

marco mazzi - MATERIALS 00 - Internet War.

materials 00/01

[Iraq, with a territory that is wedged between the Middle East and Asia, winds through a region linked to ancient pages of history. Mesopotamia, the cradle of ancient civilizations, has been inhabited by peoples, such as Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians, who have left indelible traces. Here the Code of Hammurabi was drawn up, one of the oldest collections of written laws. In this land the faith of Abraham was born and the first prophets preached. Here Islam experienced the first dramatic division between Sunnis and Shiites. The recent history of Iraq, where Pope Francis' apostolic journey is scheduled from 5 to 8 March next, is also shaken by events and dramatic conflicts. Since the twentieth century, oil wealth has been the main economic vector of the Gulf country. But precisely these riches were also the origin, and at times the cause, of wars and suffering. The first Gulf War is one of these painful pages in Iraqi history. It is the summer of 1990. Two years have passed since the end of the bloody conflict between Iraq and Iran, which cost the lives of at least one million people, according to some sources. The war, which lasted eight years, caused enormous damage to the economies of both countries. The Iraqi population is exhausted and unemployment reaches unsustainable levels. In 1990 Iraq, which contracted over 70 billion dollars in debt to other Gulf countries to finance the war against Iran, was on the verge of bankruptcy. Among the creditor countries that demand the repayment of the sums disbursed, there is also a small state, Kuwait. For the then Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, that debt must instead be canceled. He claims that Iraq fought against Iran in defense of the entire Arab nation and the Gulf countries. Saddam Hussein not only refuses to pay off the debt, but accuses Kuwait of illegally extracting Iraqi oil from some wells on the border during the period of the conflict between Iran and Iraq. The accusations are formalized in a letter sent to the Arab League on July 15, 1990. A few days later, we pass from words to military action. On August 2, 1990, Iraqi tanks invade Kuwait City. Thus began the first Gulf War. On August 2, 1990, Iraqi troops cross the border and quickly occupy Kuwait, a small country with rich oil reserves. After the invasion, the Emir of Kuwait asks for the intervention of the United States. The Iraqi president at the time, Saddam Hussein, proclaimed the annexation of Kuwait, which he also declared the 19th province of the country. The annexation is not recognized by the international community. On 6 August the United Nations Security Council votes a first resolution for the embargo against Iraq. On November 29, the UN Security Council approved resolution 678, authorizing, starting from January 15, 1991, the use of all means necessary to force Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait. Ultimatum expired, a coalition led by the United States starts military operations. It is the night between 16 and 17 January 1991. The largest international military operation since the Second World War opens. The air campaign, which began that night, renders crucial Iraqi infrastructure unusable. On February 23, the ground operation for the liberation of Kuwait begins. A few days later the

last stages of the conflict are experienced. On February 27, Iraqi troops begin to leave Kuwait. And on February 28, 1991, the then American president, George Bush, proclaimed a ceasefire.

the day military operations end.

It's February 28, 1991. It's

Iraq accepts UN resolu-

tions. The then US president, George HW Bush, addresses the nation. He declares that Kuwait has been liberated and that the objectives of the allied forces have been achieved. The war, adds the American head of state, is "behind us". But the toll is heavy. The first Gulf War is estimated to have cost the lives of over 5,000 civilians, at least 30,000 Iraqi soldiers and about 500 US-led coalition soldiers. The Iraqi government does not collapse and Saddam Hussein's regime survives for another 12 years. The conflict, which ended on February 28, 1991, also leaves open the wounds that will lead to other tragic pages, such as those related to the second Gulf War, which began on March 20, 2003.

There are several films and novels that have inspired by the first Gulf War. As Silvia Giovanrosa recalls in her profile, among the most significant we can remember the film "Bravo Two Zero", based on the autobiographical essay of the same name by Andy McNab. The author is a former Marine of the British Special Air Service and commander of the Bravo Two Zero patrol. The mission entrusted to him is to sabotage Iraqi telephone lines and discover the location of the missile launchers. The mission will be a failure: some soldiers will die, others will be missing and McNab will be captured and tortured.

The film, like a documentary, describes, in great detail, the horror of war. Another autobiographical novel, of which the film version has been produced, is "Jarhead". It is the story of a young soldier who left for Kuwait, who finds himself living the war without fighting it. He and his companions are often employed in heavy training in the desert. They will go home without ever having fired a shot. But they were able to reflect on what they left behind and which, due to the war, has been definitively lost.]

materials 00/02

[The gravity of the situation cannot be minimized in any way, but it remains to be asked whether "the most adequate response in the face of such a provocation is to encourage people to take their own life". Hence the relief that the Pontifical Academy for Life, in a Note, moves to the news of these hours concerning the first patient to have obtained the green light to medically assisted suicide in Italy, a man paralyzed from shoulders to feet for 11 years due to a traffic accident in the car. At the end of a long process, it was the opinion of the Ethics Committee, following verification of his conditions through a group of medical specialists appointed by the Marche health authority, to confirm that all the requirements for legal access were met. to assisted suicide.

The matter is delicate and controversial, the PAV premise and the suffering caused by a pathology such as quadriplegia is certainly understandable. But one wonders: "the legitimization" of principle "of assisted suicide, or even of consenting homicide, does not pose any questions and contradictions to a civil community that considers the failure to assist as a serious crime, and is ready to fight against the death penalty? Painfully confessing one's exceptional inability to heal and recognizing the normal power to suppress, don't they deserve more worthy languages to indicate the seriousness of our oath to take care of our suffering humanity? Is all we manage to express the request to make the gesture of our mutual suppression normal?"

According to the PAV, there should be other ways for a community to take responsibility for the life of its members, favoring the consideration that life itself has value. First of all, "accompaniment - as happens with palliative care - that takes on the set of multiple personal needs in these very difficult circumstances", also in-

cluding the possibility of "suspending treatments considered disproportionate by the patient".

From the information we have it would seem that with this positive opinion the assisted suicide procedure must be concluded. Here, we probably do not have the certainty that this really happens in the absence of specific legislation, especially as regards the medical treatment that should accompany the sick person to death. I would therefore believe that it would be necessary to wait even before evaluating whether this possibility of assisted suicide can occur in the short term without specific legislation. Undoubtedly, the Constitutional Court, in the sentence two years ago (no. 242 del 22 November 2019, ed), had admitted the possibility of assisted suicide with a whole series of conditions that ad today we are unable to verify. I therefore allow myself only to express the drama of the situation and that death was considered only the possibility of solving a problem.

In these moments it is always difficult to comment. Surely, ours is not a judgment on the person, no one can in fact allow himself to judge a sick person who arrives, because he is desperate, to want his death. I can imagine that one of the causes that leads a person to decide to die is loneliness. Not being part of a network of people, of families can be a contributing cause of despair. The defeat is first of all for our society which is unable to be close to people and to convey meaning even in a difficult situation such as that of a sick person who cannot move. Every life has a meaning. Sure, people can figure it out for themselves but it's not easy. We need people who reaffirm day after day that that life has a great meaning for those who live with the sick. If this intimate relationship, of compassion, of friendship is missing, life is inevitably difficult to understand and people can come to want to die.

It is also up to the community to find meaning in one's life or to be able to recognize and rediscover meaning. Leaving people alone in their decision also seems a bit cruel to me. Loneliness creates coldness, despair. Being close and not feeling judged but accepted certainly gives great hope and in hope there is also a meaning. This does not only concern those who are in a precarious state of health, but in general all of us for whom in desperation any way out becomes a solution, even death. It is necessary to increase as much as possible networks of families who also have the task of intercepting situations of desperation in order to freeze such extreme solutions. Everything must be done with a view to welcoming, as Pope Francis teaches us, respecting the freedom of everyone, but that it is an effective, conscious freedom, that you arrive at making decisions after an intimate dialogue that allows you to understand that life has many aspects and many of these can be lived intensely although in a situation of great difficulty. We have to go back to talking to people, to meeting them.

We live in an age where it is difficult to restore the 'village', but we must strive to recreate the quality of those relationships knowing full well that they also had problems, yes, but that allowed them not to be alone. Finding new forms of interpersonal relationships that could be lived centuries ago.

Definitely, one thing we need to avoid today, even we who are called to express considerations is groped to force our communities to take a position. If we now begin to emphasize the question, without a true critical spirit and reiterating that each case is different from the other and that situations can never be compared, we induce a simplification of the problem. Attempting to create - as perhaps the Coscioni association wants to do - a public question on such a personal matter, in my opinion, is a huge mistake both for the patient in question and for the community, but above all for the common good. Because assisted suicide cannot represent a common good but is on the contrary a defeat for the community. It is up to us to talk about this issue responsibly, trying to highlight as much as possible that each case is unique and that it is therefore dangerous to proceduralize death.

Bringing the category of procedure to death is truly something dramatic and cruel.

Now, we

should expect a parliamentary debate on this issue. This worries me not a little because, if it is done without the precautions I mentioned earlier, our community will be divided in an evident way, because everyone is afraid of dying and suffering. The lack of delicacy on this issue will create a spirit, close to the Christmas, gloomy. We hope to be able, even in our narrative, to highlight the beauty of life, but not of an abstract life but of a concrete one. A society that pushes people to die is a society that loses in hope.]

materials 00/03

[" Let me go now." David had almost made it . He had convinced the Swiss doctors to start assisted suicide : " I am tired of this pain, it never leaves me, they could put out a cigarette on my legs that I would not notice ... Enough! When I saw that DJ Fabo had made it I envied him. At least he was free , " he told the man in the white coat who listened to him. She smiled at him. She passed a hand on his shoulder in a kind of caress. But in the end Davide had to wait one more time night: " We can't do it in the evening, because then we have to call the police... and the agents ask us not to call them even at night ".

It will be today, Thursday, therefore, unless Davide changes his mind at the last minute: he will get ready in his room, the doctor will fix the cannula, then Davide sucker à il Pentobarbital. After a few tens of seconds he will slip into sleep which in about ten minutes will lead him to death (this article was written in the night between 13 and 14 April. Then, in the morning, the confirmation of David's death, read here).

He doesn't call it that, he says " vacation ". " It took me a long time to make up my mind ", said Davide who until 1993 was a bartender near Massa. He left his story written in a last letter: " My name is Davide T., I am 53 years old, I am ill with multiple sclerosis. For the first few years in a more tolerable form, then, the " bitch " was transformed into the "more bitchy " form : the secondary progressive. Over the years, I've really tried them all, from interferon, first the weekly one, then the one I self-injected (then my hands worked!) Every two days, then the horrible chemo period began! I have tried them all. I was one meter and ninety-two tall and now I have become a scrawl with long legs, hunchbacked almost to the ground, but above all excruciating and truly unbearable pains 24 hours a day.

Now I spend every day, absolutely everyone, either in the bathroom on the toilet, or on the bed in some way, with the opium-based pill to try to calm the pain ".

It sounds like the hopeless message from a man who can hardly move anymore, who has to struggle to say every word. But is not so. Davide continued to joke until this morning. Like when he asked for his last supper last night: " You don't want to starve me to death. " Or when he got out of the car and noticed that he had punctured the rubber of his wheelchair: " Damn, I forgot the pump at home! ". And Mina Welby: " If you want to go back for it, we'll take you home again ". Davide had no doubts: "No, no, no". Already, by now he has decided.

It's like it's already gone. " It took a long time, but now I'm sure ", the physical pain in the end was stronger than the fear of death. And of the thought of leaving his mother Anna alone who has assisted him over the years: " I know it's hard now - he said last night - but if you really love me, you too hope that I stop suffering like this".

There aren't many left with Davide, he tells you without rancor.

The girlfriend who followed him for the first few years is gone, many of the friends have drifted apart. It is difficult to live with suffering for too long. Davide thought about it for a long time in the Massa apartment, with the window overlooking other buildings. Then a few months ago he asked his mother to contact the Swiss clinic of Dignitas. He had

been waiting since December. He followed the last hours of DJ Fabo knowing that soon it would be his turn too . " I just can't take it any-more, without any prospects, every day I'm definitely worse than the day before, and after a very long reflection I decided to go to Switzerland for assisted suicide. I have to enormously thank the Luca Coscioni Association, which raised funds to help me with my shopping ". Davide wanted to reach his destination and never go back: " I very much hope that Italy will become a more civilized country, finally making a law that will allow us to put an end to enormous suffering, without end, without remedy, at home , near to loved ones, without having to go abroad , without excessive expenses . I also hope that legalization, or at least the therapeutic use of marijuana, will soon arrive in Italy. I am, living in Tuscany, among the few in Italy to promptly receive my marijuana maps through the ASL , with a doctor's prescription, and I know its benefits very well, fortunately I have been very familiar with the great for almost 20 years. " Dowries " of Mary. Soon I will leave for my long-dreamed " vacation " ! Hurray. Health for all and above all a lot but a lot of serenity for everyone ". Who knows what Davide's holiday will be. He sees nothing: " Because I do n't believe in God, I'm an atheist. But it will still be a liberation " .]

materials 00/04

[Protecting the human rights of all those who live in contact with the sea is the joint commitment for which the Holy See and FAO work in support of seafarers engaged in the fishing sector and their families. Despite the efforts made to implement conventions and agreements concerning working conditions, safety at sea and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, fishermen and workers in the sector are still victims of exploitation, forced labor, slavery and trafficking.. A condition that mortifies the dignity of man and with it every possibility of authentic social and economic development. Pope Francis observes in his Encyclical " All Brothers " that only " when the dignity of man is respected and his rights are recognized and guaranteed, does creativity and enterprise flourish and the human personality can deploy its many initiatives to favor of the common good ". It is to call attention to the condition of sea workers that Stella Maris, at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the FAO and the Permanent Observation Mission of the Holy See to the FAO, the Ifad and the Pam, promote the Conference on November 22 on the theme: " Stemming the tide: together we can stop human rights violations at sea ", or " Stemming the tide: together we can stop the violations of human rights at sea". A necessary reminder also to in the face of the worsening of working conditions at the time of the pandemic, which directly affects the fishing and aquaculture sector, affecting the health of workers and hindering socio-economic development. Prevention and control measures have influenced trade of fish, created changes in consumer demand, generated logistical problems around distribution channels and access to markets and fishing areas. limited year the availability of migrant workers. Factors that reduce the income of workers in the sector and of communities that depend on fishing, and that can favor the reduction of the budget for food - with an impact on food insecurity and malnutrition - the increase in child labor and the level of nutrition of women for loss or reduction of income.]

materials 00/05

[The fight against the abuse of minors and vulnerable people also involves a twofold action: to stimulate the Bishops' Conferences to study the problem in

depth in collaboration with the academic world and to strengthen the relationship between Church and lay institutions, starting from by governments. In the aftermath of the European Day for the Protection of Abused and Sexually Exploited Children - at the same time as the Italian Church has instituted a Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors - is Professor Ernesto Caffo, founder of Telefono Azzurro and member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, to reiterate that "this understanding is necessary and that there is an increasing need for great training, especially of educators and families."

It is a step that must be taken, says Caffo, "knowing that, on the one hand, there are many victims who ask for listening and help and, on the other, the social and ecclesial communities are suffering from tragic events that they often remain hidden. "

One of the main themes is that of being able to carry out independent research. Every Bishops' Conference must be able to have a picture of what has happened. I must say that, in this sense, the experiences of the Conferences have been greatly appreciated. French, Portuguese, Polish and Austrian bishops: they have begun a path of sharing between the laity, the academic world and the various expressions of the religious world in order to be able to address the critical issues. Transparency: this is what is important. Transparency in data collection and in the resolution paths that must be shared more and more.

First of all, it should be noted that the pandemic has made the phenomenon worse. lie and communities need to be helped to keep their children in the educational circuit.

Education is very important and even Unesco places emphasis on this aspect. In addition, economic and health care must be provided to those who are really poor. If this is not done, families will continue to allow their children to carry the burden of unsustainable work on their shoulders.

"Statistics leave you speechless. But we cannot allow our reaction to them to obscure their purpose: to evaluate the measures taken by the Church to deal with this scourge and to make all the recommendations needed to transform a system that has failed quantitatively and qualitative ". Thus in a message the Cardinal Seá n Patrick O ' Malley, president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, he addresses those who are taking part in the European Day for the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, on the theme "Making the circle of trust truly safe for children". In Rome, in particular, the international conference organized by Telefono Azzurro on the theme "The right to trust" with the participation of experts from all over the world, to develop concrete actions, guidelines and protocols, for the protection of children.

So take a cue from a tragic global reality that the figures describe, to "transform a failed system". The cardinal starts from here, citing WHO data. About 120 million girls and young women under the age of 20 have experienced some form of forced sexual contact; 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused before their 18th birthday, while in some parts of the world 1 in 2 children have been sexually abused and due to the associated shame, stigma and fear at the experience, at least 60% of victims and survivors never disclose their abuse.

Equally "gloomy" the data that the cardinal summarizes on the extent of this problem in the Catholic Church.

Cited France with the estimate of 216 thousand abused children from 1950 to 2020, as reported by the investigation Independent Commission (CIASE). Also in Australia it appears that - notes the cardinal - 40% of the sexual abuse of minors in the period examined by the Royal Commission of Inquiry occurred in an area linked to the Catholic Church.

The president of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors underlines in this regard the importance as a Church of "learning from the progress of civil society and the academic world in terms of scientific research models", in order to implement a "more informed approach to our prevention strategies and protection policies, on field and online ". Thus, by exchanging and learning

from each other, it will be possible - he remarks - to obtain global protection, understood as a priority, and this requires "an investment in the creation of relationships of trust and inter-institutional support". Unclear memories make room in my mind, many uncertainties and many unbridgeable gaps.]

materials 00/06

[in the community, but unfortunately my condition was so bad that at that time I hardly remembered my name. If I look back into the past I can only see a girl of just sixteen trapped in the body of a little girl, with a sunken face and bulging eyes, pale and frozen skin, protruding and aching bones, so fragile that it seemed they could break at any moment. And finally the memory of a weak heart, with too slow and irregular beats, a heart begging for mercy and seemed to be near the end of its rhythmic process.

I see a girl of just sixteen who didn't stand still for a billionth of a second, too scared of being able to stop and perhaps too scared by the idea that, if she stopped, her greatest phobias would end by reaching it, thus bringing his mind into a state of despair such as to see death as the only solution.

