

## CRIME AS AN AUTONOMOUS SYSTEM

### *El crimen como un sistema autónomo*

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Recibido: abril de 2017; Aceptado: septiembre de 2017;

Publicado: diciembre de 2017

Ref. Bibl. BÜKE SAĞLAM. CRIME AS AN AUTONOMOUS SYSTEM.

1616: *Anuario de Literatura Comparada*, 7 (2017), 259-275

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the nature of the unmotivated crime system and its relationship with other systems. Considering the changes in the criminal acts and in criminals themselves, I try to point out the autonomous core of every violent act giving examples from literature, films as well as from the real life cases. The changing roles between good and bad, victim and torturer, sane and insane, legal and illegal is another discourse I investigate. The concept of crime is one of the most contentious subjects in real life and in literature therefore I try to understand the very core of one of the most ambiguous violent acts by comparing and contrasting real life with the fictitious world. Knowing that reality and fiction interact, I trace the similarities between real life cases and their literary representatives such as Theodore Kaczynski's (a.k.a Unabomber) actions, ideas of Kurt Gödel, Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* as well as W. G. Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* along with the theoretical works of Michel Foucault and Mark Seltzer.

*Key words:* Crime; Systems; Theodore Kaczynski; Kurt Gödel; Unmotivated Violence.

RESUMEN: Este artículo examina la naturaleza del sistema de la delincuencia inmotivada y su relación con otros sistemas. Teniendo en cuenta los cambios en los actos criminales y en el delincuente mismo, intento mostrar el núcleo autónomo de cada acto violento dando ejemplos tomados de la literatura y el cine, así como de la vida real. El cambio de papeles entre el malo y el bueno, la víctima y el torturador, el cuerdo y el demente, lo legal y lo ilegal es otro discurso que investigo. El concepto de delincuencia es uno de los temas más discutidos en la vida real y en la literatura y por esta razón intento entender el núcleo de uno de los actos violentos más ambiguos comparando y contrastando la vida real con el mundo ficticio. Localizo las similitudes entre casos reales y sus representantes literarios, como las acciones de Unabomber, las ideas de Kurt Gödel, además de *Los anillos de Saturno* de W. G. Sebald, junto con los trabajos teóricos de Michel Foucault y Mark Seltzer.

*Palabras clave:* Delincuencia; Sistemas; Theodore Kaczynski; Kurt Gödel; Violencia Inmotivada.

In our world crime has always existed and it will continue to exist as long as people do exist. It is totally peculiar to human beings; a man-made creation. The techniques or styles of the criminal acts or our understanding of these actions can change in time but their sources will always remain the same. In the previous ages criminals had been punished physically. Then they began to be isolated from the society via prisons based on surveillance. Now we are mainly interested in their mental situations; we are trying to understand the reasons of a criminal act by analyzing the mind of the criminal. Indeed, we are not living in an age of reason anymore but we are living in an age of «finding a reason». We are trying to get into the minds of the criminals and figure out the reasons of their actions. Thus, we think we can prevent other criminals from committing other crimes. We want to avoid future crimes.

People love to control just as most of the killers do; it is nothing new. They feel comfortable when they rationalize some «abnormal» circumstances as these events become less threatening when they find a concrete motive in them. However, the desire to find a reason does not always entail a scientific purpose; it may be based on simple curiosity and may evolve into a vain ambition. The desire to feel superior or the will to power can be some of the sources of this drive. It is highly interesting to see how the tamed and untamed, men of law and criminals, healers and killers have somehow some things in common. People want to destroy the destroyer; physically or psychologically. This happens when the good and the bad intermingle; as if distinguishing between good and bad were easy. We tend to see something good or valuable in pragmatic term. For instance, when

