

## GILBERTO DI PETTA &amp; MARIO ROSSI MONTI

THE ITALIAN SCHOOL OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL  
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY: ROOTS, DEVELOPMENTS,  
CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

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1. *Introduction*. Rari nantes in gurgite vasto

Our aim in this essay is to briefly explore the pathways, the personal history and the ideas of those who contributed to the foundation of the *Italian School of Phenomenological Psychopathology*. This school should be placed alongside other similar phenomenological schools that sprang up in Germany, France and Holland in the course of the 20th century. As a philosophical approach, Husserl's phenomenology reached Italy only in the 1920s thanks to Antonio Banfi's translations (1886-1957). This first phase was followed by a long silence that lasted until the 1960s, when Enzo Paci (1911-1976) edited the translation of Husserl's *Crisis of European Sciences* [Husserl 1972, original 1933; see also Scarantino 2018].

In the Italian psychiatric literature of the time, however, no mention was made of the fact that some German-speaking psychiatrists (such as Karl Jaspers and Ludwig Binswanger) had taken inspiration from philosophical phenomenology already at the turn of World War I. The only exception was the isolated work of Giovanni Enrico Morselli. If we take 1913 – the year of publication of Jaspers' *General Psychopathology* – as the beginning of the phenomenological approach in psychopathology,

we can say that its Italian reception was delayed by thirty years. This can be explained by at least three factors:

1. The philosophical debate between the two wars (1918-1940) was completely dominated by idealism and historicism, against which both phenomenology and existentialism had taken a critical stance.
2. Neuropsychiatric positivism did not consider concepts initially developed in the field of philosophy and only subsequently applied to the clinical context as scientifically valid.
3. The absence, in Italy, of a psychiatric tradition in the true sense of the word. Except for the work and the philanthropic ideas of Vincenzo Chiarugi in the 18th century, psychiatric assistance in Italy had as its primary objective – according to the 1904 law – the custody of mental patients entrusted to psychiatric hospitals. At the academic level, instead, mental illnesses were considered an epiphenomenon of the diseases of the nervous system.

The first studies dedicated to phenomenological psychopathology in Italy were written by Danilo Cargnello between 1947 and 1948. In the following decades, the development of territorial or community-based psychiatry (starting with the 1978 law No. 180), together with the absence of a strong psychiatric tradition analogous to that of France and Germany, created an atmosphere of conflict between a scientist-positivistic paradigm and a socio-political one. In this context, surprisingly, the original contribution of phenomenological psychopathology, despite its few adherents, consisted precisely in its ambiguous position between, on the one side, the clinical domain and, on the other, the transcendental dimension of philosophy. A new psychopathological ‘science’ could therefore emerge: engaged in a *search for meaning* within the clinical context, it interfaced with trends in cultural anthropology (as in the dialogue between Ernesto de Martino and Bruno Callieri) and ethnopsychiatry and, more recently, worked toward a definition of a phenomenologically-based psychotherapy.

In 1965, the journal *L'Évolution Psychiatrique*, founded and edited by Eugène Minkowski and Henri Ey, dedicated a special issue to

Italian psychiatry entitled *Hommage à la Psychiatrie Italienne* [Ey et al. 1965]. Among the contributors were Franco Basaglia, Adolfo Bovi, Bruno Callieri, Lorenzo Calvi, Franco Giberti and Guido Gozzano. The presence of Franco Basaglia among them testifies of the impact of the phenomenological perspective within the reformist and democratic renaissance promoted by the new Italian psychiatry. The typically phenomenological idea of «bracketing the illness» represented a clean break with a form of psychiatry that revolved around the ineluctability of a chronic evolution of schizophrenia. Only much later, in January 2011 another journal, *L'Art du Comprendre*, edited by Georges Charbonneau, devoted an entire issue to the 'Italian School' entitled *Délirer: analyse du Phénomène delirant* [Ballerini & Di Piazza 2011]. The contributors were Arnaldo Ballerini, Bruno Callieri, Lorenzo Calvi, Ludovico Cappellari, Riccardo Dalle Luche, Gilberto Di Petta, Clara Muscatello, Mario Rossi Monti, Paolo Scudellari and Giovanni Stanghellini.

These two dates – 1965 and 2012 – can be taken as symbolic benchmarks. This time span saw the development, in Italy, of a form of psychopathology that, starting with the work of a small group of 'pioneers', gradually turned into an accredited school of thought, thereby finding its own place among the bio-psycho-social epistemologies that characterized the second half of the 20th century. Laurent Feneayrou's introductory essay [Feneayrou 2016] to the French translation [Cargnello 2016] of Danilo Cargnello's *Alterità e alienità* («Alterity and Alienity») recognized the existence of an Italian School stratified across generations and with its own relevant literary production.

