't like to say. The climate is tensed, someone now seems more forthcoming to go on with the discussion, others stay in a hostile silence.

The possibility that they have experimented in the previous encounter, of a way of staying together whose center was not acting but thinking, seems to have filled them with curiosity, but it has also disconcerted and scared them. They say that they have never talked together, they do things together and for these they agree, but having different opinions creates difficulties, they are afraid that then they will fight. "Words make a mess" they say, and I –the therapist- seem to represent the troubles' responsible. Language, like sexuality, seems an adults' world prerogative, from which the boys are excluded and all they can do is imitate in a caricatural way. I think that in this there is the adult therapist's aspect as a new adult figure that places itself differently from the other adults, because he invests language of emancipation meanings, he participates to the linguistic communication with them, he promotes it and values it.

The adult therapist presides, in a certain way, over a rite, the rite of the communication's construction.

We could think about initiatory rites in which the adult was the keeper of the tribe's secret that made the generation continuity possible, that consented the passage from childhood to adolescence, from the children's group to the adult's group, telling them the adults' secrets through the initiatory rite.

This movement implies the abandonment of the magic childhood's thought, and so it scares. Language scares, like sexuality scares, like girls scare because they solicit desires and because they think.

These reflections, that take shape sentence after sentence, from everyone's mental work, and that the therapist puts together and points out, permits them to take knowledge of the fact that the fear of which they are talking about, has to do with the loss of the group's protection. If they experiment different thoughts in their internal, they aren't an ensemble of people which are built up around an acting anymore, they individuate themselves more, losing the protection of ambiguity and of the groupal's anonymity, and this scares (mostly now they find themselves exposed to the public judgement).

So differences break links and make them become weak and lonely? The tensions that they experiment in between them are also due with the different opinion's representativeness : "I only speak for my self" says one of them. Or else: "when someone speaks , does he do it for himself or also for the others?" Are we I or are we we?

The other appears, different from one's self but not incompatible, in regard of whom a responsibility, till yet not recognized, is now perceived: the fear to betray and the fear of being betrayed, not for bad will, but for the incompetence in understanding and of becoming voice of what the other one thinks is partly shared.

So the desire of reassembling and of untangling internal tensions comes back, proposing themselves once more like victims of an instigation from the girl, rather than like authors of a damage towards the girl.

But the possibility of experimenting a kind of reciprocal responsibility inside the group helps to talk about responsibility "if they rob your motorbike – says one of them- is it maybe your fault because not looking after it, you provoked someone to rob it?" Or maybe is taking advantage from the other's people weakness a sign of lack of responsibility that concerns who makes this gesture, also independently from the damage done?

"But she chose an easy way in order to have the male's company" agreed some of them.

"But we choose an easy way also" say others.

It seems at last that it's possible gaining a sufficient recognition of the girl's existence and of the damage inflicted to her, in a dimension in which guilt doesn't rule, but in which, through the identification with the victim, the sensation of one's own responsibility gains space.

"We really treated her like a mop!" they say, almost all agreeing. And of the boy who stubbornly insists on his own innocence, they say: "it seems that he doesn't understand anything, he's very tough, but at the end he understands also", with a responsible attitude that doesn't contain the risk of using him like escape goat.

What can we do now?

I suggest them to think together how they could be tested, and thinking about their "tough" friend they all say: "they could oblige us to work for a beautiful and unapproachable woman; or maybe oblige us to satisfy women that look for us only for sex; or maybe send us to work in a center for unmarried mothers". A series of hypothesis in which retaliation and reparation are blended together.

Their feeling of sexual inadequacy widens in considerations that concern the general sensation of inadequacy and mortification, which they are now able to share.

They speak about their work, about their being trainees of older manual workers that treat them in an unrespectful way, obliging them to a repetitive work, without teaching them anything.

"They oblige us to sweep for the whole day – some say- intending the being on fatigue a kind of work that trainees do – but we can't touch an tools without being scolded"

Many of them think that bossiness is an unavoidable way of relationship with employers. Some one asserts that the only way of learning is the one of being scolded from the elder workers, so then you can become like them!

Someone doubts that humiliations during their job is useful, someone says that "fear doesn't make you learn". Bossiness generates bossiness. The discourse deepens and

hypothesis on how it is possible facing bossiness, without being subjected to it and without becoming bossiness themselves, come up.

In this case the thinking process led to the disclosure of a deep humiliation level, one's own abuse level from adults that humiliates their subjectivity and their emerging virility, leading them to be in the aggressor's shoes in a caricatural desperate imitation. The desperation of the social birth that has been blocked leads to the necessity of addressing, in a defensive way, to an acting that rescues them from the state of humiliation and narcissistic mortification. These teen-agers are social subjects with a blocked development, with social fathers that don't help them getting born and that won't give them their name, they are teen-agers that, in the group's dimension, look for one of the possible situations.

So they used a phase specific instrument, delegating to the group the function of scaring, submitting, inflicting humiliation and relieving the individual from responsibility. They convoked the group-band because they needed to convoke an interlocutor to which delegating the function of enacting an action that represented the solution of their problem in a collective way.

So the group will have to re-subjectivize, remake them think, remake them become aware of their responsibilities, make thinkable and pronounceable what has been hidden in the desperation of a shameful action.