we are talking about a doctor or a soldier we are already conditioned to believe their actions are actually for humanity's sake. We have almost no doubt about it. They seem to have an unauthorized (or authorized) immunity. However, the same or a similar action can be done by a criminal as well and we are ready to destroy him or call him a mad man. For instance, psychologists Henry Murray's or B. F Skinner's researches on mind control and behavioral conditioning are beyond being «ethical» or «sane» but these men are still considered to be two of history's most respectable figures. However, the reactionary acts of Theodore Kaczynski (once a subject of Murray) are considered to be totally mad or sick<sup>1</sup>. There used to be a time when criminals committed petty crimes and did not stand out for their cunningness or ingenuity. With the passing of time criminals are characterized by higher intelligence (sometimes at the level of geniality), higher educational level, higher social skills and higher creativeness. Most serial killers and mass murderers show these features. Moreover, it is very easy for us to find the full list of the properties of serial killers. It is enough for us to type «serial killer» on Google. They are considered as intelligent people with a traumatic childhood (they were often abused physically or psychologically), sexual frustration, lack of empathy, incapacity to gauge the consequences of their actions, poor moral values, etc. These and many more detailed characteristics try to explain the reasons why they did commit their criminal acts. However, it is possible for us to find another genre of criminal act which has become more and more popular in our age (and I believe it will become much more popular in the future) and cannot be simply explained with basic assumptions: it is now called «thrill killing»<sup>2</sup>. This genre is totally autonomous and depends on the nature and fantasy of the people who commit it; it may be used as a way to commit a perfect crime or solely to feel excitement. Although thrill killing will probably evolve in time and turn into something more ambiguous and unexplainable, it may now be considered as a genre of criminal act for which no rational explanation can be provided. What's more, we can hardly talk about a fixed pattern in this criminal act. And the unmotivated nature of this criminal act, for which even the category of «serial killer» seems inappropriate, makes it a difficult genre for experts. As the crime takes the shape of its doer, it is impossible to talk about one sole system. Creating a new, unique and perfect personal experience can be seen as the idea behind all kinds of so-called unmotivated crimes

1. See the cover of *Time* magazine. *Time*, 15 Apr. 1996.

2. Charles Starkweather's definition quoted by Mark Seltzer. See SELTZER 1998, 135. Also see [definitions.uslegal.com/t/thrill-killing/](http://definitions.uslegal.com/t/thrill-killing/).

and the doers' limitless and particular fantasies point out its autonomy.

Our world becomes more and more mathematical than ever. Everything seems to be well-shaped and well-calculated but human nature (or nature in general) always raises difficulties. The human psyche contains a perfect system in itself which is almost completely unbeknownst to us. It is this complex and limitless character which makes it unique and particular. Its uncontrollable core is immune to any artificial categorization. However, today there is a growing tendency to «pattern» or «give a name» to any single human behavior. On top of that, once given a name, a human behavior may be altered, manipulated or simply destroyed if necessary. In a way, experts have started a war with basic human compulsions believing they are dangerous, wrong or abnormal. One of these compulsions is, of course, the capacity to be violent. But what would remain if we erased one of the core things that make human a human? In order to modify the core of violent behavior, one needs to understand the reason behind it. Therefore unmotivated violence can be the only solution for those who have this compulsion and do not want to be altered.

At present the concept of «motiveless crime» has become more familiar to us as a genre of «true crime». We see that, to commit a crime there does not necessarily have to be an ideological, economical or sexual reason. One can simply commit a crime because he/she can. In these kinds of criminal acts we do not really see a particular emotion such as anger, lust or greed; the doer seems to be free from all these elements. He/she sees it as another experience in his/her life. Actually we are not talking about something new; we have already seen a lot of fictional examples and various real-life instances of this criminal act and I believe we will encounter more in the future. The main question is whether we can see unmotivated violence as a pure act of aggression in this ambiguous world we are living. It would be better for us to understand the inevitability of an unmotivated criminal act as well as the impropriety of the effort to alter or to remove this drive from the human being. However we still see the efforts to create a system based on the functioning of the human mind in order to better understand and to manipulate people's behaviors, feelings and thoughts<sup>3</sup>. At this point it would be better for us to start with the very definition of the system. Any system is primarily based on preciseness and certainty. In the online dictionary of Merriam-Webster, the word «system» is defined as: «harmonious arrangement or pattern, order»<sup>4</sup>, but in practice, hardly any system

3. See MURRAY'S «System of Needs» (2007).

4. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/system](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/system).