I'm Luna, I'm 19 and I suffered from a serious eating disorder: anorexia nervosa. My story begins in the summer of 2016, one of the most critical periods of my life.

I was losing all the people I loved most and every day a part of me dissolved with them.

Everything seemed to be wrong, every piece of my life seemed not to be compatible with that of the others, I no longer had a fixed point to hold onto and everything I did, feelings of guilt began to emerge until my life it didn't quite turn into a huge sense of guilt. We already had a lot of problems in the family and I felt I was just a major burden on everyone. I was in pain, but I didn't want to prove it, because the very thought of making others feel bad because of me made me feel selfish and only increased my inner state of discomfort. So I made a choice: I decided it was time to suffer in silence.

I fell into an abyss that seemed endless and totally lost control of the situation, thus finding myself in a new period of my life: the period of self-destruction.

I had no escape, I was finally reaching my goal, I was finally reaching the people who had left me and above all I was losing the will to fight. I was abandoning myself to nothing.

What was the point of fighting a war where I was the protagonist on both sides? What was the point of fighting a war where I would have lost so much in any case?

I did not know and I did not want to know until however, when my strength left me completely, someone else had to decide for me and in doing so he finally gave me a second chance.

I had to heal or at least try. I had to do it for myself.

The problem was that the place I was staying was not the right place to cure my ailment. So after long searches on June 5th I went to visit the community directed by Dr. Mendolicchio and on the same day I was hospitalized urgently.

It's been almost three years since that day, but I think it will always remain one of the most important dates of my life. The day the path to regaining my life began, the day my true healing process began. The day I started loving again.

Up until that moment everything around me was blurry, inaccurate and unstable, but once I got into the community, things started to change. That day, I realized it wasn't over.

A new door opened in the community, that of hope and within it I found the hands of salvation, those of Doctor Mendolicchio and all the other members of the team.

I was not a simple patient, I'm aware of that, but maybe that's what struck me most about that place. We were able to bring out the best in people, even when everything seemed useless. In community I was reborn, I regained my life piece by piece, I finally

let someone throw the reality in my face, that if I didn't agree to collaborate things would have ended badly. I was able to listen to the words of the Doctor. Mendolicchio, I treasured it several times and I understood that every flower could be reborn if cared for carefully. And I was that flower. I decided it was time to say enough. So, slowly and with ups and downs I began to take back my body and especially myself. In the community I have not only treated a broken body, but a sick life. I started loving and smiling again.]

materials 00/07

[In these times of lockdown and restrictions on freedom of movement, the problems relating to eating disorders are becoming even more frequent. It is no exaggeration to speak of " mental prison " when it comes to anorexia. If it is Maria Elena also notices that in the newspaper article she comments: " the disturbance food does not come from food but from the mind ". In the treatment of ailments food is essential to work on the ways of perception of the reality of anorexic subject, also involving the same family members as active support. Family members above all are able to recognize signs such as loss of appetite, excessive use of the scale to control weight, the use of drugs such as diuretics, etc., which can reveal the existence of a problem. In the presence of such situations it is advisable to promptly contact the assistance of an expert. As a psychologist and psychotherapist, in my interventions against the eating disorders I apply the concepts of Brief Strategic Therapy, which is particularly effective in forms of anorexia youth. [I believe that the focus should be placed not so much on physical lightness as on other aspects. There is no doubt that feeling light and fit can help, however it is important to focus on more relevant aspects. Psychological tranquility, technique and performance. The physique certainly plays an essential role, however the key thing is not to enter the vicious circle of having to be thin at all costs to be able to climb. We must think of sport and climbing as a significant moment for our health and well-being. Sport must be lived as an experience that makes us feel good, not as a way to lose weight, not gain weight or even lose it. If climbing, or doing sports in general, creates difficulties with regards to food dynamics, it is important to stop and reflect and work on how to find a psychological balance again. That's right: a trap, which paradoxically we build ourselves and from which we then struggle to get out. There are signs that allow you to understand what is happening, for example at the table chewing very slowly, or going to the bathroom immediately after eating, perhaps to expel food through self-induced vomiting. Or even drinking large amounts of water that make you feel full but don't really nourish. Sport often becomes a way to lose the calories consumed during meals, but when physical activity becomes the reason for not eating, we really risk turning the trap into something impenetrable. In situations like these, the most sincere advice is always to contact a specialist, to discuss with those who know the problem thoroughly and can help us start a path of change. It often happens to me that I receive phone calls about problems with eating disorders and direct people by providing advice that I consider valuable or at least useful. Being aware of such complex situations is not easy. At first it is certainly an unconscious process and unfortunately, once the " trap " is built, then getting out of it becomes difficult. Within my psychotherapy courses I apply a fundamental concept, that of starting with increasing awareness of the relationship between food and one's

emotions. It is the beginning of the journey for the change towards the balance of eating habits.]

materials 00/08

monophobias, the irrational fear of a particular reality, can arise at any age and can also be related to other fears, such as fear of food, eating disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorders. fear of vomiting is often, but not always, triggered by a negative experience with vomiting. The risk of a fit may be greater when a person remembers vomiting in public or having a long experience of uncontrollable vomiting. Some experts believe that emetophobia may be linked to the anxiety that accompanies the feeling of nausea and the fear of loss of control. When the subject is in the company of other people or in a very busy place (such as a supermarket, train, public transport, the cinema) a crisis of nausea can even lead to a panic attack.

Those who suffer from emetophobia often develop some very particular behavioral patterns in the attempting to protect yourself, for example by keeping a towel by your bed at night or identifying the shortest route to services, when in a place other than those you usually frequent. Many people with emetophobia experience frequent symptoms of nausea and digestive upset; these are extremely common symptoms of anxiety and can lead to a self-replicating cycle, meaning that the fear of vomiting causes nausea and stomach pain which in turn stimulates the feeling of need to vomit. Emetophobia can be successfully treated with brief strategic therapy. A practical approach that aims, through specific intervention strategies, to overcome this problem and this illogical fear. In brief strategic therapy there is no exposure to the vomiting itself. The person will only face situations and activities that could lead to vomiting once this fear has been overcome. The work on anxiety and on the reduction of fear, favors a re-appropriation of one's life, and therefore face all those situations in which one could be induced to feel nausea and want to vomit, such as sitting in the back seat of a car, eating at buffet tables, and so on.

Vomiting is almost always quite unpleasant and the treatment does not try to change the perception; rather, the purpose of treatment is to help people live their lives and engage in activities that are important to them, without being limited by an excessive phobia of vomiting.

The fear of sweating in public is a type of problem that should not be underestimated, pathological fear can take irrational paths that we often don't even imagine. The perception of "threatening" situations that worry and frighten us can significantly accentuate the physiological symptoms of anxiety. These symptoms complicate the quality of our life and consequently tend to make us avoid situations and contexts in which fear, and in particular the fear of sweating, can become a problem.

Our body naturally activates the sweating process in order to regulate its temperature (thermoregulation process) by releasing liquids rich in mineral salts. Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis) can be caused by various factors, for example: genetic and biological aspects, intense physical activity, or simply when on hot summer Sundays the outside temperature is particularly high. Sweating can also be derived from emotional factors, in the presence of states of tension; some conditions of anxiety and or stress are psychological factors that greatly influence sweating (eg sweating from fear).

Sweating is one of the typical symptoms of anxiety, obviously there are others too, such as palpitations, nausea, vomiting, which can negatively affect a person's life. Today we will focus on sweating and how this phenomenon can become a source of embarrassment in the course of normal daily activity.

The story I would like to tell you today is that of Antonio (invented name), a manager who has been successfully consulting for an important Italian company

for about twenty years. Had it not been for his foresight and his skills as a consultant, the company would not have achieved such significant improvements. From about a year on, Antonio began to lose his classic serenity, the personal characteristic that made him the best on the market. Everyone used to say that with his mere presence and a friendly smile he was able to put people at ease, conveying an idea of calm and trust. Unfortunately, following an important unsuccessful consultation, a real ordeal began for him. On that particular occasion Antonio accused for the first time a strong abdominal tension and a consequent beginning of profuse sweating, as if it were a real shower. At the end of the meeting he had to go home to change his clothes, completely wet with sweat. At the time, what happened was not explained and he continued to work without particular problems, but this unusual annoying physical reaction appeared more and more often. While realizing that from a relational point of view excessive sweating was not an advantage, nevertheless Antonio thought that things would settle down sooner or later. He always carried with him a change of clothes and tried to deal with the situation, even if at a deeper level he felt the impression of losing control and feeling like he was dying. Realizing that the problem had to be faced and resolved definitively, Antonio finally decided to undergo a course of psychotherapy. In his specific case, the sweating process is the physiological response mechanism to the stimuli of fear, a reaction that triggers a state of excessive anxiety, out of the ordinary.

The path of strategic therapy has focused on favoring a progressive approach to fear through the concept that "faced fear becomes courage", and therefore with a slow exposure to fear through targeted specific intervention strategies. Irrationally, working on himself, looking fear in the eye, this last one has slowly begun to reduce its negative effects, also resulting in a reduction in the sweating mechanism.

Antonio's story illustrates in a paradigmatic way how the physical reaction of sweating, triggered by an initial feeling of fear, in turn has the effect of increasing tension, bringing it to its peak and generating a perception of potential loss of control. It also makes us understand how the brief strategic psychotherapy intervention, addressed in a functional way to the specific problem, can really be decisive and effective.

[Wakes up early, still stunned from consumption, doesn't even know if he's really slept or if he's been up all night. He has been using cocaine for a few years, but only on weekends, with friends. His wife has always remained in the dark about everything, the very careful economic management allowed him to consume without attracting attention. Then in the moment of quarantine the situation worsened. The stress of working at home - his company has always remained open - and the inability to leave the house led him to consume cocaine at home. At first he was able to hide and use it only in the evening hours, then the situation got out of hand, his wife discovered it and from that moment problems came. commented S, who defines himself as "a cocaine addict not a cocaine addict". In reality he never considered consumption as a problematic aspect: the usual round of friends on Saturday night, a little headache the next day, but overall the use was limited to the weekend, and not particularly excessive. During the quarantine he felt a desire he never felt, a sort of irrational push that led him to take coke every day. Emotionally he enters my studio in pieces. He knows that it will not be a simple battle, that he will have to contend with the trust of his wife, with the desire for substance that grips him, but he feels that a motivation is maturing inside him that he never had.

Addiction is like a snake that coils and squeezes you, slowly choking off the ability to breathe. Only by truly believing in it, by getting naked and at stake is it possible to get out of it. Normally my strategic psychotherapy courses are able to help patients overcome a moment of great difficulty with addiction; in other situations, psychotherapy is useful to prepare for more structured community programs or to get in touch with the Addiction Service, where you can also

be treated from a medical and social point of view.] Phenibut (beta-phenyl-gamma-aminobutyric acid) is a central nervous system inhibitor, with anxiolytic and stimulating effects, used in the treatment of anxiety, insomnia and numerous other pathologies. The substance was discovered in Russia in the 1960s and according to its characteristics it was prescribed and administered to Russian cosmonauts to facilitate their concentration in times of stress or crisis. While acting on the anxious dimension, Phenibut did not damage cognitive skills, however determining a situation of excellent performance for the cosmonauts. Also in Russia in the 60s, Phenibut was also prescribed to children with psychiatric problems, with a calming function.

We usually use the term smart drugs to indicate those substances, natural or synthesized, capable of causing an important change in the cognitive abilities of the person. However, it is important to make a clarification: the most correct term scientifically speaking is not the one that has entered current use (smart drugs), but that of Nootropics, i.e. substances capable of acting on the supply of oxygen to the brain, stimulating its functionality and skills. _ The term derives from the Greek and can literally be translated into "to change change the mind".

The risk associated with the consumption of Phenibut is that of creating a form of mental addiction. The fact of improving some of our mental performances - and in part also physical - without suffering particular side effects, can lead to experiencing reality in a difficult way in the absence of taking the substance. The reality experienced under the effect of the drug becomes "distorted", that is, it does not shine, and for this reason the difficulty becomes that of continuing without the "help" of the drug, that is, with one's own resources.

The story I want to tell you today is that of Maura (not her real name) a young college graduate girl. The preparation of the thesis was a particularly stressful period for her, during which she discovered this drug on the internet and decided to try it, starting to take it. The stimulating effect did not take long to make itself felt, immediately felt a sense of lucidity never felt before, the goals of the thesis and graduation were easily achieved, by appealing to the energy and cognitive forces generated by the drug.

The problem arose after graduation, when he stopped taking Phenibut and started looking for work. Without the positive contribution of the substance she felt lost; the clarity and skills experienced under its effect had vanished and Maura began to suffer from the burden of addiction. The therapy adopted in her specific case was to address primarily the aspects related to addiction, trying to increase her self-esteem, bringing out the resources that she herself is able to put in place without the use of substances. Maura still fights her personal battle today, but she is aware of how much the Phenibut has compromised and weakened her awareness and her personal certainties.

Ketamine is a chemical related anesthetic drug of Phencyclidine, better known as "angel dust", reported by the World Health Organization in the "list of essential drugs" indispensable for a hospital. As it will seem, Ketamine is primarily a drug, its effects are expressed on the Central Nervous System (CNS) influencing the perception of pain and stimulating particular sensations. Its main use is as an anesthetic and precisely because of these outstanding characteristics it was widely used by the Americans in the Vietnam War. Recent studies indicate that low doses of Ketamine can even be used on patients suffering from depression, to obtain an improvement in mood. But there is another side of the coin, linked to the problems deriving from the "recreational" use that is made of this drug.

Ketamine, chemical formula 2- (2-chlorophenyl) -2- (methylamino) cyclohexanone, is a liquid substance, very similar to water, which can be ingested or injected intravenously.

For recreational use it can be heated until obtain by evaporation a whitish powder to snort or ingest, if in tablets. Depending on the dosage they can to experiment different types of effects. We go from light stimulation, to euphoria similar to that caused by the consumption of alcohol, up to to experiment a very completely dissociative state intense, which can lead to severe hallucinations. Its prolonged use can be addictive.

As with other hallucinogenic substances, the use of ketamine can lead to a profound inner and dream-like experience, a real " inner journey ", a sort of entry into another reality. For this reason, ketamine is also called an entheogenic substance, that is, a psychoactive substance capable of exerting a psychedelic or hallucinogenic effect such as to favor mystical and spiritual experiences. As it is easy to guess, when you live a visionary experience such as to procure dissociative states of hallucination between mind and body, the risk on a psychological level becomes enormous.

[We recount the Ketamine - consuming experience of a patient, Mario (invented name), who still remembers those moments with extreme concern today. Mario used to attend " rave parties ", self-managed and illegal music parties, often organized in abandoned industrial areas or in open spaces such as woods, quarries, forests, with a variable duration that can even reach a week. Mario says that during the "raves" he consumed large quantities of psychotropic substances, ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine. In the last period he had also started to take Ketamine and all in all the experience did not displease him, on the contrary it had contributed to increase the inner sensations of a spiritual journey into music. Then all of a sudden the experience turned out to be too intense and from that moment Mario realized that it was necessary to stop. It was day, early in the morning, suddenly Mario began to see everything black, there was no longer anyone around him. Suddenly green strips appeared out of the dark, like strange hieroglyphs ; looking closer he realized that they were the same codes as the Matrix, a famous science fiction film of the late nineties. Without either realizing this he felt light and started a strange dance, a series of instinctive movements who couldn't stop, in a context in which he had lost completely the conception of the space-time relationship. Seen from the outside, some friends have described Mario's movements as those typical of a martial art, to the point that at the end of his performance Mario would have declared " I am a kung fu master ". Actually Mario _ he had played football as a boy and never had frequented any martial arts gym. This "drug" experience had left him uncertain and confused, disoriented to the point of having a hard time understanding his real identity.]

materials 00/09 - ambiguity / - This "drug" experience had left him uncertain and confused, disoriented to the point of having a hard time understanding his real identity.

materials 00/09 - ambiguity / - This "drug" experience had left him uncertain and confused, disoriented to the point of having a hard time understanding his real identity.

materials 00/11 - ambiguity /- This "drug" experience had left him uncertain and confused, disoriented to the point of having a hard time understanding his real identity.

materials 00/12

- is a phenomenon known since ancient times and reported in various peoples around the world. It is so present that in almost every human culture explanations and related remedies have been provided over time.

Historically, sleep paralysis has always taken on magical and supernatural contours.

The difficulty of explaining this condition of mental alertness, while the body remains dormant, has favored the emergence of theories and explanations related to the presence of demons, called nightmares and succubi, malefics or alien abductions (Clancy, 2007). Over the years, however, interest in this disorder has also increased in the scientific world, making it possible to identify physiological causes and potential therapeutic interventions (Sharpless & Grom, 2015).

Sleep paralysis is defined as a period of time, during sleep or awakening, in which voluntary musculature is inhibited, but the ability to voluntary eye movements is present (AASM, 2005). It is characterized by a persistence of muscular atony typical of the REM sleep phases during (semi-) wakefulness. In this state, the person can experience bizarre phenomena such as visual and auditory hallucinations, a sensation of being outside the body, a sense of levitation, sensing the presence of intruders (often shadows) inside the bedroom (Jalal, 2016). Sensations of tightness in the chest and difficulty in breathing are common which, however, can be explained by the respiratory rhythm assumed by the body during the REM phase and which persists despite being awake. The association between somatic symptoms of the REM phase combined with the awareness of not being able to move produces a fear response in the brain (fight-flight response) which, given the immobility, often exacerbates the symptoms and agitation.

On the physiological level, during deep sleep (REM), some parts of the brain (dorsolateral bridge and ventromedial medulla) inhibit the motor neurons of the spinal column by reducing the tone of the skeletal muscles. This is to prevent movements that could injure the person while sleeping. However, it can happen that muscle inhibition on the one hand and perceptual system, eye and respiratory movements on the other, are not synchronized, leaving the person awake but unable to move. State which invariably resolves itself in a few minutes of waiting.