In its first phase, the Italian movement was engaged in the translation, introduction and dissemination of the phenomenological approach in psychiatry. Cargnello in his *Alterità e alienità* [2001, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1966] introduced the thought of Binswanger, Callieri that of Schneider (*Psicopatologia clinica* [2004, original 1954] – «Clinical Psychopathology»), Priori that of Jaspers (*Psicopatologia generale* [2009, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1964] – «General Psychopathology»), Ferro and Ballerini that of Blankenburg (*La perdita dell'evidenza naturale* [1998] – «The Loss of Natural Self-evidence»), Dalle Luche and Di Piazza that of Tatossian (*Fenomenologia delle psicosi* [2003] – «Phenomenology of Psychoses»), and Ballerini that of Kimura Bin (*Scritti di psicopatologia fenomenologica*

[2005] – «Essays in Phenomenological Psychopathology»).

In November 1994, the *Italian Society for Psychopathology* was established in Florence under the honorary presidency of Bruno Callieri and the direction of Arnaldo Ballerini.<sup>1</sup> The journal *Comprendre*, founded in 1988 and edited by Lorenzo Calvi, was adopted as its official organ: the Italian School had emerged from its initial ‘clandestine’ phase, so to speak. In 2001, the Society organized its first *Residential Course in Phenomenological Psychopathology*, held annually until 2003 in Pistoia, and from 2003 until today, in Figline Valdarno. The Course, now in its eighteenth edition, was directed until 2015 by Arnaldo Ballerini and is currently coordinated by Gilberto Di Petta and Giampaolo Di Piazza: classes meet for a total of seven weekends over a semester.

Starting from 2010, some members of the Society’s board have been engaged in the promotion of the *School of Phenomenological-Dynamic Psychotherapy*. Based in Florence, approved in 2015 by the Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR), the School is thereby legally authorized to confer the title of «psychotherapist». In addition to a four-year course in phenomenological-dynamic psychotherapy directed by Giovanni Stanghellini, a *Basic Course in Phenomenological Psychopathology* is organized annually in Florence as to stress the founding importance of psychopathology for a phenomenologically oriented psychotherapy. In the meantime, the *Italian Society for Psychopathology* – still under the presidency of Arnaldo Ballerini – was renamed *Italian Society for Phenomenological Psychopathology*. Since the passing of Ballerini in 2015, Gilberto Di Petta has been its president.

## 2. Geographical and conceptual maps

Until 1994, Italian phenomenological psychopathology developed thanks to small groups of psychiatrists or, better, to single mentors with few or no disciples at all. Italian psychopathologists, kept at the mar-

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<sup>1</sup> The founding members were Arnaldo Ballerini, Andrea Carlo Ballerini, Lorenzo Calvi, Giuliano Del Pistoia, Giovanni Gozzetti, Mario Rossi Monti and Giovanni Stanghellini.

gins of academic teaching [Rossi Monti & Cangiotti 2012], have often been accused of using an esoteric, elitist and clinically unsubstantiated language. Also, they have not done much to share, transmit and disseminate their worldview. The establishment, in 1994, of the *Italian Society for Psychopathology* marked a significant trend reversal due to the professional and human contribution of Arnaldo Ballerini: thanks to him, an atmosphere characterized by an exasperated «narcissism of small differences» and an insistence on incompatibilities was replaced by one of mutual exchange of ideas.

In its dialogue with major representatives of the European schools of phenomenological psychopathology (Wolfgang Blankenburg, Georges Charbonneau, John Cutting, Gisela Gross, Gerd Huber, Joachim Klosterkötter, Karl Kraus, Georges Lanteri-Laura, Eugène Minkowski, Michael Musalek, Jean Naudin, Josef Parnas, and Kurt Schneider), the Italian School has distinguished itself for a number of peculiarities, which will be illustrated here through a geographic and conceptual map. This will allow to see how different groups and approaches, within the phenomenological movement in psychopathology, have gradually overlapped or merged.