related to human beings can be thought as something stable or limited. Therefore, considering systems as deficient structures, it would be better to understand every single unmotivated criminal act as the autonomous and unique creation of an individual's compulsion as well as the impossibility to find a pattern in compulsive acts. Thus, we may consider unmotivated crime as an autonomous system based on incompleteness just like any natural system, which enables it to become totally unique, inexplicable and dependent on the doer. In order to explain the incomplete and regenerating nature of the systems, we may use Kurt Gödel's theory called «Incompleteness Theorem», which was basically written in order to enlighten the functioning of a system. As he suggested in *On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems*, which includes his «Incompleteness Theorem»<sup>5</sup>:

- 1) If the system is consistent, it cannot be complete.
- 2) The consistency of the axioms cannot be proven within the system.

At this point I would like to give a brief summary of Gödel's thoughts and of their relevance to my argument, as it is possible for us to adapt his ideas about mathematics to all kinds of systems. Gödel uses the term «consistent» to refer to a mathematical system that does not include any contradictions in itself. So, the direct opposite of the term consistent would be «paradox», which is another important element for Gödel. «Completeness», on the other hand, means there is no mathematical problem which has not already been solved. Axioms are the presuppositions and pre-established truths that constitute the basis of mathematics. All other hypotheses are based on these truths. Therefore Gödel challenged these axioms' accuracy and said that the non contradictory nature of mathematics cannot be proven. Thus, he was considered to demolish the certainty, stability and authority of mathematics. Kurt Gödel's ideas are highly important for this paper also for another reason. Gödel has a connection with one of the main figures of the paper, Theodore Kaczynski. As a mathematician, Kaczynski was fully aware of Gödel's ideas and was even asked by Lutz Dambeck in the documentary, *The Net: The Unabomber, LSD and the Internet* (2003) whether his anti-technological ideas derived from a feeling of disappointment he experienced from Gödel's «Incompleteness Theorem». Dambeck's documentary was mainly based on Theodore Kaczynski expressing his own anti-technological system. Moreover, in one of his letters to Dambeck reported in the documentary he says:

5. See RAATIKAINEN 2013.

When I was young and naïve, I was afraid that technology would create a completely ordered [...] world. Today I think that such an outcome is unlikely. But the reason for my change of mind was certainly not Gödel's theorem, rather the incalculability of the behavior of complex and open systems

Thus, also Kaczynski pointed to the dynamism and «fluidity» of all the established systems. This indicates the true nature of the crime system which has no stable rules or conditions, but is merely «incomplete». This incompleteness gives the offender the opportunity to give a unique form to his criminal act. Moreover, in his manifesto Kaczynski writes about the authoritative tendency of our social system, even though he recognizes that, because of their incompleteness, there are holes in every system. He talks about the tendency of the social system to divide people into «sick» and «sane» and of its effort to «cure» the sick in order to make them fit for the system. In *True Crime*, Seltzer comments on this idea of Unabomber saying: «The Unabomber's scare quotes point to criteria of evaluation (“sick”, “cure”) that are strictly relative to, and only make sense within, self-induced and self-corroborated systems of valuation» (Seltzer 2006, 7). Again, this indicates the autonomy of a system, which has its own rules and regulations, which make it impossible to talk about an objective or, indeed a «true» order. For Unabomber, incompleteness is what prevents the system from being authoritative, as he writes in his letter to Dammbeck:

Do you want to live in a world where scientists and superhuman machines know and understand everything, and therefore can order and regulate everything? If you don't like the sound of that, why do you complain that science doesn't know everything, and that there are holes in theory? Instead, you should be worrying that science knows too much.

Even if the social systems and the security systems (and basically all the systems) tend to create precise patterns and categories, it is unlikely for us to believe and act according to these patterns. It is possible to adapt Gödel's ideas about the mathematical system to a social system or to a crime system because his ideas are about the workings of any regulation. As we have said, all the systems are in search of certainty in order to be authoritative. However, they usually fall into generalizations because it is not possible to define every single person's mentality and it seems that we cannot talk about the precise patterns when confronted with real-life or fictitious unmotivated crime. I find it essential to understand, firstly, the lexical meaning of the word «crime» in order to clarify what we are really dealing with. In the online Oxford dictionary the word «crime» is defined as «an action or activity considered to be evil,