On a clinical level, nocturnal paralysis can be present in some disorders such as narcolepsy, of which it is a possible indicator, substance abuse or in seizure syndromes. Often, however, it can present without other related disorders and in such cases is referred to as isolated sleep paralysis (PSI). As mentioned, the episodes of sleep paralysis are characterized by the vividness of the senses and are commonly associated with hallucinatory phenomena during the REM phase of the sleep cycle. When hallucinations are present, the literature indicates that about 30% of the time the contents of these phenomena are very frightening for the person and, more generally, sleep paralysis is associated in 90% of cases with intense emotions of fear and terror.]

materials 00/13

[Bipolar disorder, also called bipolar disorder or bipolar depression, is a complex psychiatric disorder. It is one of the psychiatric disorders with the highest heredity and has a chronic course. The disorder can cause severe disability, especially if not properly treated. Bipolar disorder is characterized by the presence of deep and prolonged periods of depression alternating with periods of excessively high or irritable mood called mania.

The depressive phases tend to have a longer duration, while the manic or hypomanic phases last less (from a week to just over a month). The transition between these two phases can be relatively long, allowing the patient a period of well-being (euthymia), or it can be sudden.

Both phases can in

fact be very dangerous, in the depressive phases the greatest danger is associated with suicidal behaviors. In the manic phases, where the tone of the mood often leads to the refusal of therapies, the patient bipolar can engage in risky behaviors (e.g. driving fast, abusing substances, having uninhibited sexual behavior), endangering one's financial condition (e.g. excessive spending). Furthermore, the maniacally excited patient often does not recognize the need for treatment and can interrupt drug therapy, thus favoring a more sudden alteration of mood .]

- The term euthanasia includes medical interventions that involve the direct administration of a lethal drug to the patient who requests it and meets certain requirements. Euthanasia is currently illegal in Italy. Thanks to the sentence 242 2019 of the Constitutional Court, in Italy it is instead possible to request medically assisted suicide, i.e. indirect help to die by a doctor. the required conditions are four: the person who requests it must be fully capable of understanding and willing, must have an irreversible pathology that is the bearer of severe physical or mental suffering, and must survive thanks to life-sustaining treatments. Currently in Italy euthanasia constitutes a crime and falls within the hypotheses foreseen and punished by article 579 (Murder of the consenting party) or by article 580 (Instigation or aid to suicide) of the Criminal Code. On the contrary, medically assisted suicide in certain cases and the suspension of treatment - understood as passive euthanasia - constitute an inviolable right based on article 32 of the Constitution and law 219 2017. Thanks to the Legal Euthanasia campaign promoted by the Luca Coscioni Association on 3 March 2016, for the first time in the history of the Italian Parliament, the debate on the " Rules on euthanasia " began without ever reaching a vote. In January 2019, Parliament resumed the debate under the pressure of the Constitutional Court, but this too ran aground without leading to a basic text. In assisted suicide death occurs through the autonomous intake by the dying patient of the lethal drug. He is said to be assisted because a medical team prepares the drug or the mechanical structure that will help the patient to take the drug. Particularly in immobilized patients. But the last gesture, even just to push a button, must be autonomous. In practice, assisted suicide provides for medical and administrative help brought to a person who has decided to die by suicide, but without intervening in the administration of the substances.

- In Europe, euthanasia and assisted suicide are legal in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Worldwide it is authorized in Colombia, Canada, Uruguay and in five US states. Passive euthanasia, i.e. the interruption of medical intervention, is recognized in France, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Germany, Austria and Spain. Euthanasia in all its forms is prohibited in Poland, but 'in exceptional cases', the judge can decide to mitigate the sentence - up to 5 years in prison - or even give up on imposing it. Countries such as Greece (where the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church weighs), Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia or the Czech Republic consider euthanasia to be murder and punish it as such.

The first country in the world to make 'sweet death' legal was the Netherlands in 2002. Assisted suicide is also legal here, extended from 2020 to terminally ill children under the age of 12. But the first country to introduce child euthanasia, without age limits and with parental consent, was Belgium in 2016. In Brussels, euthanasia was legalized in 2003, while assisted suicide is not explicitly legal. In Luxembourg, where it was legalized in 2009, euthanasia is only possible for adults and terminally ill patients whose physical or psychological conditions cause suffering without prospects.

Voluntary euthanasia is not legal in Switzerland. But article 115 of the Swiss penal code allows assisted suicide if performed by a person, other than a doctor, who has no interest in the subject's

death. The medical profession is forbidden to actively participate in assisted suicide, just as it is for relatives. Switzerland therefore allows both indirect active euthanasia, through the intake of specific substances, and passive euthanasia, through the interruption of treatment and maintenance in life. Here you can also choose assisted suicide, for both Swiss and foreigners. Here in 2017 Dj Fabo put an end to his life.

In Britain, both euthanasia and assisted suicide are illegal. However, since 2002 the interruption of care 'out of compassion' has been authorized and since 2010 the penalties for those who lend themselves to this practice have been eased. In France, in 2016, the government promulgated the Claeys-Leonetti law introducing the right to 'deep and continuous sedation'. Euthanasia for dying patients is prohibited. Symbol of the 'end of life' here was Vincent Lambert, a quadriplegic patient who died since 2008 after doctors suspended his treatment and nutrition in 2019.

In Portugal, in April of this year, the decree was revoked, approved by parliament in January, which legalized medically assisted dying.

Both passive and active euthanasia are currently prohibited, but an ethics committee can decide whether to discontinue treatment in cases considered 'hopeless'. The interruption affects only the heavier treatments. Nutrition and hydration are excluded.

- In ancient Greece, suicide was highly regarded: it was assumed that everyone was free to dispose of his own life as he pleased. Assistance in suicide in the classical world was not prohibited until the advent of Christianity to power. At the beginning of the twentieth century, some pioneers re-proposed the theme to public opinion: the duration of life was lengthening, but a longer duration was not always accompanied by the possibility of enjoying, for a longer time, a dignified quality of life.

In the 1930s the first associations were born in the Anglo-Saxon world, which developed strongly after the war. Today, associations from all over the world are united in the World Federation of Right to Die Societies (World Federation of Societies for the Right to Die). In 1974 some humanists, including scientists, philosophers and Nobel laureates, launched the manifesto A Plea for Beneficent Euthanasia, which met with much acclaim. The main activity of these associations consists in raising public awareness and, above all, governments and parliaments, on the need to reach more advanced stages in the recognition of the rights of the terminally ill.

As it also happens abroad, the issue of euthanasia attracts the attention of public opinion when the media bring, with too much detail, some cases to the fore. Since the spring of 2000, three cases have been particularly debated on the pages of Italian newspapers. On May 23, a young man from Viareggio helped his friend Stefano del Carlo to get it over with, with a dose of insulin: despite the deceased's parents themselves having defined his gesture "a great act of love", the sentence was sentenced to four years of imprisonment. In the same days a man from Monza was sentenced to six and a half years for having, two years earlier, disconnected the wires that pumped air to his wife's lungs.

On April 24, 2002, however, her husband was acquitted on appeal of the charge of premeditated voluntary murder. The judges in fact established that the engineer Forzatti, by unplugging the respirator to which his wife's body was attached, did not kill her because, in their opinion, the woman was already dead. In May 2001, the last days of Emilio Vesce, a radical militant historian, inflamed the electoral campaign due to his son's declarations against artificial feeding, "no longer implemented as a therapy but as a therapeutic persistence". In September 2006 the case of Piergiorgio Welby broke out, suffering from muscular dystrophy and now unable to move, who asked the President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano to be able to obtain euthanasia. The President immediately invited the Chambers to discuss the problem, but remained unheard. The following 21 December Piergiorgio Welby died, triggering a strong wave of emotion throughout the coun-

try. In July 2007 Giovanni Nuvoli died, who in turn had asked for his respirator to be removed: the carabinieri had been sent to prevent a doctor from respecting his wishes. In order to put an end to the sufferings, Nuvoli was thus forced to stop taking food or drink, "allowing himself to die" of hunger and thirst. The case of Eluana Englaro, completely immobile and unconscious since 1992, held the bench for many years. The father, tired of seeing her kept alive by a nasogastric tube (and against her daughter's will), took several legal steps to suspend the treatment, without any success for many years. Finally, in October 2007, the Court of Cassation, in referring the question to the Court of Appeal of Milan, established that the interruption of treatment can be allowed, when the patient is in an irreversible vegetative state and if, in life, he had expressed his opposition to such treatments.

The Court of Appeal, in July 2008, authorized Eluana's father to interrupt the hydration and forced feeding treatments: an appeal was filed against the provision by the Milan Attorney General, an appeal later rejected by the Court of Cassation. Eluana died in February 2009 in a clinic in Udine, after the Berlusconi government had tried to issue an ad hoc decree to prevent the fulfillment of Eluana's will. In November 2010, the well-known director Mario Monicelli, suffering from a terminal illness, decided to jump from the fifth floor of the hospital where he was hospitalized. Exactly one year later, it was former parliamentarian Lucio Magri who finally chose assisted suicide in Switzerland. In 2013, the news is the case of Piera Franchina, who in turn went to Switzerland.

In October it is still a director, Carlo Lizzani, who takes his own life by launching himself from the third floor: he had said that he would have wanted euthanasia with his wife, like Romeo and Juliet. Finally, in 2016, the tutelary judge of the Cagliari court accepted the request of Walter Piludu, former president of the Province, suffering from ALS, who asked for the treatment to be interrupted. The magistrate established that "it is a right to refuse treatment and leave without suffering: sedate yourself so as not to feel anxiety or pain".

Dj Fabo died in Switzerland on 27 February 2017, Davide Trentini on 13 April, Loris Bertocco on 11 October. All three resorted to assisted suicide. For the first case, forced indictment was ordered for the radical leader Marco Cappato, who had accompanied him to Zurich. In 2018 the affair ended before the Constitutional Court, which first postponed the decision for a year inviting the parliament to intervene and later, after that period in vain, acquitted Cappato and declared the partial constitutional illegitimacy of article 580 of the code. criminal. These cases, if they are heartbreaking from the point of view of those directly involved, at least end up demonstrating how the legislation is absolutely inadequate for the times. Various bills presented in parliament were wrecked by the opposition of the clericals.

materials 00/14

[Today, the mirror is not a friend, neither was it yesterday or the day before yesterday. It keeps showing the reflection of an ugly girl, the reflection of a girl I no longer recognize. "No, it's not me."

My lifeless eyes, my dull hair, my flawless skin, my face line seems too wide, my shoulders clumsy. And to top it all, too greasy.

Yes, I'm fat. Obese. Overweight. It's me. I have always worn bulky clothes just to cover my figure, to hide my strong discomfort. My oversized shirt barely covers my lap life. Where can I find XXL clothes? Life is so unfair. My fingers look like sausages, because I'm so fat. And I eat A big slice of this chocolate cake. And another and another... until my full, swollen stomach tells me to stop. I feel so helpless and the only thing I can do is cry and eat and eat.

Wait, I can change, I can become pretty, maybe a lot thinner. I am convinced, I am de-

terminated, I can do it. And so I entered the bathroom and I approached my face to the toilet. I opened my mouth and put the my index finger deep. " I'll be beautiful just like my friends." I suffocate. "I'll get thin." He retched.

I kept throwing up until the last one drop or piece of food. I threw up like my life depended on it. And that's how it all started. I eat and vomit. I eat and vomit. At this point I am slave. "I didn't think what I was doing was wrong. My body was losing weight, it was much slimmer. In a few months, my clothes got too big for me. I was becoming a different person. More beautiful. Or so I thought. Suddenly one day they transported me in the hospital because I was passed out. I was severely dehydrated and the doctor discovered esophagitis. My mother took me to the hospital not only because of my fainting but because I had no more flesh, muscle on my bones. They were already worried that my condition might get worse if not treated immediately.

I was a skeleton. I was severely underweight. And I understand all of this too late.

I suffer from Bulimia Nervosa. It is a characterized eating disorder large binge, that is to assume a large amount of food in a short amount of time, followed by subsequent ones attempts to get rid of the food consumed, typically vomiting or taking a laxative or diuretic, and or excessive exercise.

In Italy there are 3 million young people who suffer from eating disorders: 95.9 percent are women, 4.1 percent are men, but the age in which these pathologies occur is decreasing more and more, also concerning children and pre-adolescents. According to the World Health Organization, anorexic and bulimic pathologies represent the second cause of death among young women after road accidents.

"I was very often hysterical, punched against the wall, broke my hand. Those were the moments when I saw no way out. They alternated with those when, despite the pain, I thought that staying in that situation was better, because I knew it ". Chiara Sole touched the most tragic moment when she tried to take her own life. "I ingested a lot of drugs, then I phoned a person who lived very far from me and told him what I had done. I thought that if she arrived in time to save me it meant that it was not my time, otherwise I would die". After being in a coma for a few days, Chiara Sole woke up. " When I realized I survived I decided to get a tattoo of a sun and the ascent began." Day after day ChiaraSole saw her obsessions becoming weaker and weaker until they disappeared, " when I was sick I counted everything, I counted the food on my plate, I counted the steps I climbed, I washed obsessively and I had an obviously negative relationship with the scale who had the power to turn my day upside down. " Today Chiara Sole works full time in her association. "One day I decided to tell my story on the web, I created a website and put my picture on it. I wanted to tell the people who were struggling with the disease that healing is possible." Since that day many people have met ChiaraSole, who over the years has become a health worker, and thanks also to her help, they learn to get better.

"Today both the food and the body are back to being just food and body. Before, maybe in a sandwich there were for example mom and dad, a world that had to be gutted. Another planet, which is where those who get sick live. Today my relationship with food and scales is what anyone could have ".]

materials 00/15

[Today January 16 is 30 years since the outbreak of the first Gulf War, in which the international coalition attacked Saddam Hussein ' s Iraq. The beginning of the war and its rapid evolution did not give the common man the perception of what its consequences would be, in the short, medium and long term. This war in reality would have changed the face of the Middle Eastern region forever, ushering in a season of instability that still persists today.

Regardless of the fact, now historically recognized, that the casus belli was the aggression and invasion by Iraqi forces of neighboring Kuwait, and the launch of a military campaign carried out against Israel and the Gulf countries, after three decades This situation cannot be analyzed without connecting it to the political changes resulting from the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and to the American unipolar domination of the international political scenario, with particular reference to the Middle East.

Saddam had ascended to power using slogans expressing pan-Arabism, starting a war against Persian Iran, proposing himself as a champion and defender of Arab identity, supported by the same countries that would later enter his military sights. Unexpectedly, this conflict started a long phase of political instability and security problems in the individual states. Starting from the fall of Iraq and the failed peace process started in Madrid in 1992 and actually stalled in 1995 due to the assassination of Rabin, it can be said that this war has transformed Iraq into an inexhaustible source of problems that they have accumulated and stratified, producing their own devastating effects throughout the region. The latent problems developed and increased until the epilogue, not definitive, represented by the second Gulf War of 2003.

Subsequently the problems did not disappear nor were solved, they simply took on new forms. Shiite Sunni sectarian thinking came to the fore, which over time became one of the motives for the conflicts that broke out in Arab countries; Iran with its expansionist political ambitions and influence has become the nightmare of many countries that have allied themselves to counter it.

The war against Iraq is long over, but not the internal diatribes that continue and show all their destructive potential. Iraq was none other than the first pawn to move on a chessboard that has seen the birth and development of other serious crises; beyond Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Today countries that in the past were fundamental in determining the balance of the area are in crisis or no longer have the same driving force as in the past. They are limited in their action by an uninterrupted sequence of internal problems which have undermined their stability and vigor.

Their collapse led to the crisis of the Arab identity which is increasingly fragmented and fragile, characterized by problems of growing poverty, galloping unemployment, lack of political representation and socio-economic development. This is the current scenario determined by a war that lasted a few days but which has produced tragic consequences that generate their own effects even today.

Unfortunately it is difficult to foresee a positive change in the immediate future, but realistically the 30 years that have just passed can be useful for understanding the problems, the short-sighted errors committed by a unipolar international policy that has started a conflict that we could define as " unfinished ", as its aftermath are still present today. In conclusion, we can affirm that it would be desirable for the Arab world that its problems be solved by the new generations, who are called to become aware of the situation and can remedy them. External support and political maneuvers from other countries will not be enough, we need awareness and the determination to move on. A young and conscious cultural revolution is needed which leads to the elimination of sectarian and divisive thoughts which are rooted in Arab societies and which will lead, if they persist, to their destruction as an extreme consequence.

Changes must come from within civil societies, only in this way will they be strong enough to withstand the shocks of the reality that surrounds them.]

- the conflict with Iran, Iraq is impoverished and facing high unemployment in 1990. In addition, the country owes around 74 billion dollars to the Gulf countries (including Kuwait), which demand full repayment of the debt. Hussein has two paths: declare default or go to war. He chooses the second option. In a let-

ter sent to the Arab League, the president calls for debt cancellation by virtue of his country 's commitment in the war against Iran, a fundamentalist power that threatens the states of the region. It also accuses Kuwait of illegally extracting oil from wells along the border and of having violated crude oil price agreements in league with other Gulf countries. A few days later, 100,000 Iraqi soldiers are already crowded at the border and ready to invade Kuwait City. The West has its eyes on Saddam's moves: Kuwait owns 20% of the world's oil fields and a campaign of annexations risks making Iraq a real power, not just a regional one. In fact, at stake is the geography established with the peace of Paris, with a Near East no longer Balkanized. The UN immediately adopts two resolutions calling for the withdrawal of troops and the embargo of trade with Iraq. The appeal falls on deaf ears and when Saddam's troops reach the border with Saudi Arabia, King Fahd asks the United States for help. On 8 August, numerous American units arrive in the Arabian Peninsula, followed in the following weeks and months by the British, French and Italians: Operation Desert Shield begins. In response, Iraq closes its borders, preventing about ten thousand foreigners from Western countries from returning to their homeland. Hussein's intentions - to use the hostages as human shields - will become clear in the following days, as televisions around the world broadcast images of the dictator surrounded by British hostages, stroking the head of a 5-year-old boy. It is a conflict that enjoys unprecedented news coverage, because alongside the military there is an army of embedded reporters who report it 24 hours a day. At the end of November, the UN sends an ultimatum to Baghdad: if by January 15 Iraqi troops will not leave Kuwait, the offensive will start. Saddam ignores the warning and the Allied air raids depart on January 17, followed a month later by the entry of the ground troops. The " resistance " lasts a day: on February 25, Iraqi soldiers leave Kuwait, but first they set fire to the oil wells, causing dense toxic fires that in the following weeks will engage dozens of workers equipped with helmets and fireproof suits (the images, suggestive and painful, are shown in Werner Herzog's Apocalypse in the Desert). Within hours, the allies liberate Kuwait City and Saddam accepts the unconditional ceasefire. The regime is not overthrown, but the UN imposes disarmament and confirms the economic sanctions imposed a year earlier. For Saddam's regime it is only a truce. For the last act it will be necessary to wait for the handover from Bush the father to Bush the son.

materials 00/16

[Not all cars have the same fuel tank, the capacity of a 500 is not the same as that of a Land Rover. And I was this: an off-road vehicle because I went outside the lines and tracks. Then I grew up and I realized how much diversity weighed more on the shoulders of those who were approved and how easily in life those who have a limit tend to load it onto others to take away their thoughts. So I started to feel out of place and uncomfortable from a very young age. Once my elementary school teacher gave a lesson on foods that were good for the body. Like proteins, vegetables etc. I remember very well that all of a sudden he took me and my extra pounds, silent companions, as a case history. How much did the sentence weigh in terms of humiliation: " Children, you can put mayonnaise on carrots to flavor the vegetables and eat them more willingly. Ah, no you Elisabetta better not ". Oh no? Couldn't I do it? Why is it ? Perhaps because I was more robust than my companions. A strength that was not due only to my outer shell but came from within and allowed me to become, with time and not a few sufferings, the woman I am now. For the teachers, I couldn't eat carrots with mayonnaise, I couldn't run fast because if I was out of breath the middle school physical education teacher would yell at me: " What

are you doing, slack off, Tortellini? " - So, without knowing that sometimes people say things without empathy, I would go home and isolate myself trying not to think about it.