### 2.1. *The Lombard group*<sup>2</sup>

The godfather of the Lombard group – or rather of all Italian phenomenological psychopathology – was Danilo Cargnello (1911-1998). For a long time, Cargnello, a distinguished psychiatrist and psychopathologist, was considered the most authoritative candidate to the first Italian professorship of Psychiatry, which, however, went to Carlo Lorenzo Cazzullo [Rossi Monti & Cangiotti 2012]. Cargnello was head of the Psychiatric Hospital of Vicenza, Teramo, Sondrio and, at the end of his career, Brescia (1963). Perfectly fluent in German, Cargnello took on the task of introducing the thought of Ludwig Binswanger in Italy. *Alterity and alienity* – his most important work – was published in 1966 (a second expanded edition appeared in 1977 [Cargnello 2010a]): it still remains the only comprehensive attempt to present the thought of Bins-

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<sup>2</sup> We would like to thank Dr. Paolo Colavero for his contribution to this paragraph.

wanger as outlined in his *Grundformen* [1942]. In 1984 he published *Il caso Ernst Wagner* (Cargnello [2002, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1984] – «The case Ernst Wagner»), in which he drew on the studies of the great German psychopathologist Ernst Kretschmer and devoted a complete series of essays to Binswanger's conception of schizophrenia.<sup>3</sup>

Lorenzo Calvi (1930-2017) was the only student of Cargnello, with whom he worked very closely in Sondrio for five years. After graduating in Medicine at the State University of Milan (1954), where he also attended Cesare Musatti's lectures, Calvi used to hang about the lively scene of the Catholic University and attend the lectures held at the «Laboratory of Psychology» by Father Gemelli and other eminent figures of the time, such as Ferdinando Barison, Enrico G. Morselli and Cargnello himself. In 1958, Cargnello offered him a position at the psychiatric hospital in Sondrio. Based there, where he was habilitated to teach Clinical of Nervous and Mental Diseases (1964) and Psychiatry (1969), Calvi did not abandon the Milanese philosophical school. In Milan, Enzo Paci was leading a group of students – still very well-known today – who, together with their mentor, would give historical contributions to the Italian phenomenological tradition (among others: Giovanni Piana, Carlo Sini, Salvatore Veca, Pier Aldo Rovatti and Stefano Zecchi). Calvi studied extensively the lived experience of phobia and innovatively employed the concept of *epoché* as a way to access the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*) of neurotic subjects suffering from phobias. His famous 1963 work on the construction of the phobic object as a phenomenological exercise<sup>4</sup> followed an essay and some presentations held abroad together with Cargnello; very significantly, it also predated Wolfgang Blankenburg's insight into the importance of phenomenological *epoché* as a window on the lifeworld of the *de-mundanized* patient [1998, original 1971].

Due to his professional experience as a neurologist and his extensive dealing with so-called neurotic cases, Calvi is the Italian psychopathologist who has been most engaged in clarifying the phenomenolog-

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<sup>3</sup> Now collected in Cargnello 2010b.

<sup>4</sup> Published in the first issue of *Psichiatria Generale e dell'Età Evolutiva* in 1963 (a journal founded and edited by Ferdinando Barison) and later reprinted in two parts in Calvi 2005; 2007. See also Calvi 2013 and Calvi & Colavero in press.

ical structure of the lifeworld of phobic, obsessive and hypochondriac subjects. In 1988 he founded the journal *Comprendre. Archive Internationale pour l'Anthropologie et la Psychopathologie Phénoménologiques* with the ambition to bring together fellow European psychopathologists. In 1994 he contributed to the establishment of the *Italian Society for Phenomenological Psychopathology*. Paolo Colavero, deputy editor in chief of *Comprendre*, is currently editing a posthumous collection of some of his unpublished essays.

## 2.2. The Venetian group<sup>5</sup>

The Venetian group formed around the charismatic figure of Ferdinando Barison (1906-1995). Head of the Psychiatric Hospital «dei Colli» (Padua), medical officer in Crete during the Second World War, he was later head of the Psychiatric Hospital of Padua from 1947 to 1971. In the 1950s, drawing from his deep awareness of the importance of the environment for psychiatric patients, he wrote a manual for psychiatric nurses (*Vademecum dell'infermiere – «A Nurse's Handbook»*). In the same years, he devoted part of his activity to the community, first by opening a number of clinics and later by following the example of the French Sector Psychiatry (as Ballerini did in Tuscany). In this sense, Barison aimed at an improvement and humanization of psychiatric hospitals (opening of the wards, staff training, meetings with the patients, etc.), not at their total closure as proposed in those years by his Venetian colleague Basaglia, whose ideas Barison always regarded with a certain skepticism. In 1963, he founded the journal *Psichiatria Generale e dell'Età Evolutiva* («General and Developmental Psychiatry»), which for many years provided a space for discussion and debate and was a vehicle for the dissemination of French and German psychopathology in Italy. Around him gravitated Giovanni Gozzetti, Pier Enrico Turci, Giorgio Maria Ferlini (1934-2017), Lodovico Patarnello, Paolo Roveroni and Lodovico Cappellari.