shameful, or wrong»<sup>6</sup>. The etymology of the word is from the Latin «crimen», meaning «judgement», «offence», based on the verb «cernere» which means «to judge». So when we are tracing back, we see that even the origin of the word says something about our view of a criminal act pointing out its questionable core. It basically shows us that our understanding of a criminal act is based on «judgements» which are totally subjective and depend on the observer's point of view. The definition mainly reflects the speculative nature of the concept of crime; a man-made concept based on man-made judgements. Moreover, its definition as an activity considered to be «evil» or «shameful» makes it even more ambiguous (as it apparently includes subjective moral values). So, it is our moral values that define the concept of crime. Nevertheless we are continuously witnessing how various immoral acts are considered to be moral or true especially when they are committed by people in power. This fact points to a paradox that dwells inside the concept. I believe it is quite impossible to say what is moral or immoral or which act can be considered as a «crime», as a «political strategy» or as an «experiment» for the sake of science and development. Because all these notions are intermingled, I find very difficult to define «crime» or «evil». However these concepts had to be defined theoretically in order to create a penal system and now we have the concrete definition of one of the most ambiguous and abstract concepts of all time.

As the intention behind a criminal act is basically related to society's consideration, a connection between the media and the criminal act is inevitable. Media enable people to observe the process in detail by making them witnesses. Before, there were public executions as one of the most important and efficient media tool. Now, in our age, continuous observation of a true crime replaced the previous tradition. As Mark Seltzer suggested in his work *True Crime*, «True crime is thus part of our contemporary wound culture, a culture –or at least, cult– of commiseration. If we cannot gather in the face of anything other than crime, violence, terror, trauma, and the wound, we can at least commiserate» (Seltzer 2006, 2).

The function of public executions and their effect on people was exactly the same; being a cathartic process, its function was to increase the power of authority by making people feel the same way about a criminal act or about the criminal himself. These sensations might be anger or pity towards the criminal or fear of becoming the next victim. Moreover, modern «true crime» and the representation of it through the media preserves the basic aim of the

6. See [en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/crime](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/crime).

old public executions, whose nature was based on performance. Public executions had a theatrical structure, so has the modern true crime<sup>7</sup>. When a crime has been committed, there begins the process of judgments and observation based on a reenactment of the crime through the media. Seltzer suggests: «The known world of true crime is the observed world and the knowing and observation of that [...] the compulsion to observation and self-observation that is a precondition of modernity» (Seltzer, 3-4). We all know what a true crime is. However the real problem emerges when we try to give a definition to the «true criminal». Who is a true criminal? What makes a person a real villain? Answering these questions is not easy. But it is possible for us to see that also various literary works ask similar questions and meditate on these terms. So fiction (and even science fiction) tries to find an answer to a real social problem like the legendary work of Philip K. Dick *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, where the concepts of evil, goodness, humanity, crime, empathy and reality are discussed in a detailed way. It may seem bizarre to use a work of science fiction as a tool to understand our social problems and most ambiguous concepts but as Dick himself stated: «Science fiction is about a society that does not in fact exist, but is predicated on our known society-that is, our known society acts as a jumping-off point for it [...] *this* is the essence of science fiction»<sup>8</sup>. Therefore it is possible to use science fiction as the metaphorical representation or at least, as a starting point of the real world we are living. In the dystopian world described by *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, we are mainly dealing with humanoid organisms called «androids» and the «human» bounty hunter Rick Deckard who was assigned to kill them. The newest model of androids (called Nexus-6) becomes a threat for the government because of their high intellectual capacity and ability to mimic «authentic» human beings which makes them totally indistinguishable. There is only one way to understand whether they «human» or not, which is an empathy test called Voight-Kampff. It is totally possible for us to see Nexus 6s as the representatives of the various criminals of our age that become popular because of their high intellectual ability, complexity and dexterity. In the novel we see that a group of androids has been regarded as «illegal» or «criminal» after they come back to earth from Mars where they were sent as slaves for human beings. Bounty hunters are assigned to kill them. In the novel bounty hunters do not call it murder but «retirement» and, thus, they do not feel like murderers. Dick's world seems to be a reversed one with its killer-human bounty hunters who work for the