Only many years later my mother came up with the phrase: " you have to learn to give weight to words " and I thought I wanted to learn it sooner. After all, I have never eaten carrots in my life and I would never have questioned myself after that criticism in front of the class. Well yes, I admit it: I was an overweight child, a " fat " anorexic and borderline teenager. What is worse? The weight, but not what we carry but what we carry inside and how heavy the judgment of others is for us. I don't think a person's real personal victory is that they have never been fat. Being overweight is uncomfortable for health, not for looks. I thank heaven for having been, not once but four times. For various reasons and because every time I learn something about myself and about people. The difference is that people don't change and will always make jokes or judge without delving into it. Yet every time, including this one in which waiting for Edoardo, I saw my body change once again. I think I always take home a small personal trophy. Overcoming the challenge of not allowing my body to choose is for me to demonstrate first of all to myself that there are transitional bodies. Once I got attached to a person only because he told me that it didn't matter the extra or the less kg but what we had in mind. It is really true and not just a way to tell it to us while remaining fixed in a comfort zone. So, as I always say, we can really be anything we want. Not to satisfy someone but by nurturing the awareness that nothing and nobody can decide what we can be and become.

She was a former normal weight child, a professional swimmer who loved to compete, so much so that she reached the Strait of Messina swimming with the civil team of the Fiamme d'oro. Training, however, was not easy, also because the coach had the bad habit of weighing it, like everyone else, once a week, a practice that " in my opinion started the eating disorders that I would soon suffer from ". " We invented everything before getting on that scale, for example we discovered that with dry hair you lost a few grams ", says Angela Ferracci, 49, president of the Italian Committee for the rights of people affected by obesity and eating disorders , October 10, awareness day for obesity prevention - " Obesity Day " - Angela offers readers her story. That more than a thousand researches or expert opinions helps to understand what obesity really is and what can really fight it.

" Things change when you understand that you can eat all the food in the world but your problems remain the same "

The first difficulties come for Angela after she quit competitive sport, around the age of fifteen, when she had a perfect weight.

A creeping depression in the face of suddenly empty days, the rebellion against traditional food in favor of fast food that just then began to spread everywhere: so at 18 he finds himself weighing 76 kilos, at 20 he is already about 95 until it reached its peak - 165 - at 34 years old. Angela continues to study, to work in various law and notary firms, later she opens her own legal services center in the Castelli in the province of Rome, where she lives. But his main commitment lies in reading and in the spasmodic search for ways to lose weight, in keeping with his way of being. " In bad luck I was lucky enough to have a muscular body, so I was still able to move, at that weight you breathe badly and sometimes you are forced to stay almost motionless ". How was it possible to get to weigh so much? " When you are faced with a very obese person ", he replies, " everyone thinks of some dysfunction. In truth, this is not the case in most cases. I am the classic individual with ' saving genes ', if I'm not careful I store more than the others, period. I need up to 1400 calories, the rest accumulates. To this were added the depression and the evil and absurd gaze of the others: living in the hamlet in Rome is difficult, everyone laughs, they tell you ' how have you reduced ', ' if I lost 40 kilos maybe I would go with you '. But the main cause of the weight gain was a huge emotional imbalance, the inability to

manage anything in my life except through food. So you can get to 250 kilos, I've known people like that. And, I repeat, it is not the thyroid that is not working, but the uncontrolled stress, the food that becomes like a drug. Things can change only when you understand that you can eat all the food in the world but your problems remain the same ". Increase stigma, increase weight. In her life Angela has made various hospitalizations for obesity, in wards where they also treat anorexia and bulimia. But just after having experimented with these clinics he decides to found the CIDO. " In the so-called specialized centers they do a little diet, a little gymnastics, a little psychotherapy. But the fundamental problem with obesity is that most people, relatives but also professionals themselves, do not regard it as a serious disease. And this leads to the blaming of those who are obese. I am convinced that doctors must be firm and also severe, but that above all they must have respect towards us, because if you consider me a shit, you pass me the deadline, or you tell me ' see me with someone like her I would not go out ', you only hurt me. Not to mention your friends, the ones who don't invite you to eat out ' because I feel guilty if you get fat ' with the only consequence that you, alone, go to the supermarket and buy yourself ten pizzas. The more an obese feels discriminated, the more he eats, so the aim of the CIDO was to create a movement of opinion against the stigmatization of the obese and discrimination based on appearance ". At one point Angela, in 2007, has a cerebral hemorrhage. Everyone begins to accuse her claiming that it was caused by obesity, but instead they discover a very rare disease, Moyamoya, a cerebrovascular malformation of the carotid artery of genetic origin that has nothing to do with weight. At the time there was no open magnetic resonance and in closed ones Angela did not enter. Because " being obese also means fighting against obstacles of this type, like the seat of the Frecciarossa which has gone from 60 to 44 centimeters since its debut, even the thin are uncomfortable ". Or be forced to buy two seats when flying by plane. " They say that we cost, that we weigh on the community, but even a multiple sclerosis patient weighs, and yet no one blames him ". And the chapter of the sexual-sentimental life arrives: " They make me a little disgusting, I admit, those women who write that ' fat girls do it better ', as well as the perverts who say ' I want to see what it 's like to do it better ' repel me. love with a fat woman '. I have always defended my dignity and in fact I met a wonderful man, a psychotherapist who also deals with eating disorders - ironically - and who is now my husband, although everyone was amazed that a normal weight would get along with an obese, in the eyes of the people it seems impossible ". Today Angela lives in Forlì, weighs 130 kilos but is slowly losing weight thanks to a healthy diet and two little dogs that force her to move. When asked if he has any regrets, he replies that he has only one, " that of not having believed enough in me and not having defended myself even more ". She is proud to have founded a unique association in Italy, while abroad the obese have numerous centers of reference, even if she notes with sarcasm and bitterness " that no professor wanted to put his face on it " and that many obese are still ashamed, not come out. Finally he specifies: " When I see obese children, I feel sad, I believe that health is very important. Far be it from me, in short, to claim obese pride would be the same as being proud of having cancer. I don't defend my pounds, I defend the dignity of my person ". Angela 's last wish will come true soon, because after a training course that lasted a year and a half and after becoming, with her husband, a " support family ", she will receive a child in foster care and then perhaps in adoption.. To train to be a mother, she volunteers in a foster home. " I just got out of there", she concludes, " and all the children hugged me ". In their eyes, Angela is just a woman who brings support and love. The rest is seen only by adults deviated from a culture where overweight and obesity are evil. And, above all, a

consequence of sloppiness, neglect, lack of will and, of course, infinite guilt.]

materials 00/17

[The first thing that almost everyone thinks about when it comes to Voodoo are the famous " Voodoo dolls ", those used to hurt other people at a distance, damaging a doll with the likeness of that person. It is something that has been told in dozens of films and TV series, and which for many people represents the only knowledge about Voodoo. And it is false. In fact, as journalist Pumza Fihlani recently explained on BBC Africa, Voodoo is a religion with a long history that is still very much practiced in different parts of the world, born in Africa and then arrived with slaves in the United States, where with slightly different forms and names it still exists. And nowhere, except in the movies, are there the famous Voodoo dolls.

Voodoo, explains Fihlani, is based on the veneration of nature and ancestors, and on the belief that the living and the dead coexist side by side: the world of the dead is superimposed on that of people and can be accessed thanks to a series of intermediary spirits, who are also a bond with god. Voodoo believers have a simple concept of sin: they believe that good deeds must always be performed and that one will be punished for bad ones. The negative and reductive idea that many have of Voodoo, Fihlani always says, is due to colonialism and how Christianity was spread in African countries. In particular, the sacrifice of animals practiced by the Voodoo faithful has been associated with witchcraft, although it is also a custom rooted in the traditions of many other religions.

The Voodoo religion is best known for the dolls used in some ceremonies, but few know its principles and it is often not even considered a religion, but rather a kind of witchcraft. A fairly recent example is contained in the Disney animated film *The Princess and the Frog*, set in Louisiana, that is one of the places in America where Voodoo has remained in the tradition of African Americans, albeit with somewhat different forms : the " villain " of the cartoon is a sorcerer dressed like a Voodoo priest which evokes the spirits of the dead.

In the Benin, a West African country that borders Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Niger, at least 11.6 percent of the population it is said of Vodoun or Vodun religion, what is usually called Voodoo in Europe and the United States, or with the Italian transliteration Vudù. Voodoo has been one of the official religions of Benin since 1996: it was the first African state to recognize it as such. According to a 2013 estimate, 27 percent of the country's population is Muslim, 48.5 percent Christian, but many in the country are known to practice both Christianity that Voodoo, a " double religion ", and identify the spirits of Voodoo in Christian saints. Dodji Amouzouvi, a sociologist and anthropologist expert in African traditions and religions, told Fihlani: " There is a saying around here that says: ' Christians during the day and Voodoo at night. ' It simply means that even those who practice other religions always return to Voodoo in one way or another ».

Benin is not the only African country where Voodoo is widespread: there are also faithful of the religion in neighboring Togo, Nigeria, Ghana and the Ivory Coast. On the occasion of January 10, considered the day of Voodoo because it was on this date that it became the official religion of Benin, a large party is held in the city of Ouidah, in Benin, which is also attended by faithful from other countries.

In Ouidah is the Temple of the Pythons, an important Voodoo sanctuary, where the faithful go at this time of the year to make amends for their sins, sacrificing animals and making other offerings to the gods. Inside the sanctuary live more than fifty snakes: pythons are a symbol of strength associated with the Dagbe spirit, which is honored in the temple. The Voodoo faithful ask him for the po-

wer to change, to become better people, and the blood of sacrificed animals is the means by which to make this request. The meat of the animals, on the other hand, is cooked and eaten by the faithful. Traces of African Voodoo have also been preserved in Louisiana, in the southern United States, and in some countries of Latin America, where are you? you develop slightly different beliefs: although they are themselves called Voodoo - Vodou in Haiti, Vodú in Cuba, Vud ú in the Dominican Republic, Vodum in Brazil - there are many differences with the African religion. In America Voodoo had arrived due to the slave trade (in Ouidah, among other things, there was one of the largest slave trading centers) and is one of the few things left in African American cultures to represent a link with the origins African. Slave masters believed that Voodoo was a form of witchcraft and severely punished the slaves who practiced it: according to some historical reconstructions, the repression of Voodoo is precisely what made the slaves more determined to keep it. Fihlani also interviewed a high priest of the Voodoo of Ouidah, Daagbo Hounon, who told her: « Voodoo is not evil, it is not the devil. If you believe and someone thinks badly of you and tries to harm you, Voodoo protects you. Some say it's the devil, but we don't believe in the devil and even if he exists, he's certainly not here. » Foreign visitors are welcome to Hounon, and in Ouidah it is possible participate in some kind of initiation ceremony for anyone interested in Voodoo: he comes explained how to use medical herbs, how to pray and meditate, how to practice rituals aimed at the gods. Hounon told Fihlani that this program is popular with tourists from the United States, Cuba and parts of Europe. Regine Romaine, an American anthropologist of Haitian origins, explained to Fihlani that the bad reputation of Voodoo around the world is largely due to Hollywood films that have spread an incorrect image, for example in the genre horror. Like many other African Americans, Romaine tried to understand Voodoo to understand her origins and find a link with a cultural identity that was lost due to the slave trade. The so-called " Voodoo dolls " - which in countless films and TV series are used to harm a person from a distance, by hitting the doll that represents them with needles or in other ways, also come from the cinema and television. Similar items are not part of the Voodoo or African tradition and were also used in Europe long before Voodoo was discovered by the colonialists: the idea that they were used by Voodoo believers was initially spread to discredit religion when it arrived in the States. United. Then the cinema did the rest.]

materials 00/18

[Days ago, the girl who cuts my hair said: " Constance, listen, but you who are so... (giggle) big (more giggle), how can I find a gift of your size for my mother, that nothing ever suits her? ". I sketched, as I almost always do. These are the daily humiliations that we fat people undergo, like the girl in the perfumery who says that you are " free range " without makeup, the girl in the bar who in front of ten other customers asks if you are sure you want to take the croissant, " because you know, it is very caloric », or the courier's delivery boy who, in order not to carry the parcel to the floor, comments that walking up the stairs is good for you. You sketch and say " You're right" or " I understand", like that time on a low-cost plane when the extension was missing and I was left on the ground. You sketch, and go crying at home. And you don't tell anyone, because you risk them saying « But you can't lose weight, so they don't insult you anymore ? ". Except that's not the point. I've hated my body all my life, even when I was skinny. My mother was bulimic, and I inevitably became one too. For everyone there is a time when weight problems began. I remember my mother's bony fingers when she slapped me and called me "

gluttonous," and how I had been on a diet for eight years. At recess time, I begged for cookies, and while the other girls kept the rest of the shopping money to secretly buy the first tricks, I bought us the brioscine. " Greedy". Back then, no one knew what devastating effect certain words can have on children. Mom compared her wrist to mine and was proud that it was half the size, while my best friend told me, " You're not beautiful, but you're nice." At sixteen I weighed 80 kilos, at nineteen 47, and so on. I've tried all kinds of drugs, I've been throwing up for decades. And meanwhile I dreamed that one day, when I got thin, everything would fall into place, and my life would begin. It just never happened.

Then, a few years ago, after a psychologically violent relationship, I gained a lot of weight. Tens of kilos in a short time, up to 130. So obese that there were no shoes or bras that fit me, that I could no longer put on my socks, that I was afraid of breaking chairs, or crushing my cat. And every time I went out there was someone who looked at me with contempt, who wanted to tell me at all costs that I had a problem, tell me what to do, how I should be. As if we fat people don't already feel like shit every day, as if we don't know it's not healthy. As if we did not dream of a way out every day. So I locked myself in for three years, and from the pharmacy to the supermarket I used delivery for everything. And if I really had to go out I did it in the dark, and I opened the door of the house very slowly, to make sure that no one was there. And in the meantime I ate, because eating was the only thing that gave me comfort. And since the comfort does not last long and afterwards I was disgusted, I took back, and it was a vicious circle.

Meanwhile, on social media I was pretending to be normal. Not that I was hiding how I was, but I certainly wasn't advertising it. Nobody knew that if I talked on the phone I had to sit up, or I would lose my breath. Two years ago, faced with an ultimatum from my father and brother, I went on a diet. And I lost forty kilos unaided, and then some more - except regaining some in the last three months from the stress of a work project. It doesn't matter, I'll lose them again. But the road is still long, menopause is looming and I really don't know if I'll ever get out of it, even though I'm much better. There is a weight that cannot be lost, even when you have lost it all. Binging, fat shaming, body shaming. Words that fats live with every day. An aesthetic condemnation, but above all a moral one.

TV, where for a very long time the fat girl has existed only to be teased, doesn't help. And if it's not the writers it's the audience. When Gabourey Sidibe had sex on the terrace in the Empire series, thousands, angry, flocked online to denigrate her. I was once written that in the concentration camps no one died obese. I reported the individual to Twitter - they found no violation. And when I wrote a book about diversity, and a female was supposed to review it, they asked me " Don't you have a skinny photo?" In the Lives on the Limit program at the beginning there is a disclaimer: « Attention, it could disturb a sensitive public». As we were horror. Days ago, lawyers for the New York cop who killed an African American tried a new line of defense. He was obese, they said, he would die anyway. When I read Fame, Roxane Gay's memoir, of how she became obese to make herself disgusting to men after being raped, I realized that, net of different experiences, I had done the same, and for the first time in many years I cry for me. But it was when I reread Lindy West that something clicked.

Years ago, after a well-known colleague targeted obese people, West wrote a personal essay. Hi, I'm fat, the title. And it began like this : « This is my body. I wanted to change it all my life. I know people find it revolting. Curiously, all this fat shaming didn't make me lose weight. And so fuck it. This is MY body. I'm not ashamed in any way. I don't have to justify it. Indeed, do you know what it is? I like everything about my body. " I said, " Wow, who is this woman? Do you really love or is it just an act? ». And that was the moment. The moment I realized that it is not us, fat, ugly, different, who have to change or hide in order not to be bul-

lied and mocked, it is you who must not be bullied and mocked. I swallowed insults for three years, I can't take it anymore. I have decided to learn to like myself. And I know, it will seem paradoxical that I have decided to do it right now, almost offensive that a fat girl decides to accept herself. But I decided to do it anyway. That's why the other day, after a few minutes, I went back to the hairdresser. And I said that I would no longer use it, that certain attitudes are outrageous and unacceptable. Another stylist remarked that what I was told was not an offense, but the truth : I glared at him before he could finish. I am a fat woman and I deserve respect. I deserve to be accepted. Now.]

materials 00/19

[Geneva, seen from the porthole next to which I am sitting, sparkles with an intensity that seems to me inconsistent with the reason why I am here. The reason is the thin blonde lady who is waiting for me at arrivals: her name is Sabina Cervoni and accompanies people who choose to die. This verb - to die - she never pronounces it. She says leave, but more often leave: it is because - she explains - there are words she likes and others she doesn't. And also because if what he does is called " accompanying ", then it makes sense to imagine that it is a journey.