Giovanni Gozzetti (1933-2013) graduated in Bologna in 1958, spe-

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<sup>5</sup> We would like to thank Dr. Ludovico Cappellari and Dr. Paolo Colavero for their contribution to this paragraph.

cialized in Clinical of Nervous and Mental Diseases in 1962 (still in Bologna) and was habilitated to teach Psychiatry in 1971. Head of the psychiatric ward in Verona and later in Padua (1971-1978 and from 1978 to 1992 in the *Ospedale Civile Clinicizzato*), he was editor-in-chief of the journal founded by his mentor Barison. Gozzetti (1998) was a pioneer in promoting an encounter between phenomenology and psychoanalysis and developed a close relationship with other important figures who had preceded him on this path, such as Gaetano Benedetti in Basel and Salomon Resnik in Paris. His most famous book, *La tristezza vitale* (Gozzetti [2008, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1996] – «The Vital Sadness»), remains a fundamental point of reference for those who approach the study and treatment of melancholy.

Pier Enrico Turci has always been particularly receptive toward developments in the field of philosophy of mind. Recently, he has published, together with Carlo Umiltà, an essay entitled *Breve viaggio in spazio, tempo e soggettività* (Turci & Umiltà [2017] – «A Brief Exploration of Space, Time and Subjectivity»), which is evidence of this interest. Lodovico Cappellari, who directed for many years the Department of Mental Health of the Veneto region, has translated the methodological approach of phenomenological psychopathology into an effective and advanced psychiatric practice. Particularly active in the context of the Venetian branch of the Italian Society of Psychiatry, Cappellari has done much to promote and disseminate the phenomenological approach within the mental health services. Currently, this work is being carried on by a student of Gozzetti and Cappellari, Leonardo Meneghetti, who is committed to preserve the relationship between phenomenological psychopathology and clinical practice within the services.

Maria Armezzani [2002], Ludovico Patarnello, and Giorgio Maria Ferlini, also thanks to a fruitful dialogue with Resnik and Benedetti, have kept the phenomenological tradition within the university alive. In 2003, Ferlini established a post-graduate specialization school in phenomenological-psychoanalytic psychotherapy (*Aretusa Institute*), which was open until his death in 2017.

### 2.3. The Piedmontese group

Giovanni Enrico Morselli (1924-1973), head of the Novara Psychiatric



Hospital, mentor of both Eugenio Borgna and Filippo Ferro, established important international ties with figures such as Karl Jaspers, Abraham Meyerson, Bénédict Morel, Henri Ellenberger, Juan Lopez Ibor, Manfred Bleuler, Robert Volmat, Jean Bobon, Henry Ey and Eugène Minkowski. He became convinced that in the mentally ill person – alongside or perhaps thanks to psychotic disintegration – creative mechanisms develop connected more to the individual than the illness – as if the psychopathological condition gave rise to a different form of existence, a kind of «new life». In this sense, Morselli's *Caso Elena, o Sulla dissociazione mentale* («The Elena Case, or On Mental Dissociation»), published in 1930 in the *Rivista Sperimentale di Freniatria*<sup>6</sup> is emblematic. Mention should be made also of his paper on the experience of self-intoxication with mescaline, which he presented at the Neurology Congress in London in 1935.

At the beginning of his career, Eugenio Borgna focused on clinical examination of psychoses and favored an epistemological-hermeneutic approach. Later, he produced a series of pathobiographies such as those on Rainer Maria Rilke, Antonia Pozzi, Georg Trakl and other twentieth-century personalities whose life had been particularly tragic. Filippo Maria Ferro, currently honorary president of the *Italian Society for Phenomenological Psychopathology*, established himself as a historian of psychiatry and as an art historian, thereby becoming particularly skilled in tracing evolutionary similarities between psychopathological conditions and historical forms of artistic expression. Working at the intersection of phenomenology and psychoanalysis, Ferro has taught psychiatry at the University of Chieti for many years.

#### 2.4. *Tuscany and the Florence school*

Tuscany proved a particularly fertile ground for the growth of a psychopathological tradition. In addition to Arnaldo Ballerini and his first students Mario Rossi Monti and Giovanni Stanghellini, we must mention Enzo Agresti, Giampaolo Di Piazza, Luciano del Pistoia (a student of Georges Lanteri Laura), Riccardo Dalle Luche and Massimo Ballerini.

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<sup>6</sup> Later republished as a volume. See Morselli 1995.

Fellow travellers were also Andrea Carlo Ballerini and Giuliano Casu. However, the first core of the school originated around Arnaldo Ballerini (1928-2015). Later on, this group would rightly earn the name of «Florentine School», and would lead to the establishment, in 1994, of the *Italian Society for Psychopathology*. It is hard, however, to trace back in time the very ‘foundation’ of the school. From a legal point of view, there is no doubt that the Society was established in the Florentine study of notary Mario Piccinini on November 3rd, 1994. Around that table sat Arnaldo Ballerini, Andrea Carlo Ballerini, Lorenzo Calvi, Luciano Del Pistoia, Giovanni Gozzetti, Mario Rossi Monti and Giovanni Stanghellini. This is what is written in the official documents.