7. See FOUCAULT 1995.

8. In JOHNSON 2005, 114.

government's police force and freedom-fighter androids who try to defend themselves. Throughout the novel we see them defending themselves rather than committing any criminal act. The ones who continuously kill are the «human» bounty hunters. However, androids continue to be regarded as the «criminals». As the reader keeps on reading, the line between human beings and humanoid organisms, or between the criminal and the victim, becomes blurred. In my opinion it is a great metaphor of our age where we try to find out the true criminal. If androids are not evil, then who is the true criminal? In the opening scene of the novel Deckard and his wife, Iran, have an argument. Iran accuses Deckard of being «a murderer, hired by cops». In return, Deckard defends himself by saying «I've never killed a human being in my life», but «just those poor andys» (Dick 2017, 1). Deckard is always struggling with the moral question in his mind: Is it evil to kill «something» which is regarded as «non-human»? But the real question behind it is whether declaring someone as «illegal» is evil or not<sup>9</sup>. Can someone be illegal because s(he) exists or because of his mental/physical structure? More importantly, can it be legal to manipulate, modify or destroy a difference? In Dick's world, it seems totally natural and legal. His dystopian world resembles a lot our present-day world. For instance, another bounty hunter, Philip Resch, seems to lack empathy even though he could pass the empathy test. The reader is sure that he is human (at least the test says so) however he is the one who can kill his targets very easily and without any regret. Even Rachael Rosen –who is an android– defines him as a man who is «very cynical» (Dick 2017, 3). On the other hand, we see the character of Luba Luft as an «android» (and one of the targets of Deckard) who is an opera singer and an art-lover. She has a great capacity to appreciate the beauty of the world and has various interests, unlike Deckard who seems to have only one ambition, which is to have a real animal which would have a great impact on his statu quo. As Rachael Rosen says «You love the goat more than me. More than you love your wife, probably» (Dick 2017, 6). So we are indeed in a reversed world which is not unfamiliar to our age, in which human beings become less human whereas «androids» (a metaphor for «illegal people») may become «more human than human», as Dr. Tyrell suggests in Ridley Scott's adaptation of the novel, *Blade Runner* (1982). So both the novel and the movie raise the questions «what is evil?» or «who is the true criminal?» without giving any certain answer. As I have suggested before, Nexus 6 replicants can be seen as the representatives of a specific group of present-day criminals or potential threats that

9. WITTKOWER 2017, 108. «To be guilty, now, of a crime not yet committed, we must be absolutely free to choose to do otherwise...».

policemen do not want to deal with as they are smart, complex and inexplicable. Their actions cannot be foreseen and may be totally motiveless. So Nexus 6 replicants may represent the kind of people who cannot be controlled and are too smart for various psychological or behavioral tests. This idea is revolutionary when we think about the publishing date of the novel, which was 1968. That is, after Skinner and Murray's researches, experiments and contributions to WW2, but before the attacks by Theodore Kaczynski. A brief summary of what B. F. Skinner and Henry Murray's researches amount to may be useful. As we mentioned before, Henry Murray was a psychologist working at Harvard University. He developed a theory called «Theory of Personality» in 1938. His concept of personality was based on «needs» that were dominating the behaviors of a person. Murray divided needs into two, «primary» and «secondary». Primary needs were the concrete ones, such as the need for oxygen, food, etc. Secondary needs were the psychological ones that needed to be unveiled in order to become understandable, and thus, to control the personality of an individual. Moreover he also developed a «Thematic Apperception Test» (TAT)<sup>10</sup>, a psychological test based on projection. In this test the subjects were asked to create stories about the pictures they were shown. Through their responses Murray and Morgan (his colleague) portrayed their subjects' inner thoughts, motives or feelings. Murray's work, *Explorations in Personality*, can be seen as one of the forerunners of the researches about behavior and mind control along with the works by B. F. Skinner, who also published his *The Behavior of Organisms: An Experimental Analysis* in the same year. Skinner was also working at Harvard University at the same time as Murray and was known for his behavioral approach to human actions. His operant conditioning apparatus (also known as «Skinner Box»<sup>11</sup>) and «utopian» novel *Walden Two* (published in 1948) can be seen as two of his main works which deal with behavior conditioning and modification. It is known that both Skinner and –especially– Murray contributed to WW2 with their ideas and works. During the war Murray worked with US government and with American Intelligence agencies to create Hitler's psychological profile, as well as to develop psychological tests in order to assess the psychological convenience of the agents<sup>12</sup>. The tests were continued at Harvard University from 1959 to 1962, when Murray used twenty one undergraduate students (including Kaczynski) as guinea pigs for his CIA sponsored