Sabina carries out this task as a volunteer for Exit , one of the Swiss associations dealing with assisted suicide. Roman by birth, 59 years old, after a life literally in the trenches, first as a specialized operating room nurse and then as head of humanitarian projects - " I started with the war in Somalia, and then Burundi, Angola, Mozambique, Congo, Sri Lanka -, for four years she stopped in Geneva, where she works for a local institution that takes care of citizens in difficulty and, in her spare time, takes care of and follows people who decide to take their own life. On her the director Angelica Gallo and the screenwriter Nicolò Galbiati have built the documentary entitled La fourth Parca. In classical mythology the three Fates hold the thread of the destiny of men in their hands. " But I like to think that the fourth is the one that leaves the freedom to decide," says Sabina. Associations such as Exit - they are different: Dignitas, Circle of Life - operate in Switzerland by virtue of a small regulatory gap. The art. 115 of the Swiss penal code establishes that " persons who accompany a subject to suicide with altruistic intentions are not punishable by law". And it is from this " non-punishment" that in the early 1980s, on the initiative of a group of women, the association was born. The first assisted suicides - to which, according to Exit, only Swiss residents have access, but other similar realities also work with foreigners - occurred only in the 2000s and, since then, demand and supply have been steadily increasing. With one hundred deaths occurring, for whatever reason, in Switzerland throughout 2018, 2.4% were assisted suicides. The previous year they were 1.7 %. The registered members of Exit are 160 thousand; Membership - costs less than 40 euros a year - is an essential condition for accessing the association 's services but, of course, many sign up only to support the idea of freedom of choice at the end of life.

Sabina herself, years ago, joined forces for this reason. His vision on the subject is conditioned by his experience on the war fronts, but above all by a personal and painful story. " My brother Fabio was diagnosed with bipolar syndrome when he was 20 years old. He attempted suicide several times, until, at the age of 40 - he had a job, a partner and a small son - he made it clear he could not take it anymore and that he wanted a way to end this suffering other than killing himself. He did not find a way out, so one day, without saying anything to us - other times he somehow warned us - he left in a very violent way. Its history, and many other pieces of things that I have seen in life, have led me to do what I do ». In all of French-speaking Switzerland there are 25 escorts, ten in the

city of Geneva alone. Most are people from health professions: doctors, nurses. « Not so much because some competence in those fields is required, but because we are used to practicing what in the jargon is called " affective neutrality " : staying close, while managing to keep a distance; be empathic, but protect yourself ". There are no courses to learn this profession, only preliminary interviews and a year of internship in which the aspiring companion joins a more experienced one. « Until the day arrives when your tutor tells you: this time you take care of it, and he stands aside. My first accompaniment happened like this, we were in a residence for the elderly, the man I was to follow had had an accident and was quadriplegic. He had been a running enthusiast and since I am too, we talked about that, remembering the great champions of the past. His wife had not wanted to attend, but he was very convinced. It was more he who supported me than I him. His words comforted me in the doubt that I was doing the right thing. "

Do you have doubts? I ask. « Doubting is normal and human », he replies « but the more time passes, the more two convictions strengthen in me: that natural death is a concept that makes no sense. Nothing in our existence is more "natural ". And, the second, that every death is dignified. There are, however, lives that, for those who live them, are no longer so ». The chaperone is the person with whom those who choose assisted suicide relate from the very first encounters. Which can be several or even just one, if those who want to die are really motivated. Of course, before arriving at the interview, there is a bureaucratic part to be carried out, presenting documentation that includes, in addition to the registration to Exit, a recent certificate that ascertains the ability to understand and want and a diagnosis that until 2014 had to be of a terminal illness (tumor, ALS) but can now certify a poly pathology that limits autonomy in daily life acts. Exit also accompanies psychiatric patients, but for them the attestation of the ability to understand and want is a different document, not the result of a single visit, but of 6 months of interviews with a psychiatrist. For all, then, a declaration is required, written in one's own hand and endorsed by a notary, in which the will to be accompanied to suicide is expressed. After each accompaniment (which is communicated in advance to the Police and the coroner who make an inspection a few hours later) a criminal case is opened against Exit. Which as a rule the attorney closes as soon as he receives the documentation. " But there have been cases where the lawsuit has gone on. Usually, when the news becomes public, we have a boom in registrations and donations: this idea of solidarity is very Swiss every time the freedom of choice is questioned ». In the preliminary meetings, the companion, in addition to explaining the procedure, verifies how strong the person ' s intention is and invites him to make his decision known to relatives and friends. " We don't want anyone to disappear suddenly, without anyone knowing. It happened to me and it wasn't easy afterwards. Then I remember a woman: she didn't want to tell anyone, I at least convinced her to write some letters, which I then sent. Often people say they want to be alone that day, but just as often family members express the desire to be present, and they are important moments, even beautiful ones, in which we greet each other and talk about life, not death ".]

materials 00/20

["militant " promotion of ornithology - The secret life of birds. How they love, work, play and think, published in Italy by the Nave di Teseo - is an event certainly appreciated by ethologists. Discussing it with the author Jennifer Ackerman (lively journalist and writer) was a pleasant duet (as they do when humming couples of some birds together to strengthen their emotional bond) and on a double register. First of all because ornithology is one of the most traditional

ways, with entomology, towards a path of naturalistic interest for young people (according to the entomologist EO Wilson in Biophilia) which, if it continues over time, is structured in choices of reading, collecting, birdwatching and in some cases crystallizes in a university course in the sector of behavioral and ethological disciplines. Hence some talents interested in human behavior deviate, choosing studies of a psychological-clinical nature, infantile neuropsychological when not psychiatric, for some natural " appetite " in the observation and analysis of the behavior of others. On the other hand, the prototype of the ethologists, Konrad Lorenz (Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology in 1973), was a psychiatrist who was passionate about hierarchical walks of the garden geese, the " engagements " in the jackdaws of the attic, suffered in spring the courtship of small insectivorous birds that as adults put insects and vermicelli in their mouths to attract them with the approach that re-proposes the feeding of the nest, to facilitate sexual contact: and hence his primitive description of the phenomenon of imprinting.

Secondly, Italy (with its explosive post-war urbanization, the abandonment of traditional local peasant and pastoral cultures, the migration from the mountainous areas to the coasts and attractive metropolises) urgently needs a more Northern European naturalistic literacy: to fill the gap with massively zoophilic and naturalistic countries such as Austria, Germany, Switzerland, all Scandinavia, and others. So a text that arouses the readers' curiosity about birds is welcome. Starting with bizarre and curious cases of colorful parrots and shady cuckoos. But with the " pastoral " aim of opening our eyes to the birds that accompany our daily life. Swifts courting each other screeching furiously on our heads, white dancers swaying elegantly next to the traffic lights, male crow bowing to the reluctant female with the branch for the nest still in its beak, a pledge of future paternal commitment, woody but promising diligent cues to chicks.

An important novelty on which the text dwells at length is the importance of the sense of smell of birds, a still little known sensory modality : the ability to discover food by smell, or to draw a mental map olfactory, perhaps for migratory species or to explain the prodigious ability of traveling pigeons in returning to their dovecote. How much did one of my teachers, the ethologist Floriano Papi, long active at the University of Pisa, have to fight, starting from the 1970s, to convince that even birds perceived olfactory stimuli with acuity and discernment: a beautiful international revenge, for the whole Italian ethology. With a caveat: that in the reading of the melodious, marvelous ornithological events of the text, with the inevitable " game of mirrors " between ornithic behavior and events of our human behavioral complexity, silly (if not dangerous) interpretative short-circuits occur. There is no " natural behavior " in the human species, read as a Darwinian law, an analogy with that of the many species of birds pictorially narrated in the book.

The erroneous idea that we too may obey, albeit subtly, simple animal-like ethological laws in the near past (mass murderous aggression), or sadly remote (since medieval and Leonardo bestiaries), when animal examples have interpreted for centuries virtues and vices of the human species. The Homo sapiens species is a product of Darwinian natural selection, like birds, but its culture and history make it a case in itself. Churches, wars and the preparation of atomic devices now remain glorious, now funereal attributes of a single solitary species that for millennia has been walking powerfully on the angry crust of planet Earth. The class of birds includes about ten thousand species. You have made a great overview of them, choosing only a few, characterized by their more or less curious or fascinating behaviors. In selecting them, which cases struck you the most for their " similarity " with what happens in human behavior? « I am reminded of the strange and aesthetic behavior of parrots - replies Jennifer Ackerman -. Many species play, imitate, dance to the rhythm of human music. The kea of New Zealand, undoubtedly the " king of the game " in the bird world. They emit trills that re-

semble baby giggles, are extremely social, curious and exploratory. They play, argue, throw sticks in the air, roll on the ground, unscrew accessories from their perch.

And I think of the gray parrot, which not only imitates human language, but also distinguishes dozens of words and knows how to use them in some way. Or the Ringo Starr, the male Australian palm cockatoo that rolls, with self-made chopsticks, beating on the perch or on a log to attract a partner. Each male has a unique style and rhythm. Or the cultural transmission from one generation to another in the construction of tools in corvids. Or their manifest empathy, made up of physical contacts, towards their partner or "ally" who suffers inside the flock ». And in which species, on the contrary, has he discovered and narrated very different behaviors, unthinkable for the human species? "Some birds raise their children in ways that are unimaginable to us. Like hatching parasites, cuckoos, which lay their eggs in other people's nests. We thought they just throw out the eggs and let the adoptive parents raise their children. Instead, we now know that cuckoos, especially females, are extremely attentive and acute observers, they know how to choose the right moment in which to lay and use refined strategies to avoid being discovered.

Even more "disturbing" is the behavior of the female of the beautiful "eclated parrot" which sometimes eliminates all male offspring, and only them: since the males develop much more slowly, in case of scarce resources the mother prefers to concentrate on female offspring ". Ackerman is a rigorous reporter and popularizer. Unlike our world of researchers, which we prefer to use technical terms, some popularizers play, a little fictional, with the ethological events of birds which are very well suited for direct comparisons with the human species, given that many species are diurnal and use, like Homo sapiens, a visual and auditory communication, apart from the extraordinary sense of smell of some birds. Terms perhaps stolen while chatting with professional ethologists - such as "possession" of a partner in the whip bird, "contagious giggle among close friends" among crow chicks, "popular game" among the kea - he considers them an important condiment, perhaps indispensable for a prose that brings the common reader closer to ethology? « I consider a good way of writing and communicating science a partnership, a true collaboration, between journalist and researcher. My work depends on the willingness of scientists to share their time and knowledge and I have always been impressed by their generosity. Spending time together in the field is one of the things I love most about my job. Like the challenge of translating sometimes complex scientific concepts into prose that is entertaining, enjoyable and accurate ».

An important point of reflection concerns how much intentional there is in an animal behavior. Professional ethologists often pay a great deal of attention to underlining that a bird's response could be a mechanical, stereotyped, almost automatic action "triggered" (released) by a particular stimulus. Examples occur under the eyes of all such as the courtship of the male of the pigeon in front of a female or the territorial aggression that is immediately triggered towards a member of its own species in the robin: perhaps they are a simple product of hormones and peptides that flood the brain in spring. of these animals? The "will" of the alligators to attack, the "popularity" of a social game in the kea or the "cunning" of the common cuckoo in driving away the legitimate owners of the nest to lay an egg do not reveal an attempt to make them a little too similar to us? "In my view, to evaluate the difference between an automatic reaction triggered by a stimulus and an intentional behavior, by suggesting an underlying intelligence, it is necessary to observe whether the animal demonstrates a behavioral flexibility : that is, the ability to adapt knowledge and ability to use them in a context outside of which he has learned it or in which he has evolved. The key is whether a bird can transfer something learned for a certain set of stimuli into one context and adapt it to another context. A good example is western jays, which hide food. They store it to find it later. If a jay hides food and

is alone, it leaves it there. But if another jay is watching it, it waits for the potential thief to go away and reborn it again, to protect it. " Intentionality and animal consciousness have been discussed since the time of Aristotle at least. This is also the subtle modernity of those who practice ethology today.]

materials 00/21

[Despite the degree of malnutrition existing on the planet, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) obesity represents one of the main public health problems in the world. We are in fact facing a real global epidemic, which is spreading in many countries and which, in the absence of immediate action, can cause very serious health problems in the coming years. Excess weight is a condition characterized by an excessive accumulation of body fat, usually due to an improper diet and a sedentary lifestyle. Nutrition and physical activity are behaviors strongly influenced by social, economic and cultural conditions. Debunking a fairly common misconception, obesity is not a " problem of the rich ". Or at least, not only that: the most disadvantaged segments of the population from a socio-economic point of view tend to consume more meat, fats and carbohydrates, rather than fruit and vegetables, and to care less for their image and physical well-being. On a psychological level, obesity can completely upset a person's life: those who are obese are often isolated and subjected to a real social stigmatization, which makes any type of sociality difficult. In particular, overweight children tend to develop a difficult relationship with their bodies and peers, resulting in isolation, which often results in further sedentary habits. The genetic component of obesity has been found in several studies; given the multifactorial nature of obesity, however, it is likely that there are also combined genetic factors capable of favoring or not the ability to lose weight and keep it low. Obesity and overweight are conditions associated with premature death and now universally recognized as risk factors for major chronic diseases. A particularly serious problem is that of the onset of obesity among children and adolescents, exposed since childhood to breathing difficulties, joint problems, reduced mobility, but also digestive and psychological disorders. Furthermore, those who are obese in childhood are often obese even as adults: therefore the risk of developing early risk factors of a cardiovascular nature (hypertension, coronary heart disease, heart attack) and conditions of impaired metabolism, such as type 2 diabetes or hypercholesterolemia.]

materials 00/22

[Hi, I'm Elliot Rodger. Well, this is my latest video. We have come to this. Tomorrow will be the day of vengeance. The day I take my revenge, against humanity, against all of you. For the past eight years, since I entered puberty, I have had to suffer an existence of loneliness, rejection and unfulfilled desires, all because girls weren't attracted to me. They gave their affection, and sex, and love, to other men, but never to me. I am twenty-two and still a virgin. I've never even kissed a girl. Exactly a week ago, a 22-year-old student named Elliot Rodger killed six people and then took his own life in Isla Vista, a Santa Barbara suburb near the local University of California campus. Isla Vista is known as a " college party-town " where students, who number more than 60% of the 23,000 residents, party a lot, somet-

mes too much . Rodger stabbed his first three victims at his home, then got behind the wheel of his car and continued the massacre around the town-campus. He went in and out of clubs and bars, armed with several firearms, all legally registered and purchased, and shot three other people, killing them, then continuing for several blocks, shooting from the windows, and chasing people with his car. trying to pull them under, hitting some and colliding with at least one cyclist and a skateboarder. At around 9:30 in the evening he was reached by the police, with whom he started a firefight from inside his black BMW 325i, then crashed into a parked car and died of a gunshot wound. to the head, a wound that the police later described as " self-inflicted". To describe it like this, it looks like a scene from Grand Theft Auto. It is not, and the 7 victims, including Rodger, and the 7 injured, two of them in critical condition, can attest to this. Not that he intends to associate acts of violence with violent video games, on the contrary . But the relationship between the Isla Vista massacre and mass popular culture cannot be denied.

As is well known, Rodger used to post several videos on the his YouTube channel , a video in which he talks about himself, shows all his problems, and announces his violent intentions. In the videos, Rodger plays (very badly) the part of the " villain " in a badly scripted film, projecting an image of himself totally plagiarized by the Hollywood imaginary. He puts himself in the right light conditions, behind him palm trees, or Californian landscapes, and looks into the room, sitting in his BMW and, squinting, looking around, taking breaks that are nothing short of cinematic, he says things like "I'll slaughter every single spoiled, haughty blonde whore I see. '

It is also known that Rodger was active in the PUA community (ie " Pick-Up Artists "), made up of very sad men who created a lifestyle around the very bad The Game , a manual-book by Neil Strauss focused on the art of " towing ". I'm not going to list exactly how sexist it is: take my word for it when I tell you it's one of the most stupid and sexist books ever published. Rodger, however, like many members more or less affiliated with the PUA, was later disappointed by the experience, and had joined a group called PUAHate, in which bitter men gather online to speak very badly of both the PUA and women in general.. Rodger's definition, in these circuits, was of incel, ie " involuntary celibate ".

« I wanted a girl. I wanted sex, I wanted love, affection, adoration. But you thought I didn't deserve it. And this is an unforgivable crime. If I can't have you, girls, then I'll destroy you. [laughs like the villain in a movie] You denied me the chance for a happy life. And, in return, I will deny all your lives. Rightly so. I hate you all ». (transcript of Elliot Rodger's The Day of Retribution)

Personally, I've seen all of Rodger's videos. They're ghastly fascinating, the most transparent picture of a psychopath's mind I've ever seen, and they're all available online, which makes them both extremely accessible and immensely popular. The only Retribution has nearly three million views.

Other killers, in the past, have had similar relationships with the celebrity : Cho Seung-Hui, the " Virginia Tech Shooter ", had sent to the American network Nbc a package containing photos, videos and a poster in which " he explained the reasons for the massacre ", in the two hours between his first two victims and the next thirty. The psychopath would like to be famous, celebrated: until a few years ago, this meant letters to the newspapers, confessions on video, photos of the paparazzi. Rodger, for his part, has effectively cut out the intermediary : he was the director of his own story, and his videos are all available for scrutiny, analysis and public judgment, as he is, on the other hand, his Manifesto, entitled " My twisted world " (in the original, My Twisted World).