In reality, the birth of the society was preceded – like every other birth – by a series of events and by a long ‘labor’, which originated in Arnaldo Ballerini’s desire to revolutionize the so-called ‘culture’ of mental institutions and innovate the working practice of psychiatric services in Tuscany. Following the death of his mentor, Ballerini left the Clinic of Nervous and Mental Diseases at the University of Bologna – where he was training as a neurosurgeon – and was suddenly thrown into the tough reality of the Florentine mental hospital. There, he was tragically struck by the shallowness of the local psychiatric culture. He used to tell the following episode: «When I mentioned to a colleague the possibility that a patient had internal schizophrenic experiences, he appeared perplexed and told me that schizophrenic subjects do not have internal experiences».

Alongside an in-depth and almost obsessive study of Karl Jaspers’ *General Psychopathology* and Kurt Schneider’s *Clinical Psychopathology*, Ballerini pursued a strong interest in the ways in which psychopathological culture can translate into a psychiatric practice aware of the patient’s lived experience. Inspired by the principles of French Sector Psychiatry, he developed a first model of territorial or community-based psychiatry in the Valdarno region, thereby combining the rich tradition of phenomenological psychopathology with the practical needs of clinical management of very complex cases. Thanks to this tireless work – and also to the insatiable curiosity with which he explored territories not strictly related to psychopathology – phenomenological psychopathology was able to escape the cul-de-sac in which

it had been long trapped: admired and idealized, on the one side, for the depth of its insights, it was often downplayed, on the other, as the useless diversion of an elitist group of psychiatrists fascinated by philosophical questions scarcely relevant to clinical practice. Ballerini's life-long dedication, instead, created a shared space where the majority of Italian psychopathologists could finally recognize themselves, debate and, when necessary, argue and disagree.

Mario Rossi Monti and Giovanni Stanghellini are Ballerini's two main students. Trained in both psychopathology and psychoanalysis under the *Italian Psychoanalytic Society* (SPI) Rossi Monti's standpoint reflects the history of the complicated relationship between phenomenological psychopathology and psychoanalysis. He shares this approach with Antonello Correale, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, who has always been familiar with serious pathologies and psychiatric institutions [Correale 1991; 2001; Correale & Berti Ceroni, 1998; Correale, Cangiotti, Zoppi 2010] and has integrated the psychoanalytic perspective with that of phenomenological psychopathology. Giovanni Stanghellini has established extensive ties with the English-speaking world, particularly with Oxford, and has played a mediating role between the analytic and the continental approaches in the field of psychopathology.

Stanghellini, who has worked with Josef Parnas in Copenhagen and with Thomas Fuchs in Heidelberg, has founded with Bill Fulford (Oxford) the *International Network of Psychiatry and Philosophy*. Currently, he is the editor (together with Bill Fulford, Katherine Morris and John Sadler) of a series entitled *International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry*, published by Oxford University Press. Both Rossi Monti and Stanghellini, after working in community-based psychiatry, have reached the academia, obtaining a professorship respectively of Clinical Psychology (University of Urbino) and Dynamic Psychology (University of Chieti). This way, they can make a substantial contribution to the transmission of psychopathological knowledge in the training of clinical psychologists and psychotherapists.

### 2.5. *The Emilia-Romagna group*<sup>7</sup>

Carlo Gentili, head of the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Bologna, was one of the few Italian professors of psychiatry to contribute to the field of phenomenological psychopathology, as well as to develop an integrated working model compatible with both university and community-based psychiatry. Clara Muscatello carried on Gentili's work in the Bologna clinic. Today, this tradition is kept alive by Paolo Scudellari, professor of Psychiatry at the University of Bologna, a student of Muscatello, with whom he has published important contributions, particularly on the subject of narcissism, paranoia and hypochondria.

Carlo Maggini, who was head of the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Parma, always relied in his work on the principles of classical psychopathology. Riccardo Dalle Luche, a student of Maggini, introduced the Bonn Scale for the Assessment of Basic Symptoms (BSABS) in Italy, according to the original model developed by Huber and Gross at the Bonn School. He has dealt with cinema and psychiatry and has written pathographies of historical characters, artists and personalities now part of the collective imagination (Adolf Hitler, Frida Kalo, Marilyn Monroe).