From a private dimension, of a group "hidden behind the bushes", in an affirmation ritual of an imaginary virility -ritual that in its repetitiveness remembers video-games- obtained through the expulsion on the victim of their own proper anxiety of passivity and mortification, the group found itself exposed to the public look and to the public punishment. Afterwards, going through the justice's rites, that powerfully brought on the scene the adult figure, the group gradually arrived to constitute itself like a therapeutic group.

The group became "speaking": events and emotions found a space of relational expression inside a dramatic action in a theatrical way, that is in a linguistic way of the term and not like on the "crime's scene" like a concretization of a developmental exigency stillborn.

This pathway "inside" groups that, although composed by the same people, changed along the way in their structure, promoted in its members a modification in the self-representation capability.

Working with teenagers in situations that are so critical solicits the fear of not being able to feel a minimum of indispensable empathy, and sometimes this can happen, and for the therapist it implies the risk of feeling instinctively and exclusively on the victim's side, mostly for the woman therapist, and so interpreting the institutional role like an alliance with the victim and therefore simply stigmatizing the criminal action, rationalizing the justice's intervention and its inevitability.

Certainly the intervention's legitimacy is in the therapist's mind strongly, and informs his role very much, but it's not a justice against the criminal but against the crime and so as a support of the developmental process's resumption.

Even in difficult cases like these, the possibility of understanding the traumatic aspect and the deep “likeness” between victim and persecutor is very intense.

Just the possibility of recognizing this intolerable likeness, before not known, in a climate of non annihilation but that supports mirroring and reflection, climate that the therapist promotes and stimulates, permits to reach an initial recognition of the other, of his subjectivity, of his presence in the self representation. On the empathy’s side it’s possible empathizing with them as victims in order to lead them closer to the victim’s perception as a person and so recognizing their own responsibility in its regard without being exiled in guilt, but being near to the suffering for their own setback. The penalty can therefore be felt like a testing, not only in a juridical way, but as a pathway’s construction of self-reparation and reparation of the other.

We could say that the therapist holds Perseus’s shield, permitting the group to support the impact of their own violence and their own mortification, without remaining petrified.

So the therapist’s aim is the one of making what is known thinkable, to use Bollas’s words (maybe in an “eccentric” way), supporting this birth, permitting that the victim, in a known way, enters in the group, without transforming this in a mental explosion for the teen-agers.

The group that shared this acting, in my opinion, showed an extraordinary capability in the working-through of the acting’s meaning, elaboration that is important both for the group’s thinking processes -the group will in fact rebuild itself in its friendly dimension on a new base- for the individual interiorization processes, and also for the development of their own individual and social responsibility. The collective thinking function favours the individual symbolization capability that supports growth.

References

- Alvarez A. Chi esercita quali violenze, tecniche diverse per diversi tipi di violenza. Atti del convegno: “Le vittime e gli autori della violenza”, Torino 1997.
- Balier C. (1996), *Psicoanalisi dei comportamenti sessuali violenti*. Centro Scientifico Editore, Torino 1998
- Balier C., Ciavaldini A. (1998) Violence et processus adolescents, *Adolescence*, 31
- Blos P. (1979) *L’adolescenza come fase di transizione*. Armando, Roma 1988.
- Breer W. (1996), *The adolescent molester*. Springfield (Illinois) Ch. C. Thomas Publisher
- Pietropolli Charmet G. (1997) *Amici, compagni, complici*. F. Angeli, Milano.
- Cramer Azima, F. et al. Ed. (1989), *Adolescent Group Psychotherapy International* Universities Press Inc. Boston
- Fonagy P.(2001), *Attaccamento e funzione riflessiva*. Cortina, Milano.
- Giaconia G. Violentatori violentati, da dove nasce la violenza. Atti del convegno: “Le vittime e gli autori della violenza”, Torino 1997.
- Jeammet P. (1997), Violence à l’adolescence, *Adolescence*, 30.
- Laufer M.e M.E. (1984), *Adolescenza e breakdown evolutivo*. Torino Boringhieri 1986.

Maggiolini A., Riva E. (1998), *Adolescenti trasgressivi. Le azioni devianti e le risposte degli adulti*. F. Angeli, Milano.

Mahron R. et al. (1980), *Delinquenza minorile*. Borla, Roma.

Novelletto A., Biondo D., Monniello G. (2000), *L'adolescente violento. Riconoscere e prevenire l'evoluzione criminale*. F. Angeli, Milano.

Redl F. (1966), *Il trattamento psicologico del bambino*. Boringhieri, Torino 1977

Saottini C. (1999) Molestie sessuali e adolescenza, *Adolescenza*, 10,1

Saottini C. (2000) Gruppo e banda, in Rosci E. (a cura di) *Più o meno 16 anni*. Milano, Franco Angeli

Rassial J.J. (1998) De la violence sexuelle, *Adolescence*, 31

Winnicott D.W. (1984), *Il bambino deprivato*, R. Cortina, Milano, 1986.

Winnicott D.W. (1956) La tendenza antisociale, in (1958) *Dalla pediatria alla psicoanalisi*, Martinelli, Firenze, 1975. (pp. 368-369).

Cristina Saottini is a psychoanalyst (SPI; IPA). Researcher in the field of the family's boundaries and author of several publications.
E-Mail: c.saottini@gmail.it