All this access to all this material has allowed the flourishing of an unprecedented amount of articles that aim to analyze the causes of the massacre, and the conclusions they have drawn are the most varied. It has been seen as a problem with firearms legislation in America - and, of course, in part it is. It

was seen as a problem of racism , as Rodger's family, troubled by his videos, had asked for police intervention days before the massacre: some policemen showed up at Rodger's house, but found him " polite. and shy, "which has prompted various commentators to wonder if they would have reacted the same way if Rodger had been, say, an Arab immigrant. It is said that the privilege of white American males kills . It is written, and well , about the identity insecurity of Rodger, who was half-white and half-Asian, a fact that has sometimes been overlooked in other articles. This is no small thing: Rodger was obsessed with his not being accepted by the white community of Santa Barbara, he only wanted blond women, and his manifesto is chock full of racist references to " inferior races," such as Hispanics and blacks, who do not " deserve" white women. It is no coincidence that Rodger killed in the massacre only Asians and whites . Absence of empathy, megalomania, self-centeredness, remorse, deception, hidden emotions, frustration: it is enough to see even one of Rodger's videos to be able to list every traditional symptom of psychopathy. And many of us, seeing these videos, have done so, observing the tics and analyzing Rodger's choice of phrases as if we were all diagnosing his insanity. But engaging in the psychiatric analysis of a murderer is not the work of inexperienced people, as Park Dietz, a forensic psychiatrist, explained to Jay Caspian Kang, in a piece released for the online edition of New Yorker . " These immediate and popular psychiatric autopsies present two serious problems," Dietz said. " First: no one, in the midst of the news avalanche, has a total view of the data. And second, most of the people who carry out these analyzes are absolutely not qualified to do so. ' Dietz is clearly right. I myself am not qualified: a degree in philosophy should not allow me to make judgments in cases like this but, however summary and superficial the conclusions I can draw, in this specific case it is tremendously clear to me that the massacre of Isla Vista it's not just the story of an isolated psychopath.

Rodger's psychosis can attract us to its videos, to try to look at it closely, to understand its symptoms, drawn to these madness documents as if we were, in part, staring at a car accident, and in part avoiding that a madness of the genus can ever become part of our brains. But this attraction, mixed with fear, mixed with repulsion towards Rodger's madness should not limit us.

The story of Elliott Rodger is fascinating - and I use this term with all possible respect for the victims of the massacre - because it allows us to observe, in crystallized form, with accessible materials and data, two problems that Western society struggles with. to face. I am speaking of mental health, specifically, and of the machismo intrinsic in Western society, in a broad sense. And, above all, of the connection between the two.]

materials 00/23

[The neurobiological models of psychopathy have focused on the peculiar functioning of limbic and paralimbic structures, in particular the amygdala and the ventromedial prefrontal cortex, trying to shed light on the association between dysfunctions in these areas and lack of empathy and regulation of behavior.

There are mainly two theses that have attempted to explain why people with psychopathy do not normally experience empathy and guilt: (a) the hypothesis of empathic deficit (Blair 1995) and (b) that of lack of fearfulness (bias to fear) (Hare 1970; Kochanska 1997; Lykken 1995; Patrick 1994).

According to the hypothesis of the " empathic deficit " an anomaly in the functioning of the amygdala would be found which would make it difficult absent to recognize the emotions of others such as anxiety and sadness . The second thesis argues that at the base of the disorder there is an alteration of the amygdala which would ma-

nifest itself in poor fearfulness (low reactivity to noxious or threatening stimuli). It would imply insufficient sensitivity to punishment and, consequently, a limited importance attributed to moral norms.

Psychopaths have difficulty processing emotional information and empathically responding to others. This deficit could be at the basis of the success these individuals often have in manipulating and deceiving other people, resulting in convincing. The absence of emotional reciprocity and empathy, or the reduction in intensity with which emotions are experienced and represented, could explain the peculiar capacity of persuasion that characterizes such individuals: lacking empathy, in fact, psychopathic people would be more able to represent their victim as "an object to use", managing not to feel remorse or guilt for the consequences of their actions. The basic schemes of self, of others and of the world of psychopaths seem to be characterized by rigidity and inflexibility: the psychopath sees himself as strong and autonomous, while the others as weak and vulnerable to exploitation (prey). There is typically a bias where the malicious intentions of others are overestimated. The psychopath will therefore tend to pay maximum attention, minimizing the risk of victimization and becoming an aggressor himself.

The scientific literature has explored the capacities of moral judgment in psychopathy, trying to understand whether or not the person affected by this problem is able to distinguish "what is right" from "what is morally wrong".

The results of the research have highlighted how people suffering from psychopathy exhibit mainly utilitarian personal moral judgments: this would explain the tendency to violate rules and social norms in order to obtain advantages for themselves. According to this perspective, the psychopath would generally be hyper-focused on the goal and, consequently, would not be able to take into due account the "moral" costs of his own conduct.

Empathy normally exerts an inhibiting effect on aggressive behaviors since it represents an affective experience shared between two human beings. According to Feshbach and Feshbach (1969), individuals capable of accurately assuming the other's perspective are more inclined to engage in prosocial actions rather than aggressive conduct.

The difficulty observed in psychopathic subjects to represent and "feel" the emotional experience of the other has been interpreted by other scholars as the consequence of an active and conscious distraction from the victim's gaze, which the antisocial person would voluntarily put into action in order to inhibit the natural activation of prosocial feelings and therefore be able to maintain a cold and sufficiently detached attitude.

In fact, the ability to grasp another's fear or sadness is not necessarily accompanied by a positive attitude: the empathic resonance of the suffering of others can even be at the service of "immoral" desires. It follows that, rather than having a deficit of empathy, psychopaths may have "antisocial purposes" and not give so much weight to the representation of the suffering of the other, empathic or intellectual, rather than to the representation of their own personal purpose (Mancini, Capo and Colle, 2009).

The developmental history of psychopathic people is generally characterized by dysfunctional parenting experiences, as described by Patterson and collaborators (1991; 1998). According to the "theory of coercion" psychopathic behavior would be learned within the family and then generalized to other contexts and situations. The poorly cooperative behaviors of children would be a consequence of coercive interactions between parents and children.

Some examples of dysfunctional parenting are: inconsistent or, conversely, excessively severe discipline; low supervision and monitoring; insufficient expression of affection; high number of negative verbalizations and high expressed emotionality (Cornah et al. 2003; Portier and Day 2007).

Research by Patterson and colleagues (1991) shows that the parents of subjects with psychopaths rarely exercise a significant and contingent punishment for aggressive and uncooperative

behavior which they intend to reduce, moreover, they do not provide instructions to the child through aversive stimuli. If they do, this is carried out on the emotional wave of the moment (angry attitude, exaggeration of the punishment then retracted, inconsistency in managing contingencies, etc.). Furthermore, from the longitudinal studies carried out by Patterson and collaborators (1998) it has been highlighted that the coercive interactions just described between parents and children predict aggressive relationships with peers and affiliation with deviant groups in adolescence.]

materials 00/24

[Researchers agree that psychopathy involves persistent antisocial behavior, altered empathy and remorse, audacity, emotional resilience, meanness, impulsiveness, and selfish traits. In addition to some 'positive' aspects, such as attention to detail, the ability to interpret others. The ability to be precise and creative means that psychopaths can be successful professionals. But how do you know if you are dating one? Here are the signs to look at according to science. An article in The Conversation by Calli Tzani-Pepelasi, researcher in psychology at Huddersfield University, notes that the first characteristic that could become evident when meeting a psychopath is the pathological attitude to lie. He is likely to repeatedly try to deceive his partner and lie about anything to achieve his goals. It is often difficult to catch him because he plans deceptive stories.

Self-esteem, then, is usually extremely high. In comparison, the partner will feel useless and if this does not happen it will be the psychopath who makes him feel this way. Gradually eroding the "victim's" trust and sense of reality by confusing, deceiving and persuading her. Psychopaths are good manipulators.

If you manage to resist, discussions full of frustration will break out, and finally the sweet eyes to make the other surrender. A lack of self-control and remorse can also make it difficult for the partner. Psychopaths also tend to exhibit traits of sociopathy and narcissism, which are correlated with infidelity. Faced with this, women are more likely to gradually end the relationship, while men are more likely to experience fear of rejection due to the impulsiveness of the partner.]

materials 00/25

[An owl gliding through a cloud of soap bubbles? What you will see in this video is the experiment that a team of scientists from the Royal Veterinary College of London has developed to reconstruct the physical laws of flight of these birds of prey. What the researchers saw, in particular, is that thanks to the study of the trajectory of the bubbles (20 thousand, very small and full of helium) it was possible to investigate the strategic use of the tail to get rid of a part of the resistance in the air and succeed to glide more easily. A trick that these birds employ to quickly reach prey but which, from a technological point of view, could provide a useful starting point to revolutionize the design - to begin with - of small airplanes and drones.]

materials 00/26

[The term Gulf War I refers to a conflict that went on between January 16, 1991 and February 28, 1991 between Saddam Hussein 's Iraq and an international coalition led by the United States. The hostilities , however, began a few months

earlier, with the invasion of the territory of Kuwait by the Iraqi army. Until 2003, the conflict was known simply as the " Gulf War " , but with the second operation launched by the US against Iraq in that year , historiography began to indicate it as the first Gulf War, to distinguish it from the second conflict. On August 2, 1990, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein orders his troops to cross the border into Kuwait, a small Gulf state ruled by the emirs of the Al Sabah family. The goal is to annex its territory and make it an integral part of Iraq . In this way, a phase of tension is initiated in the region that sees Saddam Hussein in the crosshairs.

The Iraqi military operation lasts a total of four hours. Baghdad has a force of at least 100,000 men and 300 tanks in Kuwait. In this way, also exploiting the surprise factor, Iraq is able to immediately extinguish the Kuwaiti resistance. The small air force of the emirate takes refuge in Saudi Arabia, the emir Jaber al Sabah also flees to the kingdom of the Saud. About 200 civilians and soldiers died during the operations. At the end of the day, Saddam Hussein claims the total occupation of Kuwait.

The reason for Baghdad's choice to invade Kuwait is to be found in several factors. From 1980 to 1988 Iraq was engaged in a bloody and devastating war with Iran , which ended without winners and losers but which effectively bleeds the coffers of the state. Saddam Hussein sees in that military adventure the possibility of making Iraq a regional power and becoming a point of reference for the Arab world against the newborn theocracy that has settled in Tehran.

At the end of the conflict, however, the country is in dire conditions. To relieve the situation, Baghdad desperately needs to increase the extraction of oil, of which the territory is very rich, and to earn the money necessary for reconstruction from crude oil. However, in the summer of 1990 the condition of the black gold market is far from the condition hoped for by the Iraqis . In fact, we are witnessing a production surplus that leads to a collapse in the price of oil, with consequent damage to Baghdad's coffers.

Saddam Hussein suspects that Kuwait's hand is behind this situation. On July 17, 1990, in a televised speech, he publicly denounced the government of Emir Jaber of inflating the market to cause economic damage to Iraq . The following day the denunciation also becomes official, with Iraqi Vice President Tareq Aziz sending the Baghdad accusations against Kuwait City to the Arab League. In the document, moreover, Iraq shows evidence of alleged thefts of oil by Kuwaiti companies carried out along the 120 km border between the two countries. Saddam Hussein's government is therefore asking, as compensation, for the cancellation of a credit claimed by Kuwait of at least ten billion dollars.

The mediation comes from the OPEC oil cartel, which decides to raise the price of oil. However, this is not enough to make Iraq recover the money it needs to meet its needs and to repay the debts of the war with Iran . To these economic factors Baghdad also adds political claims: according to Iraq, Kuwait is to be considered, for historical and cultural reasons, its own province.

Immediately after the invasion of August 2, 1990, the international community reacts harshly against Saddam Hussein. The action is seen by many as an aggression against a sovereign state. The rais, however, for his part, before advancing his troops in Kuwait, hopes for a " pass " especially from the US. This is due to the support received by Baghdad in the war against Iran . From Washington and most of the countries of the Arab League, however, the condemnation is clear.

US President George Bush orders Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait on 4 August . On August 6, the UN Security Council votes in favor of sanctions against Baghdad. The only ones to vote against it are Cuba and Yemen, countries that do not have the right of veto. The Soviet Union also takes sides against the invasion of Kuwait. In the meantime, the White House has announced that it has initiated contacts with at least 60 countries to prepare a harsh reaction against the action of Saddam Hussein.

On 7 August, just 5 days after the invasion of Kuwait, the US launches its first military

operation. Its code name is Desert Shield , meaning " shield in the desert ". The goal is to contain Iraq ' s ambitions and put heavy pressure on Saddam Hussein' s troops. Formally asking for the start of the operation is the government of Saudi Arabia, worried about the possibility that the Iraqi army after Kuwait could also invade the territory of Riyadh.

The US intervention, however, serves above all to " surround " Saddam. The Desert Shield consists in fact in the sending of numerous US troops to Saudi Arabia. A shield in defense of Washington ' s most loyal allies in the region. US soldiers and vehicles are joined by those of a vast international coalition made up of 34 countries. These include some belonging to the Arab League, including Oman, Qatar, Morocco, Bahrain and Egypt, as well as of course Saudi Arabia. The coalition also includes Italy. The rais in Baghdad now knows that along their borders there are several armies capable of penetrating Kuwaiti and Iraqi territory.

During the following summer and autumn the battle is diplomatic. The US is working to have a broad international consensus on its side. On 9 September in Helsinki, President Bush meets the Soviet leader Gorbachev. Moscow aligns itself with the US condemnation of the invasion of Kuwait and negotiations are started in which the USSR promises neutrality in a possible conflict with Saddam, in exchange for economic aid. A gesture resulting from the end of the Cold War, which was definitively overcome in previous years.

In response, the Iraqi rais closes the borders and detains about ten thousand foreign workers within his borders. Among these many are Westerners. The presence of European and American citizens is for Saddam Hussein one of the few diplomatic cards he can use. Several times the Iraqi leader shows up on TV with some of the Western workers, in an attempt to show the Western public opinion the respectful treatment he received towards them.

In the media, however, the figure of Saddam Hussein is weakened in the West. In the main networks there is talk of alleged abuses perpetuated by his troops in Kuwait and of raids carried out in hospitals. A testimony to this effect is given before a commission of the US congress by Nariyah, a Kuwaiti girl. In front of the deputies , the fifteen-year-old claims to have seen the incubators of the hospital in Kuwait City overturned by Iraqi troops who would then have killed the newborns. In the following months it emerges that the girl is actually the daughter of the Kuwait ambassador to the US and has never set foot in her country. His testimony comes from a campaign run by the public relations firm Hill & Knowlton , paid for by the Kuwaiti government in exile. // History, however, contributes to giving Iraq a very negative image . Even if public opinion is not particularly prone to war in the US and Europe, the eventuality of a conflict is not strongly opposed. The use of force in the following months therefore appears increasingly probable. // Thus we arrive at November 29, 1990: the UN Security Council votes Resolution 678 , with which for the first time explicit reference is made to the possibility of using the armies of the international coalition against Iraq . An ultimatum is also set: Iraqi troops must leave Kuwait by January 15, 1991. Otherwise it could be war. The situation then worsened. Thousands of Iraqi soldiers are moved to Kuwait, the embassies in Baghdad are closed and Saddam Hussein, in the latest attempt to free himself from the bad image produced in the media, releases all Western workers by 6 December. Iraq , the USA and the whole world are now preparing for the conflict. // In the days leading up to the expiry of the UN ultimatum , diplomacy fails to make progress. The deployment of US forces and the international coalition in Saudi Arabia portends the beginning of real military operations. When in the night between January 16 and 17 1991 the ultimatum is now closed, the first anti-aircraft sirens wake the inhabitants of Baghdad. Peter Arnett, CNN correspondent, is among the first to ask for the line to hear the sounds of the explosions caused by the bombings. This is the beginning of the first Gulf War. We no longer speak of Desert Shield, but of Desert Storm , or rather " desert storm " , the code name given to the military action against