Paolo Verri, a psychiatrist and psychopathologist from Ferrara, was a student of Antonio Slavich (a longtime collaborator of Basaglia). From Modena, where he headed the local section of Democratic Psychiatry, Slavich invited him to come to Ferrara, where he took part to the dismantlement of the mental hospital. There, he also headed for many years various mental health departments. Matteo Rossi, a new generation psychopathologist who did his training between Figline and Florence, has focused on the psychopathology of adolescence.

### 2.6. *Rome*

Bruno Callieri (1923-2012) – undoubtedly the main protagonist of Italian psychiatry and psychopathology during the second half of the twentieth century – graduated in Rome in 1948. Trained with Mario Gozzano in

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<sup>7</sup> We wish to thank Dr. Paolo Colavero for his contribution to this paragraph.

the field of neurology, thanks to his knowledge of German he pursued an in-depth study of Jaspers' and Schneider's works on psychopathology. He abandoned neurology and quickly became the main point of reference for phenomenological psychopathology in Italy. In those years he developed his studies on *Wahnstimmung* (delusional mood) and on *Weltuntergangserlebnis* (the schizophrenic experience of the end of the world), which gained him international reputation [Callieri 1982]. His dream of a professorship in Psychiatry, however, faded quickly. His interests did not coincide with those cultivated within academic circles; in fact, he was often encouraged to abandon his field of study if he really wanted to obtain an academic position.

After the encounter with Ernesto De Martino, founding father of Italian cultural anthropology, Callieri's approach became increasingly anthropological. His participation in international events, such as the *2nd Congress of Psychiatry* in Zurich in 1957, where he went with Franco Basaglia, allowed him to meet with key representatives of psychiatric and psychopathological thought, such as Jung, Binswanger and Minkowski. In 1961 Callieri was in Heidelberg with Kurt Schneider, with whom he had established a long epistolary relationship since the Italian translation of Schneider's *Clinical Psychopathology*. In 1962, Callieri was the only Italian invited to contribute with an essay on *Wahnstimmung* to a collection of texts celebrating Schneider's seventy-fifth birthday [Callieri 1962]. Left out of the academy, Callieri headed the Guidonia Psychiatric Hospital until the beginning of the 1980s, after which he lived in 'splendid isolation' in his apartment in Via Nizza 59 in Rome. Many psychiatrists of different generations studied with Callieri. Gilberto Di Petta is undoubtedly the one who has most developed his ideas.

### 2.7. Naples<sup>8</sup>

Starting from the 1960s, Sergio Piro (1927-2009) played an important role in the battles that led to the closure of mental hospitals. In 1951 he graduated in Medicine and Surgery in Naples; he then specialized in

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<sup>8</sup> We wish to thank Dr. Giuseppe Ceparano for his contribution to this paragraph.

neuropsychiatry in Cagliari in 1956, with a thesis on the semantics of schizophrenic language [see Piro 1958; 1967]. A multifaceted personality, his interests ranged from music to anthropology, from psychopathology to psychology and phenomenology. Mostly remembered for his contribution to the movement that led to Law 180, Piro was head of the Materdomini Psychiatric Hospital, in the Municipality of Nocera Superiore, from 1959 to 1969. In 1965 he had a documentary shot for the first time entirely inside a psychiatric hospital, whose aim was to publicly denounce the conditions of hospitalization of the mentally ill. Embarked on a collision course with the mental institution he was heading, he was fired in 1969. From 1974 to 1975 he was head of the Leonardo Bianchi Psychiatric Hospital in Naples, and from 1975 to 1994 he headed the Frullone Psychiatric Hospital. Piro's contribution to phenomenological psychopathology stands out in his many texts and articles, where references to (among others) Binswanger, von Gebsattel, Heidegger, Husserl, Jaspers, Merleau-Ponty, Minkowski and Strauss abound. His continuous dialogue with authors such as Ballerini, Callieri, Calvi and Cargnello is also evident. His contributions are distributed along two main lines: the study of schizophrenia and the cultural training of psychiatric workers.

### *3. Lines of development of the Italian School*

When Kraepelin, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, elaborated the notion of *Dementia praecox*, subsuming under it catatonia, hebephrenia and paranoia, he passed down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century all the tenets of nineteenth-century positivism: a chronic, progressive, irreversible disease leading to a deterioration similar to that of senile dementia, apart from its tragic early inception. In 1911, Eugen Bleuler, inspired from the French tradition and the emerging psychodynamic culture, broke with this paradigm, translating the notion of dementia into that of schizophrenia. However, even Bleuler's construct proved problematic because too elastic. Only Kurt Schneider, in the 1950s, was able to set precise psychopathological-clinical coordinates: the so-called *first-rank symptoms* (FRS). From that moment on, the notion of schizophrenia was destined to be split in two: the nosographic level would no longer coincide with the psychopathological one. From a nosographic point of view, Schneider's lesson

was incorporated into the DSM series and would survive to the present day.