10. See [minddisorders.com/Py-Z/Thematic-Apperception-Test.html](http://minddisorders.com/Py-Z/Thematic-Apperception-Test.html).

11. See [simplypsychology.org/operant-conditioning.html](http://simplypsychology.org/operant-conditioning.html).

12. See [psychology.fas.harvard.edu/people/henry-murray](http://psychology.fas.harvard.edu/people/henry-murray).

MK Ultra experiments<sup>13</sup>. The purpose of the experiment was to observe people's reaction under extremely stressful conditions. Therefore the chosen students were subjected to psychological abuse, attacks and insults. So, these tests can be seen as the extensions of some psychological tests which were basically created to alter or manipulate human behaviors during the Second World War. Though it has a long history, the desire to control and manipulate behavior still exists. The human experiments held at Harvard University were questioned after Kaczynski's attacks between the years 1975 and 1995. After his arrest, people were divided into two groups; those who believed he was simply insane, and others who believed he was conditioned and had been turned into a monster after the Harvard experiments. Therefore he was actually a victim. However, I consider myself a part of a third group. I believe Kaczynski is neither mad nor a victim. It is true that he was a victim of MK Ultra Experiments along with twenty one students for several years; but during the period of his attacks, he seemed to use his free will. His attacks were a perfect response to Murray's experiments; he reacted against the act of conditioning with the power of free will. Therefore I see Kaczynski as a man who created his own autonomous system based on actions (attacks) and theory (Manifesto) as an opposition to Murray's argument (and system). The case of Theodore Kaczynski and other fictitious examples that I am going to give can be seen as a demonstration of the chaotic nature of various criminal acts. Reactional violence, thrill killing or unmotivated crimes seem to have an internal and vague logic in themselves. Therefore, it is not that possible to classify these actions traditionally. However, when we look at the concept of unmotivated crime, we see that it began to be contextualized in the late 18th and 19th centuries<sup>14</sup>. This kind of criminal act is still popular in our age and will dominate (I believe) the pattern of future crime. Gratuitous violence is equally frequent and harder to fathom. As the scholar Joel Black says about Thomas De Quincey's essay *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts in The Aesthetics of Murder* saying: «For De Quincey and his successors, murder could not simply be explained away or condemned as an immoral, criminal act. The most violent, abhorrent, and unpardonable of crimes [...] could be presented artistically and experienced aesthetically» (Black 1991, 56). Criminal acts and their literary reflections changed their forms and these acts began to be seen as personal experiences. Therefore, the structure of the unmotivated crime could (and still can) be seen as a unique and incomplete

13. See [psychologytoday.com/blog/impromptu-man/201205/harvards-experiment-the-unabomber-class-62](http://psychologytoday.com/blog/impromptu-man/201205/harvards-experiment-the-unabomber-class-62) and [leaksource.wordpress.com/2012/11/29/lawful-unabombers-cia-sponsored-mkultra-experiments-at-harvard/](http://leaksource.wordpress.com/2012/11/29/lawful-unabombers-cia-sponsored-mkultra-experiments-at-harvard/).

14. BLACK 1991, 30.

system. It depends on the person who commits it and for this reason it is impossible to make any generalization or categorization. It may be reactionary or impulsive and there would be no way to foresee this kind of act. As Seltzer suggests in his work *Serial Killers*:

The killings, in this inversion of cause and effect, are in the service of the fantasy and not the other way around, which suggests that the motive system does not merely originate in the individual but originates the individual, as a pure and self-caused reserve of a radical psychic autonomy. This amounts to an understanding of the serial killer as something like a terminal instance of the self-caused, autogenic, or self-made man: a hero of the drives (Seltzer 1998, 137).