Iraq . From Washington, when it is night in Baghdad while in the US it is full time for dinner, President Bush confirms the start of the attack. Only in the morning does Saddam Hussein make himself heard on the radio, promising resistance. The Iraqi rais is also shown on TV in the afternoon before in prayer in his study, then in a meeting with his closest collaborators. It is clear, after the first hours of the conflict, that none of the parties involved want to yield. // US-led military operations are planned in two phases. The first consists of a massive bombing campaign. The Pentagon ' s need is to prevent Iraqis from immediately responding to the coalition' s actions. Barracks, missile launch sites, air bases are therefore targeted. In Baghdad, some government buildings and other strategic locations located in the center are targeted. According to initial information released by US defense officials, the first waves of bombing are successful. This is because Iraq is lacking several defensive and response infrastructures. Especially the first attacks are very violent and leave Saddam Hussein with few cards to play. // All US allies participate in the air campaign. A first incident involving the international coalition occurs on the second day of the war. An Italian tornado carrying Major Gianmarco Bellini and Captain Maurizio Cocciolone is shot down by Iraqi anti-aircraft. On January 20, Iraqi TV shows Cocciolone being interviewed , with a swollen face and evident beating wounds. The video goes around the world. The two, along with other prisoners of war, are released in the following weeks. The air campaign goes on for about a month. In addition to infrastructure, military communication centers are also affected. The Iraqi response is made less effective by desertions since February. During the first week of the war, in fact, the air force of Baghdad, through its most experienced pilots, managed to carry out some important sorties. But the intensity of the US bombing knocks out various means. Hence the flight of numerous crews to Iran . There is talk of more than 100 Iraqi aircraft landed in the neighboring country in a few days. // There is no shortage of controversial episodes, such as that of February 13 in which some missiles hit an air-raid shelter in Baghdad. According to local authorities , more than 400 civilians have died. For the US, the area is used as a communication center and not as a gathering for the population. The massacre, also reported by CNN, is perhaps one of the most serious of the conflict. According to the Iraqis, it is the demonstration of the ineffectiveness of smart bombs, the laser-guided missiles that constitute the most recent pride of the US war industry, used however (as will be discovered at the end of the conflict) only in 7% of raids. // With the launch of the bombing campaign, the composition of the alliance against Iraq is also clear. In total there are 34 countries that provide means and men, in addition to some governments, such as that of Israel, which politically support the war action. Several states of the Arab League are part of it, with the exception of Libya and Yemen, while Jordan declares itself neutral. From Europe comes the support of the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The coalition includes Pakistan, Canada, Australia , as well as other minor countries in Africa and the Middle East. // For Saddam Hussein, the anti-Iraq coalition is destined to fall apart. This is mainly due to its heterogeneity , demonstrated for example by the presence of Syria and Israel, two countries that have always been formally at war. However, the Jewish state does not actively participate in the conflict. Baghdad ' s goal is to drag Israel into war, so as to withdraw the support for the coalition given by the other Arab states. // That is why there is immediately a strong suspicion that Iraq wants to launch missiles at Israel. The US bombings immediately aim to destroy the launch pads of the shields to prevent this threat. In fact, already in January there are several missiles sent over the Israeli skies. In some cases the anti-aircraft is unable to intercept them. Despite the attacks, the government of Israel still decides not to go to war, thus causing the rais' political plans to fail. // Other Iraqi missile attacks are

also directed towards Saudi Arabia, a country that hosts most of the international troops and forces. The US patriot system manages to shield the Saudi skies, but on 25 February 1991 a scud missile hits the Dahrahn base, causing 25 military casualties. // After more than a month of aerial bombardments, Iraq is exhausted. The country has largely unusable military infrastructures, while the economy is at a standstill. In the cities there is no food, there is a shortage of drugs, the population begins to suffer the most tragic social consequences of the conflict. However, Saddam Hussein does not give up on the defense of Kuwait. However, on 24 February, noting the Iraqi difficulties, the US-led coalition decides to launch Operation Desert Saber, the "saber of the desert". // This is the ground action to take Kuwait City. Iraq, fearing an invasion from the sea, strengthened Kuwait's coastal defenses in the preceding weeks. But the US commands decide, together with the Saudi troops, to penetrate by land precisely from Saudi Arabia. // The coalition's advance towards Kuwait City encounters no obstacles during the first hours of the ground fighting. In part this is due to the surprise effect given by the land raid, in part by the fact that American, French and British soldiers also operate in full Iraqi territory to prevent counter-offensives from the north. // The response of the Iraqi Republican Guard, the elite corps of Saddam's army, appears ineffective. Many soldiers desert, others surrender. Only on February 26, the troops of Baghdad manage to offer an important resistance in the so-called battle of the "Phase Line Bullet". Here, not far from Kuwait City, the Iraqis, thanks also to a windstorm and the visibility made poor by fires in some oil wells, block US soldiers for a few hours. Only the next day did the marines succeed in overcoming the troops in Baghdad and resumed their advance. // At that point, in the late morning of February 27, Saddam Hussein orders the withdrawal from Kuwait. The Republic Guard is called upon to defend Baghdad. However, the Iraqi president's message is not received by some brigades concentrated in the defense of Kuwait City airport. Around the airport the last remaining soldiers organize a strong resistance against the US-led coalition. The Americans, together with the Saudis and Kuwaiti units entering the country, manage to take control of the area only after several hours of battle. On February 28, the allies definitively enter Kuwait City, putting an end to the war. The international coalition mourns a total of 1,100 victims, Iraqis instead 35,000. On the same February 28, President Bush declared the end of hostilities and the liberation of Kuwait. // Shortly before the final end of the war, another of the most controversial episodes is witnessing in Iraqi territory. On February 27, during the retreat of Saddam's troops, a convoy of more than 1,500 vehicles is targeted by US planes. The incident occurs along highway 80, an artery that connects Kuwait City with Basra. The soldiers, together with PLO volunteers and prisoners of war, are therefore about to return to Iraq. The convoy is hit both in the head and in the tail, effectively blocking all the vehicles in the central chain. In several waves the entire group of vehicles is targeted. When journalists arrive at the scene a few hours later, the first real war image is projected into the homes of viewers. The show is dramatic. Long lines of vehicles are piled up in the center and sides of the carriageway. There is no certainty of the exact number of deaths. Iraqis and some commentators speak of more than 1,000 dead, while others claim that many people aboard the targeted vehicles managed to escape to safety before the bombing. The fact is that the episode arouses not a little clamor. Especially since the action taken against retreating and therefore inoffensive means appears to be inopportune to the part of US public opinion. The first Gulf War is the first to be almost entirely covered by television. The conflict is constantly entering homes and schedules, hours of live broadcast are broadcast every day both from Baghdad and from the other hotspots of the conflict. The use of satellite technology allows connections from the Iraqi capital during the bombings, the viewer follows the air campaign from the same perspec-

tive as those on the spot. But paradoxically, the cruelty of war is more hidden than on other occasions. The spectators, especially when it is evening in the US, have in those days a real regular appointment with the connections from Iraq and with the images of the bombings, but neither is the destruction nor the drama created by the bombs seen. The only real episode that gives the dimension of the conflict is linked to the videos of the roads of the highway 80. Among the international networks, a leading role is played by CNN. Also for these media aspects the war in Iraq of 1991 can be considered a turning point.

After the war, Kuwait regains its sovereignty and the royal family returns to rule the country. The worst consequences are obviously to the detriment of Iraq. Saddam Hussein retains power, but the price is very high. First, the economic and infrastructural conditions appear dramatic. Bridges, power stations and airports are out of order. Politically, Baghdad is subjected to a severe embargo regime. The government cannot sell the oil and trade is also kept to a minimum. Soon basic necessities were running out on the shelves of supermarkets and shops .

At the political level, the international coalition imposes two no fly zones on Saddam Hussein : one in the north and one in the south. The goal is to avoid the use of aviation against possible rebellions in the Kurdish or Shiite provinces, enemies of the rais. Thus the sovereignty of Iraq is limited. Kurds and Shiites, however, try to rebel and for several months after the war the country is shocked by waves of protests, repressed by Saddam with the West , which in this case too prefers not to intervene directly against Baghdad.

The US for its part is consolidated in the role of " solitary hyperpower " , a term coined by the former French Foreign Minister Hubert V é drine, which emerged with the end of the Cold War. from Washington 's political and military ambitions] .

materials 00/27

[A phenomenon that, from Japan, is spreading like wildfire in Europe and the West. Let's talk about " techno -sex " : for some, man-woman relationships are so tormented and unhappy that, as life partners, they would prefer to opt for replicants. It is not just about sexual pastimes but a real anthropological revolution that could upset the concept of family and, perhaps, even of reproduction. Pro Vita & Famiglia addressed the issue with the journalist and writer Enrica Perucchiatti, who extensively dealt with the issue in her latest essay Cyberman. From artificial intelligence to man - machine hybrid.

Enrica Perucchiatti, in your book you focus in particular on the phenomenon of " artificial lovers " in Japan: are these practices spreading in Europe and the rest of the world too?

« Yes, the phenomenon is not only Japanese. In Turin, a year ago, he had opened a brothel with silicone dolls which, at the beginning of the activity, had sold out. More and more companies (Harmony, Samantha, Solana) produce robot-dolls, which can be managed through specific apps that allow them to be controlled remotely, with the possibility of choosing a replicant with the most diverse human characteristics and personalities, depending on of tastes: intelligent, romantic, moody, shy, enterprising. At the moment the most popular are robot dolls with female features but male and even transgender androids with removable body parts are also emerging. Indeed, in Japan the phenomenon is particularly rooted, with the spread of waifu, a sort of " virtual wives " available to young nerds who live perpetually glued to their computer screens. These young, rather maladjusted, also called hikikomori, develop an obsession with absolutely unreal female models, which also stems from their passion for manga, to the point that they find refuge in a virtual reality, even sexual, by resorting to technosex or digisexuality (" digital sexuality "). What is most striking, however, are the reports and dossiers in which

these trends are presented as the future. Some futurologists argue that by 2050 - according to others by 2070 - human beings will have more sexual relations with robots than with each other ". What's behind this spasmodic search for " surrogate sexuality"? "It is as if there is a kind of terror for real human relationships, which pushes many young people to take refuge in virtual relationships. Last year, a 35 - year-old Japanese man even married a hologram pop star named Hatsune Miku, who looks like a blue-haired teenager who plays gigs in Japan. Because of this terror for real women, many men chase artificial paradises, no longer identified, as in the past, with drugs but with everything that is virtual and that also involves human and sentimental relationships. These robot dolls are not built only for sex but they even develop an affectivity and bonds towards the men who use them. Films like Her, in which Joaquin Phoenix falls in love with a computer processor, or Lars and a girl of his own are proof that this phenomenon is also taking root in the West ».

We have talked about a social trend which, for now, mainly involves the male population. How do feminists pronounce themselves on this issue? « The feminist world is split. Some feminists see techno -sex as a commodification of the female image. Others have a different opinion. This is the case of Cathy O ' Neill, a professor of mathematics at MIT in Boston, according to which in the future men will have to worry about the competition of robots in this worthy substitute for male partners. There are those who have linked the phenomenon of sex robots to the MeToo campaign. According to some, women will be able to supplant men with robots with masculine features. At the moment, however, it is a trend that mainly concerns men: it is as if they experienced a malaise in human relationships and in the relationship with women in flesh and blood. However, the most disturbing discourse of feminists concerns their stance in favor of ectogenesis, or rather the development of artificial uteri which, in the future, could definitively separate sex from reproductive activity ". There are also those who hypothesize the possibility of a hybrid reproduction between humans and androids: reality or science fiction? « Thanks to the ' Overton window ', even the most unthinkable or repulsive idea can take root in society until it becomes real. That said, I don't know if a human-android hybrid reproduction will ever become feasible but these are hypotheses that should not be accepted as boutades. On the contrary, public opinion must be made aware of the concrete drifts that could arise from it. For example, it should not be underestimated that projects have been funded to insert electrodes into the brain to connect the human mind with artificial intelligence. Therefore, at this rate, I do not see why, at a later time, it will not become possible to give life to a new breed of human-robot hybrids. Obviously, I hope it never happens: if that is the case, it would be better for humanity to die out sooner ".]

materials 00/28

[You can think of the entire Internet as a place where ideas embodied in cyberspace are having a war, and it's not much different than the war of gods in heaven, which has been taking place since there's been human beings.]

decoding (interlude)

decoding 01

a) had discovered in the center (of a). they could not attribute to any group. the station of Place d'Italie, and that. and filed. messages on the Internet. time will not pass! the posters of the most spectacular and most alarming operation. (a display of languid nonsense that had submerged all the stations for a while. he found the report of the laboratory. I was able to notice, at the station). fifty-three letters, characters. the honorific king of Israel. no. the spacing had allowed. at the Voltaire station, the graffiti. then they got busy, the definitive message to all. an existing alphabet, and they had. they wanted to upset. the French, unexpectedly. the (possible) se at the twenty-six letters. the writing at the station had hinted characters, joined together. and it was not a graffiti. drawn. you got forty-two marks. and another two meters thick. conventionally eleven marks ran. one line in the direction. overall, fifty-three marks. when he crossed the track, with a decoding problem. ilire a correspondence, its entirety: vestiges). the messages, and those of the alphabet. it had nothing particularly worrying (after two weeks, nothing particularly explicit but it is facing a dead end). it was not. could arouse the interest of correspondence with anyone. internal security, like everything. (the first time this happens. dark and threatening!). the laboratory had been created.

a-1) the traffic was already heavy on P. pleasure. to be told: the sphere. site. it was five o'clock. in short, you know him. well, no. moment of absence. it happens to him, you can imagine it. and then absences, and B. was definitely, yes. the social lobbies for sure. arrived less than ten minutes earlier. but, in the case of Europe. sitting on the sofa in front. whoever else, that's five. expected. "but was everything okay?" too important to be. "yes, well. I think so". the president is not an IOZISTAN. "what impression does it make on you?" the presidential plane with flags and sabers is in flight. a driver, an office, the political sphere is the body. it takes half an hour. the last few years, the years of TV. everyone loses all power. it's almost a minute. it is the influence of the social lobbies. (you lose all power. due to competition, language dreams of buying (daylight). in a long time, almost a minute. the political sphere at least does not express itself. this text tries to obtain an opening formula. you forgot you have a body. like a greeting, not a kiss. I can't stay in that place. is this an opening formula? the situation breathes by association of ideas.

decoding 02

Today, 5th August 2021, WikiLeaks publishes "The Intolerance Network" over 17,000 documents from internationally active right wing campaigning organisations HazteOir and CitizenGO. The documents date from 2001 to 2017 and cover the founding of CitizenGO and early activities of both organisations. The documents are from their internal systems and cover things like: spreadsheets of donors and members, strategy and planning documents, letters, financial charts and legal and training documents. HazteOir was first founded in 2001 in Spain to campaign for right wing values, in 2013 it founded CitizenGO to spread its work beyond Spanish speaking countries. This dataset includes the founding of CitizenGo, and documents from HazteOir organising, along with US based The Howard Center for Family, Religion and Society, the 2012 World Congress for Families (WCF) in Madrid. The WCF brings together right wing organisations

that promote opposition to LGBTQI+ and reproductive rights, it has been labeled as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center and a 2014 Human Rights Campaign report stated "The World Congress of Families (WCF) is one of the most influential American organizations involved in the export of hate".

Tying all these organisations together is Ignacio Arsuaga, founder of HazteOir and on the board of CitizenGo and was awarded the 2013 WCF "Man of the Year Award". The WCF President, Brian Brown - an American campaigner against LGBTQI+ rights, is also on the board of CitizenGo. Both HazteOir and CitizenGo are part of a larger global network of right wing organisations that work together to push their values in grassroots and political spheres. CitizenGo partners to push campaigns with a number of organisations, for example it ran a petition with the Population Research Institute "Abortion is NOT a Human Right!". They work to mobilize grassroots support, and are keen to stress this is their base, however it is clear through the dataset that they aim to raise large funds and influence policy at a high level. A 2019 undercover investigation by OpenDemocracy confirmed ties between Spanish HazteOir and CitizenGo with right wing political parties across Europe in Spain, Italy and Hungary. There have also been reports regarding ties to El Yunque, a secret militant Mexican Group, a tie which HazteOir has tried to rid itself of.

Both HazteOir and CitizenGo run their campaigns and other work under the guise of family values but it is clear through the document set that their values are rooted in an extremely ultra conservative Christian context. They do a lot of work online starting petitions but have also worked in the physical world, for example their "hate bus" - a bright orange bus has with slogans such as "boys are boys" has toured in Spain and America.

WikiLeaks publishes this dataset as part of our goal to protect censored documents of political and historical importance. The dataset appears to be the same that was online briefly in 2017 after a hack that was claimed by the "ACAB Gang", but after legal action was removed from being published on the internet.

Whilst a trend to the right globally is becoming more visible it is important to understand the organisations that are instrumental in working to effect this change. As an important part of this network WikiLeaks believes the documents that show the origins of CitizenGo are an important part of the public record. Wikileaks Editor Kristinn Hrafnsson said: "As ultra right wing political groups have gained strength in latter years with increasing attacks on woman's and LGBTQI+ rights, it is valuable to have access to documents from those who have lobbied for these changes on a global basis. The people have a right to know where political policies are hatched".

As part of WikiLeaks' belief in not only securing the preservation of, but also ease of use of large datasets, we have worked to ensure that not only is this dataset preserved in our library, but that it is also searchable and well organised so that it can be used by everyone.

We have also worked to redact the documents, which included a lot of personal information which was not relevant to the political importance of the data. We are pleased today to add "The Intolerance Network" to our evergrowing online library, and to be adding to all the valuable work on this topic that has preceded us.

decoding 03

The Human Rights Committee, a treaty body at the United Nations Office in Geneva, has adopted a document that would seek to require states to legalize abortion under certain conditions.

This document, known as General Comment No. 36, declares that states "must" provide access to abortion in cases of rape, incest, health of the mother, and when the pregnancy "is not viable."

General Comment No. 36 also calls on states to remove criminal sanctions on abortionists who provide illegal abortions. It calls on states to "remove existing barriers" to abortion and urges them "not introduce new barriers," including "barriers" created by health care workers exercising their right to conscientious objection from being forced to perform an abortion contrary to their moral convictions or religious beliefs.

The Human Rights Committee is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The ICCPR is one of the most widely adopted and highly esteemed international human rights treaties. General Comment No. 36 seeks to reinterpret the 'right to life' in the ICCPR to mean that states "must" provide abortion access under certain conditions. However, the ICCPR never mentions abortion. To the contrary, the ICCPR guarantees the right to life for every human being:

"Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." (ICCPR, art. 6(1)). The ICCPR also recognizes that the life of the unborn child should be protected from the execution of the death penalty:

"Sentence of death ... shall not be carried out on pregnant women."

General Comment No. 36 would seek to turn the 'right to life' on its head by claiming that the 'right to life' means a right to abortion. States are legally bound by international law to observe treaties they have ratified or acceded to. From time to time, the Human Rights Committee will issue General Comments, documents which seek to elucidate how the Committee interprets certain provisions or thematic issues contained in the treaty. General Comments often provide states with what the Committee believes are their obligations under the treaty and provide recommendations for implementing the treaty.

General Comments are not binding on states. States are not required to follow the Human Rights Committee's recommendations on how to implement the ICCPR. Nevertheless, non-binding recommendations offered by the Human Rights Committee often places pressure on states to legalize abortion or to weaken the enforcement of pro-life laws. With the adoption of General Comment No. 36, the Committee and other U.N. entities will be empowered to place significantly more pressure on sovereign states to legalize abortion. General Comments are more authoritative and esteemed documents than statements issued as part of concluding observations on state party reports. General Comment No. 36 is the first General Comment from a U.N. treaty body stipulating that all states "must" legalize abortion under specified circumstances. No prior statement or General Comment issued by a treaty body has been so precise or so widely applicable.

General Comment No. 36 will empower U.N. entities to urge state to legalize abortion under these enumerated circumstances under the false pretenses that states are required to do so under international human rights standards.

The Human Rights Committee's attempt to turn the 'right to life' on its head by claiming that it means a right to abortion must be stopped.

Please sign our petition to tell the Human Rights Committee that abortion is NOT a human right.

materiali 00 - A catastrophic spill.

Oil can suffocate life with its black cloak. Regrettably, this is happening now off the coast of Peru. According to the Peruvian Ministry of the Environment, last Saturday, January 15, around 11,900 oil barrels were spilled and spread throughout the waters along the Peruvian coast, affecting 21 beaches.