The idea of schizophrenia as a disease was grounded on productive symptoms, incoherence or disorganization. Its conceptual construction in the context of anthropo-phenomenological psychopathology, instead, followed a different course: the nuclear schizophrenic disorder was progressively identified with autistic perplexity. In fact, when Minkowski and Binswanger elaborated their notion of schizophrenia, they did nothing but develop Bleuler's original intuition of its autistic character. However, while doing this, they shifted such notion – a very significant fact – from an ontic-psychological plane to an ontological-structural and transcendental one. Callieri's work on *Wahnstimmung*, begun in 1962, went precisely in this direction. From this point of view, his work certainly qualifies as the first major exploration undertaken by an Italian psychopathologist of the vast territory disclosed by European psychopathology. The landmarks of this journey can be identified as follows: Callieri's essay on *Wahnstimmung* in 1962; Blankenburg's study on Anne Rau in 1971; Ballerini's contribution on schizophrenic autism in 2002.

In 1962, as we know, Callieri published his work on *Wahnstimmung* in the Festschrift dedicated to Schneider [Callieri 1962]. In it, he completely re-interpreted the notion of *Wahnstimmung* in light of Husserlian phenomenology. From an experience of atmospheric disturbance almost mechanically preceding the delusional outbreak, *Wahnstimmung* became an experience of transcendental suspension in which one's intentionality no longer finds its object, and the signifier no longer finds its meaning. On closer inspection, Callieri's phenomenological re-interpretation of *Wahnstimmung* actually anticipated Blankenburg's insights. In retrospect, Callieri's *Wahnstimmung* appears, in fact, as a psychopathological experience of *epoché*. Rather than the first step undertaken by the phenomenologist, the *epoché* has become – in an evocative, but dramatic development – the *false* step of the schizophrenic.

It is clear that in this new conception of schizophrenia so-called productive symptoms become totally useless, because they tell us nothing – in psychopathological terms – about the profound structure of the disease. From a psychopathological standpoint, the presence or absence of delusions and hallucinations is not an indication of the presence or absence

of the disease. Some subjects are not delusional or do not hallucinate, but *are schizophrenic*; some are delusional and do hallucinate, but their schizophrenia is not due simply to these factors; finally, other subjects are delusional and hallucinate, but *this does not mean they are schizophrenic*. Together with some of the work of Giovanni Stanghellini, Arnaldo Ballerini's studies on autism, his strong reliance on Blankenburg, and his in-depth analysis of sub-apophenic schizophrenia as an essential factor in basal schizophrenic disorders illustrate how Italian psychopathological research focused on the transcendental modes of constitution of common sense as fundamental structure of everyday life and on its disruption in the schizophrenic world.

#### 4. Perspectives on delusion<sup>9</sup>

For the Italian school of phenomenological psychopathology, delusion has always been a favorite object of phenomenological research: starting with Cargnello's studies on Binswanger, this focus characterized Callieri's studies on *Wahnstimmung* and, as we shall see, Mario Rossi Monti's *Forme del delirio e psicopatologia* [2008] («Forms of Delusion and Psychopathology»). In the decades covered so far, research on delusion increasingly expanded its range to include many of its forms: paranoid, schizophrenic, melancholic, borderline, and organic. However, not only the type, but also the concept of delusion has been investigated, especially as regards its different stages of emergence: from basic symptoms and prodromal gestation phases [Stanghellini 1992; Gross *et al.* 1992] to pre-psychotic perplexity [Callieri 1982; Di Petta 1999] to the most mature phases [Gozzetti *et al.* 1999; Rossi Monti & Stanghellini 1999], from the analysis of vulnerability [Stanghellini 1997] and premorbid personality in the light of Kretschmer's psychopathology [Kretschmer 2016, original 1918; Ballerini & Rossi Monti 1990] to the description of the fate awaiting the delusional person once the flames of his madness have turned into lukewarm ashes [Ballerini & Rossi Monti 1983] to the definition of schizophrenia as a disease of the ontological-metaphysical structure of the subject [Ballerini & Di Petta 2015].

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<sup>9</sup> We wish to thank Dr. Paolo Colavero for his contribution to this paragraph.