Seltzer's observations perfectly define the nature of unmotivated true crime and the psyche of the doer. As we can see from the description, the individual transforms into his criminal act and his criminal act is based on a system which is totally unique and incomplete. Its incompleteness enables it to become limitless and without any pattern. The autonomy of the crime system derives from its incompleteness as it enables the doer to create his own unique fantasies. As Seltzer suggests: «For this is, we are told, "murder with no motive [...] we have people that commit murders like you might go out and mow the lawn. That's about as much thoughts as they give. A term that's been used is recreational murder. Nothing else to do –they go out and kill"» (Seltzer 1998, 133).

We are living in the age of reason based on analysis and observation; or, as we have put it before, in the age of «finding a reason». Clarity and precise scientific definitions are our primary and most important objective. For this very reason, I believe, reactive or «recreational» murder has become more popular in our time and will be more dominant in the future in order to show us the impossibility to find a pattern in an autonomous crime system. As we have pointed out while talking about Gödel's theory, arithmetic is the science of numbers and investigates the relationships among numbers. It uses pre-accepted truths in order to solve problems. All numbers have specialties which make them unique. There are judgments about these numbers. The correctness of some of these judgments can be proven but mostly generalizations are used because numbers are infinite and it is impossible to prove the correctness of a judgment in every number. So, the judgments are assumed to be true and the system is constructed onto assumptions. However, these assumptions are considered to be certain. And this is the paradoxical aspect of a system. When we adapt this logic to other systems, questions about the stability and the reliability of these systems remain open. Especially in the age of media, we have become more skeptical about truth and reality. Moreover we see how truth and fallacy are intermingled and at times how fallacy creates the truth. Seltzer explains it saying:

«Crime» on its own is then crime fiction, «false crime». The presumption seems to be that «crime» is a fictional genre and that one must bend fiction toward fact by adding the word «true» to crime. This interestingly paradoxical relation between true and false crime points to the manner in which crime in modern society resides in that interval between real and fictional reality –that is, the uncertain and mobile, conditional, and counterfactual, reality of a «reflexive modernity», a modernity that includes the self-reflection of its reality as part of its reality, and as one of its defining attributes. That is, a reality bound up through and through with the reality of the mass media [...] true crime points to the media a priori in modern society. This is because the technical infrastructure of modern reflexivity is the mass media. It points to the fact that the real world is known through its doubling by machines, the doubling of the world in the mass media that makes up our situation (Seltzer 2006, 16-17).

Seltzer's observations suggest that we are living in a bizarre world. It is a world of mixture and it is impossible to talk about a pattern or about a certainty. We are living in purgatory where good and evil, truth and fallacy are mutually intertwined. And the media seem to create the basis of this universe. Actually media have always been at the center of people's lives. But the media tools and their relation with the criminal act differ from age to age. As we have mentioned before, in the previous ages public executions served as a kind of media tool. In his well-known work *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault has explained the history of punishment and the use of violence as a form of discipline, emphasizing its strategic, systematic and transformative nature. By destroying a criminal, authority transforms the evil doer and turns him into a part of its power. In other words, once punished the individual is no longer the «other» but has been made part of the body politic. The convict increases the power of the authority, which is nourished by the criminals;

Discipline «makes» individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. It is not a triumphant power [...] it is a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated, but permanent economy<sup>15</sup> (Foucault 1995, 170).

This definition bears some striking similarities with the motivations generally attributed to the serial killer's act of violence and the crime scene he leaves behind; he basically makes a new person by cutting the body

15. See also SELTZER 2009, 129: «For Foucault, discipline in the modern period achieves a decorporealized discretion. But the fascination with spectacles of bodily violence clearly does not go away. The fascination, however, mutates from its “pre-modern” form».