### 5. *The world of a drug addict*

Starting in 2004, Gilberto Di Petta began to explore the phenomenological structure of the intoxicated conscience with *Il mondo tossicomane: fenomenologia e psicopatologia* («The World of Drug Addiction: Phenomenology and Psychopathology»), followed in 2006 by *Gruppo-analisi dell'esserci* («Group Analysis of Existence»). In 2016, with *Le psicosi sintetiche* («Synthetic Psychoses»), edited with Danilo Tittarelli, he has attempted to identify the boundaries between endogenous and substance-induced psychotic experiences. Few authors within the phenomenological tradition have developed a real interest in the experiences triggered by the use of drugs. There are hints scattered here and there in the literature, but there is no comprehensive study. As for the lifeworld of the drug addict, Di Petta distinguishes a world of *fluctuating life*, where one's conscience is intoxicated by the substance; a lifeworld marked by *chemical hunger*, in which abstinence devours the subject and forces him to seek the substance; a *frozen* lifeworld, where the development of tolerance removes the patient from the enjoyment of life. One's sense of space, time, body, self and one's relationship with others change significantly in each of these lifeworlds.

From a psychopathological-clinical perspective, instead, Di Petta and Tittarelli have drawn on the work of Morselli, Cargnello and Callieri on experimental psychoses, arguing that substance-induced psychoses more often than not appear as a conglomerate of symptoms without a specific psychotic structure. As for the therapeutic approach, Di Petta has extended the *Dasein-analysis* model from a dual to a group setting, thereby developing a methodology that he has defined *Group-analysis of existence* or *Dasein-analytic Group*. Starting from 1998, *Dasein-group analysis* has been practiced in various clinical, institutional, experiential, educational and didactic contexts. This methodology has also been adopted in the training of phenomenological-dynamic psychotherapists, and a collaboration has been established with the Group Analysis Laboratory in Turin.

## 6. *Psychotherapeutic perspectives*

The *School of Phenomenological-Dynamic Psychotherapy*, approved by MIUR in 2015, has its roots in the tradition of European phenomenological psychopathology and takes shape thanks to the confluence of two important traditions, the phenomenological and the psychoanalytic one. The common ground for both is general and clinical psychopathology, whose knowledge is indispensable for any further therapeutic development. For phenomenological psychopathology, understanding is the necessary premise for the establishment of a therapeutic relationship. Mental pathology begins when the reciprocity of dialogue and understanding start to fail. However, mental pathology remains, even in its most extreme forms, something that can, and must, be approached. Given these premises, the School of Phenomenological-Dynamic Psychotherapy aims to train and provide therapists with a method (rather than a technique) of encounter: with the help of phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethics and dynamic psychopathology, the goal is to help the patient to become aware of his own vulnerability and thereby to understand and transform his posture toward the disorder afflicting him.

Thanks to the experience of clinical encounter between the subjectivity of the therapist and that of the patient, phenomenological-dynamic psychotherapy allows a collaborative construction of a new meaning. In this process, space, time, and corporeity undergo a metamorphosis, and an important change in the relationship with the world, oneself, and others is made possible. This transformation of subjectivity is experienced – in dual and group settings – through an intersubjective reconstruction of one's fundamental anthropological structures. Assigning shape and meaning to experiences is key to find one's position in the world and among others. If mental pathology can be seen as a crisis in one's dialogue with otherness, phenomenological-dynamic psychotherapy represents a *dialogue with a method*: its purpose is to reactivate the person's dialogue with himself and with other people after it has been disrupted by mental pathology.

As Binswager [1956] has written, «what we call psychotherapy is nothing more than a practice intended to ensure that the mentally ill person comes to 'see' the overall structure of human existence, his 'be-

ing in the world’, and to understand the moment when he got lost». The method, as formalized by Stanghellini, is that of PHD: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, and Dynamics. Phenomenology focuses on lived experience and aims at unfolding in front of the subject *the sheet of his conscience*, so to speak, thereby allowing what is implicit to come to light [see Stanghellini 2016; Stanghellini & Mancini 2018]. Hermeneutics demands that the subject takes a position toward what is being unfolded. Each experience is the result of a (mostly implicit) self-interpretation. In particular, a symptom is a type of self-interpretation in which the patient reduces the experience of the encounter with otherness to a single meaning. Psycho-Dynamics places both the experience unfolded by Phenomenology and the position taken by Hermeneutics within a historical-narrative context. That is, it identifies the matrix of that experience. The goal is to help the patient to rethink himself and his psychopathological experience in light of a given past.

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## Keyword

Phenomenology; Psychopathology; Italian School; Delusion; Drug Addiction; Psychotherapy

## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is the historical and conceptual reconstruction of the constitution of both the *Italian Society for Phenomenological Psychopathology* and the *School of Phenomenological-Dynamic Psychotherapy* considering phenomenological psychopathology as the essential basis of every therapeutic treatment. In this reconstruction we applied a geographical criterion to show how in different parts and in different moments of the story of psychiatry of our contry different authors developed an interest for the great heritage of knowledge of phenomenological psychopathology, with special regards to the clinical areas of delusion, psychosis, drug addiction, and serious personality disorders.

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