into pieces; the sexual and physical violence he used are some of the traces from the victim's transformation. He gains identity by transforming a human being into a mere body, which creates his existence, like a meat that feeds him. Though the crime scene he leaves behind is shocking at first sight, by investigating it carefully we see a detailed and calculated work behind it. Moreover, we know that the spectacularization of violence was first introduced by the authority as a means of punishment. Violence used to be ritualized with tortures and demonstrations. By turning the murderer into a meat to play, authority also increased its power. In his book, *The Rings of Saturn*, Sebald mentions the criminal Aris Kindt, who was hanged because of theft in the 17th century. Kindt's body was used in a public autopsy which was also represented by Rembrandt in one of his paintings. However, Sebald believes that the autopsy was a public spectacle and a continuation of punishment rather than mere scientific research<sup>16</sup>. He writes:

The spectacle, presented before a paying public drawn from the upper classes [...] also represented (though this surely would have been refuted) the archaic ritual of dismembering a corpse, of harrowing the flesh of the delinquent even beyond death, a procedure then still part of the ordained punishment (Sebald 2016, 6).

Moreover, Sebald suggests that in his painting *The Anatomy Lesson*, Rembrandt tried to show us this violence by describing an autopsy which was not done correctly; the dissection had not started, as was prescribed, with the opening of the abdomen and the removal of the visceral parts, but by dissecting the hand which could be seen as a symbol of the crime (as the crime of Kindt was robbery). Sebald continues:

Contrary to normal practice, the anatomist shown here has not begun his dissection by opening the abdomen and removing the intestines, which are most prone to putrefaction, but has started (and this too may imply a punitive dimension to the act) by dissecting the offending hand. Now, this hand is most peculiar. It is not only grotesquely out of proportion compared with the hand closer to us, but it is also anatomically the wrong way round [...]. Rather, I believe that there was deliberate intent behind this flaw in the composition. That unshapely hand signifies the violence that has been done to Aris Kindt (Sebald 2016, 9).

16. As Alexandra Warwick states in her article «The scene of the crime: inventing the serial killer», 15. «In the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century the body of the criminal was the focus of attention. Before the passage of the Anatomy Act in 1982, the bodies of executed criminals provided the major source of material for the practice of human dissection, and sustained the traces of earlier ideas about the possibility of seeing evil inside the body».

Taking Rembrandt's painting as an exemplary case, Sebald points out that the surgeons (as figures of authority) kept on torturing and violating Aris Kindt's dead body. This action, again, can be associated with the attitudes of some serial killers; and at this point one may wonder whether the authority or the criminals were the originator of post-mortem violation. This example, again, shows us that there is a system in certain types of violence, as both the serial killers and the authority use it consciously and strategically. Above all, Sebald tried to reveal the way people disrupted the natural system out of curiosity. He basically tried to show us a type of motiveless violence that was somehow legitimized by the public. It seems that doing a bad thing to a bad person (a criminal) is reasonable, even though that person is already dead. Moreover, the imagery of the dissection of a criminal is rather meaningful; the people around the body (the surgeons, doctors, etc.) are not there to understand the process; they are there to «analyze», to judge and to punish the criminal. It seems like a perfect allegory of our justice system. With this case, Sebald enables us to see the contradiction inside a so-called precise system. Once again we see that each system is autonomous and takes the form of the specific person. Even though it is a «justice» system we cannot talk about a set of rules and about a certainty. For this very reason we cannot name the systems just as we cannot name the criminals. However, maybe it is not fair to blame people for stigmatizing criminals, given that clichés and stereotypes often provide comfortable labels to deal with the unknown. If a murderer is the subject, people tend to call him a psychopath. The motives may be numerous (because there is always a motive): Either the murderer is totally insane (an adjective which is highly associated with psychopathy) or he is a person who lived a bad life (abusive childhood, poverty or drug addiction may be some of the reasons). When a murderer is highly intelligent, educated and good-looking (as in the case of Ted Bundy), the reaction is normally one of shock and surprise. However, as I have mentioned before, the incompleteness that resides in every system makes everything more ambiguous and harder to understand or to control. The urge to control is a natural need, but at the same time, a mere illusion. People have nothing to rely on except their own unique and incomplete systems. The concepts of completeness and control do not exist. It would be better for us to understand the impossibility to find a reason in every impulsive act. In every human being there resides aggressive behaviors and we have the right to use or ignore it. This right cannot/should not be taken away or else we would turn into anything but human beings.

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