The investigations carried out to date indicate that the eruption of the Tonga volcano broke two oil pipelines. The incident occurred when the Italian oil tanker "Mare Doricum" was unloading and transporting crude oil to the Repsol Refinery: La Pampilla, located in the Ventallina district. This town is part of the Province of El Callao, located about 15 km north of Lima, the Peruvian capital. Repsol S.A. is a Spanish oil company based in Madrid with nearly \$50 billion in revenues.

According to its latest report on January 29, the Peruvian Ministry of the Environment's Environmental Assessment and Enforcement Agency (OEFA), says that 11,637 hectares are affected, the equivalent to about 16,390 football fields, and over 1'186.965 M2 of ocean and 1'739.950 M2 of shoreline will be impacted. Unfortunately, those numbers are on the rise. The final impact is far from being consolidated.

Crude oil has also contaminated two crucial Marine Protected Areas: The National Reserve System of Guaneras Islands, Islets and Puntas (512 hectares affected - 7.4% of the total area), and the Ancón Reserved Zone (1,800 affected hectares - 82% of the total area). Both sites are Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) with coastal and marine species depend on them for their survival, a number of which are already on the IUCN Red List, subject to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and/or the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

The oil spill has devastating consequences for the species that depend on healthy ecosystems, such as aquatic mammals, seabirds, fish, crustaceans, mollusks, echinoderms, and plankton. Some components of crude oil, such as aromatic hydrocarbons, can affect the reproduction of animals and cause embryonic malformations, especially in birds, fish, and even turtles, states John Carlos Rivero, Scientific director of Oceana Peru.

In Peru, more than 150 bird species inhabit islets, nature reserves and the coastline and depend on the sea for food and reproduction. Many of these species are threatened with extinction, such as the Inca Terns (*Larosterna inca*), the Little Tern (*Oceanites gracilis*), the Red-legged Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax gaimardi*), the Guanay Cormorant (*Leucocarbo bougainvillii*), Peruvian Pelicans (*Pelecanus thagus*), Peruvian Boobies (*Sula variegata*), and Humboldt Penguins (*Spheniscus humboldti*).

The latter is listed as threatened (VU) in Appendix I of CITES and CMS. This species runs an alarming risk because it cannot fly. More than half of its world population is on the Peruvian coast. The last population census carried out on the coast of Peru in 2017 reflected there are about 13,600 individuals, out of a global total of 23,000.

Although the National Forestry and Wildlife Service of Peru (SERFOR) and the Parque de Las Leyendas Zoo in Lima are doing their best to rescue endangered seabirds with their professional veterinarians and zoo technicians, the magnitude of the crisis exceeds their capacity to respond. Training of additional personnel, additional infrastructure, preventive medicine, antifungals, antibacterials, food, and hydration for the birds are required. Currently, there are no specific numbers on the total mortality of the birds.

The oil spill has devastating consequences for the species that depend on healthy ecosystems. It can affect the reproduction of animals and cause embryonic malformations, especially in birds.

What will happen to local biodiversity?

Experts predict that more than 50 percent of the affected animals have already died or will die. Those that survive the contamination and the harsh cleanup treatments have an uncertain future and desperately require their habitat to be restored and healthy. In addition, as a consequence of their interaction with humans and the physiological and psychological impact of an oil spill, those individuals might not be able to be successfully reintroduced to the wild. It means, at best, that they will live in captivity for life.

What is being done to address this emergency?

Peruvian President Pedro Castillo has declared 90 days of Environmental Emergency to combat the oil spill. Currently, the Peruvian prosecutor's office is investigating the spill as an alleged environmental pollution crime as the responsibility of the refinery, with fines that could reach up to 34.5 million dollars. Furthermore, there is a ban on the departure of the Mare Doricum vessel until the investigations are completed or a bail of 39 million dollars is paid.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that Repsol has been linked to negative impacts on the North Coast of Peru.

- In 2013, Pampilla Refinery was penalized for an oil spill that also occurred in the Mar Ventanilla.
- In 2016, the company was sanctioned with a fine for exceeding the maximum permissible limits of industrial liquid effluents and not monitoring air quality.
- In 2018, Repsol was sanctioned for failing to comply with its environmental management instrument by not monitoring chemical effluents.

Initially, Repsol's official statements before the OEFA argued that it was only a "limited spill" of less than one barrel. Approximately about 0.16 barrels or the equivalent of about 25 liters in the space of 2.5 square meters. This underestimation gravely minimized the overall impact and delayed the company's contingency, remediation, and compensation plan. Worse still, according to the Prime Minister of Peru, Mirtha Vásquez, Repsol provided inaccurate information to the OEFA and did not have a contingency plan for this type of emergency. They publicly stated that they were not "conscious" of the magnitude of the oil spill at the La Pampilla Refinery in Ventanilla until the crude oil reached the beaches of Peru.

The spill is moving northward following the Humboldt Current, threatening seabirds and the livelihoods of communities farther afield that depend on fishing, commerce, gastronomy, and tourism. Peruvians are well known for gastronomy which is considered an intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO, and according to Oxfam Peru expert Miguel Lévano, many fishers continued fishing despite the emergency, and that product reached the markets, putting the health of many people at risk.

There is not yet reliable data of the impact on the communities' economies, or the social, environmental, and health outcomes. Nevertheless, beyond the data, the obvious reality that can already be felt is heart-breaking and alarming, further inflamed by Repsol's announcement that clean-up will cease at the end of February.

Experts predict that more than 50 percent of the affected animals have already died or will die.

#RepsolHasteCargo.

Hundreds of people, from members of NGOs to fishers and local communities have united to demand that Repsol take responsibility for this catastrophe. Although this Spanish company has implemented some containment, remediation, and compensation measures, they are not enough.

BirdLife International demands urgent, concrete, and transparent contingency, remediation, and compensation measures in the face of this Environmental Emergency.

With our partners in Peru and Spain, the Association of Andean Ecosystems (ECOAN) and the Spanish Society of Ornithology (SEO BirdLife), we have sent a formal letter to Repsol requesting the following:

- 1) Repsol assumes its responsibilities in this ecological disaster and immediately makes available the necessary resources to save the fauna and clean up affected coastal and marine ecosystems.
- 2) Work together with the Peruvian authorities and conservation entities to confront this ecological disaster and monitor the oiled fauna to have precise information on the final impact of this accident.
- 3) Immediately create a fund that provides the necessary resources to care for the birds affected by the spill (supporting the authorities -SERFOR, NIMAN- and local entities -Lima Zoo-), as well as to clean up and remove the oil with sufficient security conditions for volunteers and personnel involved.
- 4) Support long-term monitoring of the affected areas to assess the accident's impacts properly. In the case of seabirds, ensure the census and monitoring of the reproduction of the species that breed in the affected area and promote the study of their diet, levels of pollutants, demography, etc., with particular attention to the Humboldt penguin.
- 5) Promote the adequate conservation of the spaces already declared (including feeding areas on the high seas) through the design and execution of a restoration plan for the affected area -to be financed by your company- with the collaboration of the Peruvian authorities and the advice of national and international experts.
- 6) Launch a conscientious, transparent review of all accident contingency plans for all its facilities and activities with technical and scientific guarantees.
- 7) Accelerate the change in its business model to abandon fossil fuels and associated extractive activities as soon as possible.

We firmly believe that the protection and conservation of nature require collective, participatory, and inclusive efforts. Birds and the ecosystems they depend on fulfill ecological roles crucial to our well-being, and we must safeguard their integrity.

Additional tools

LIFE Priority birds

Bird species considered as "Priority for funding under LIFE"

Unlike the Habitats Directive, the Birds Directive does not distinguish between priority and non-priority species. However, for the purposes of LIFE funding, the LIFE Regulation provides a possibility for the Ornithology Committee to adopt a list of bird species considered as priority for funding under the LIFE programme. The current version of that list, agreed by the Ornithology Committee on 28 April 2021, takes into account the most recent available data on status and trends of bird populations in the EU (as reported by Member States to the Commission in 2019).

LIFE projects that focus on practical conservation measures for any of the species or sub-species on the list can benefit from a higher EU co-funding rate, up to 75 %.

Birds don't age like we do

As humans, we're accustomed to using visual hints to guess the age of someone or something. The neighbor's dog with flecks of gray fur and a stiff walk is obviously getting up in years. That huge gnarled tree in the park must have been there for decades.

Birds are different. They don't get gray; they don't become arthritic; they don't get bigger with each passing year; they don't leave growth rings for us to count.

In fact, once most birds develop their adult plumage, they essentially become impossible to age.

How birds are able to accomplish this remarkable feat is not yet fully understood, but it probably has to do with how their bodies process oxygen and the proteins associated with metabolism.

The reality that birds don't show physical signs of aging creates a challenge for understanding how long they live: If we can't age adult birds, how can we study their lifespans?

What we know (and don't know) about the oldest birds in the world.

If you Google "longest-lived bird," you will find multiple claims of birds that lived for over 100 years. Some birds may have even lived to be 120!

Take these claims with a grain of salt.

These records depend on knowing when a bird hatched, a fact we usually do not have if the bird was born in the wild. Also, as with fishing stories, bird fanciers sometimes exaggerate how long their birds live.

According to Guinness World Records, the oldest confirmed bird is "Cookie," a Pink, or Major Mitchell's, Cockatoo that lived to the age of 83 at the Brookfield Zoo near Chicago.

Some birds have almost certainly lived to be older than 83 (hence the upper range of the trivia answer), but for now, we do not yet have definitive confirmation of an avian centenarian.

It is usually difficult to age wild birds

As the claims for the title of "world's oldest bird" demonstrate, accurately aging birds, even in captivity, is challenging. For wild birds, it is even harder. There's the obvious problem that wild birds are difficult to keep track of. In almost all cases, it is impossible to know when exactly an individual bird began or ended its life. Furthermore, animals in the wild lead very different lives from those in captivity and the insights gained from captive individuals may not always be relevant to those in the wild.

Our knowledge of birds' lifespans in the wild comes almost entirely from bird banding. The theory behind this technique is simple: If you catch a bird that has already been banded, you can confirm its age – or at least the time elapsed since it was originally caught.

In practice, though, aging birds from banding is more complicated than it seems. Only a small percentage of banded birds are ever observed again, and if they were adults when they were first banded, their starting age is unknown.

Relatively speaking, birds live a long time.

While there is still a lot to learn about how long birds live in the wild, one thing is clear: Many birds live much longer than we might expect.

Life expectancy in the animal world generally correlates with metabolic rate. In mammals, this is often linked to body size: Big mammals with slower metabolisms generally live longer lives; small ones with faster metabolisms live shorter lives. Humans, for example, live longer than dogs and cats, which live longer than mice and hamsters. (As is often the case with these generalized patterns, there are exceptions.)

Many birds are small and have extremely high metabolic rates. So, we would expect birds to be relatively short-lived. But they aren't.

On the contrary, many birds live an extraordinarily long time, particularly when compared to similar-sized mammals. For example, under ideal conditions in capti-

vity, a House Mouse can live four years. Meanwhile, a Broad-billed Hummingbird (a quarter the size of the mouse) can live up to 14 years in the wild. Barn Swallows have been recorded living 16 years, enough time for these prodigious travelers to have traveled roughly half the distance to the moon during their annual migrations. European Goldfinches can live up to 27 years. Common Ravens are known to have lived 69 years, more than twice as long as the oldest-known dog.

As with their lack of physical aging, we are also still learning how birds are able to live so long with their super-fast metabolisms. The answers may offer clues to understanding aging in our own species.

One important point to keep in mind: Just because birds can live a long time doesn't necessarily mean that all individuals of the species do live that long. Similar to us humans (who have been recorded living to 122), most individuals will have shorter lives than those at the extreme.

For those of us watching birds at our feeders or birding in the field, it will almost always be impossible to accurately age individual wild birds once they are adults. But we can begin to understand which of the bird species around us are likely to be longer (and shorter) lived.

Longer lifespan is often associated with features of a bird's biology and natural history. Here are five characteristics that can help us make an educated guess about which species are likely to be longer-lived:

- Body size. On average, larger species tend to live longer than smaller species.
- Number of chicks. Birds with longer lifespans often have fewer young, while those with shorter lifespans tend to have more.
- Years to reach adulthood. Shorter-lived species tend to reach adulthood more quickly than longer-lived species.
- Life on the ground. Birds that live and nest on the ground have often adapted for shorter lifespans than those that live higher up, such as in the shelter of the tree canopy.
- Island life. Birds that live and nest on islands are often longer-lived than their mainland counterparts.

Keeping these insights in mind, which do you think lives longer: A Wild Turkey or a Red-tailed Hawk?

To get started, here are a few basic facts: Turkeys are larger than Red-tails (up to 24 lbs. versus vs. 2.8 lbs.), have substantially more chicks (up to 17 eggs versus up to five eggs), reach adulthood more quickly (one year versus three years), and live on the ground.

If you chose the Red-tailed Hawk, you're right. Red-tails have been recorded living up to 30 years, while the oldest recorded Wild Turkey was 15 years old.

In addition to these biological and ecological features, there is another factor that often predicts how long a bird species is known to live: How much people have studied it. In general, birds that have been better studied are more likely to have records of long-lived individuals. Given how difficult it is to age birds, this makes sense. It also shows how much there still is to learn about how long many bird species can live.

Longevity records for some familiar North American birds in the wild (based on banding data from the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Bird Banding Laboratory). To see more records, take a look at our expanded wild bird longevity graph.

Ecologist Rodrigo Medellín has been fascinated with bats since he was young, even keeping them in his bathroom when he was growing up.

These days, Medellín has been tracking the migration of the lesser long-nosed bat across Mexico. The species is critical to the production of tequila because they pollinate the plants the drink is made from.

Right now there are seven brands of tequila and three brands of mezcal that are recognized as bat-friendly, Medellín says. That means the manufacturers allow at least 5% of their agave plants to flower, so bats can visit and feed from those flowers.

To help with their conservation, Medellín learns all he can about their migration.

When Medellín follows the bats, he does it armed with a glowing ultraviolet powder. He coats the bats with the harmless dust, which they lick off and digest. By following glowing bat droppings, Medellín can trace how far the bats have flown.

Treehugger: Where did your fascination with bats start?

Rodrigo Medellín: I was 12 or 13 years old when my first bat came into my hands. At the time I had been already helping at the mammal department of UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico] and people kept telling me how amazing bats were and I realized how unfairly treated they were.

So of course when I got my first bat in my hand (I distinctly remember, a Waterhouse leaf-nosed bat, *Macrotus waterhousii*) I was trembling with emotion at how incredibly amazing its ears were, its noseleaf, its little claws, its astonishing soft, pliable wings were, and its silky, beautiful fur was.

The combination of mystery (hardly anyone knew anything about bats back then), fascination (sooo many interesting features to it), and unfair treatment they represented made me decide right there and then, in the middle of the Cañon del Zopilote in the state of Guerrero, to just continue learning and defending bats for the rest of my life.

What was your trek like, following the lesser long-nosed bat?

My journey following the lesser long-nosed bats' migration has been fun, surprising, amusing, educational, and rewarding. Starting with getting to know them in southern Mexico in a cave, and then beginning to uncover their migration, their biology, and their conservation needs, I started by mapping the caves and other roosts known at the time.

Then the Smithsonian and Fish and Wildlife Service's invitation to join the team to assess their status, through Don Wilson, at the time curator of mammals at the Smithsonian, and a mentor and friend throughout and to this day, put me front and center to really dig into the bats' conservation needs and biological mysteries.

We succeeded in listing them in the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and the Mexican equivalent, NOM-059. Right after that happened, I began working with my team to educate the tequila industry about the need to protect these bats, and we assembled a recovery plan.

We produced educational materials, developed management plans for caves, worked with the Mexican government to protect their caves in protected areas, all this while scouting and scouring the country north, south, east, west to identify and map the most important roosts. Then we devised the technology to census and monitor these roosts... another challenge.

Then after most of the priority caves had been surveyed and their future secured by educating the local people, their populations began stabilizing or growing. The moment of removal from the Mexican Federal List of Endangered Species was a most rewarding and happy moment of my life. We threw a party (lots of tequila, of course), and the media took this good news and propagated the wave of success and happiness. My team was sooooo happy!

And then only a couple of years later we launched the Bat Friendly Tequila and Mezcal Program. This program continues to grow and the bats continue to recover! What is not to enjoy, to like, to celebrate! A dream come true! Nothing less!

Why is this species so important?

This bat embodies everything good about bats: They are so incredibly personable, nice, decent, polite, and of course crucial, that every person who has been with me in the field catching them gets convinced about loving bats for the rest of their lives. They rarely attempt to bite, they often come into the nets completely covered in pollen, with big, bright eyes, trying to get away but still not trying to harm you in any way.

And this character is behind the amazing landscapes of the Sonoran deserts and more because they pollinate columnar cacti? And on top they also pollinate agaves from which tequila and mezcal come? What did we human beings ever do to deserve such an amazing species living here in Mexico?

How do you use the UV dust coating to follow a bat's journey?

We first sprinkled the bats that were emerging from the cave with yellow-glowing ultraviolet fluorescent powder by standing on top of the mouth of the cave and shaking kitchen colanders on the emerging bats. Then I had two other teams, one 40 km north of the cave and another 50 km northeast of the cave, waiting for the bats to visit cactus flowers.

My students had instructions to shine a fluorescent powder lamp on the bats while they were still in the nets to check for yellow glowing powder. That would demonstrate that they were coming from the cave.

Then they would put the body of the bats in a Ziploc bag, leaving the head out to avoid interfering with their senses, and smear them with orange glowing fluorescent powder (at 40 km) and blue-glowing (at 50) powder.

The next night I entered the cave with a UV light to look for blue-glowing and orange-glowing bat feces. And we found that too! Confirmed!

Why is it key to learn their migration patterns?

Thanks to using the UV powder, we now know that these bats can fly 100 km or more in one night along their migratory route. That simplifies our ongoing search for the stepping-stone caves that they use along their migratory route, and that also helped us understand their loyalty to the cave where they have their babies. These bats came back again and again!

What have you learned and what are the next steps?

We now know about the incredible flight power these bats have. We know a lot more about their migratory movements, and we also know a lot about how they use the landscape and their flowering plants.

Next year we will attach tiny miniature GPS trackers that will help us solve the biggest question of all: We will be able to follow their entire migratory route in detail! The height over the ground that they fly, whether they use stream beds, canyons, mountain sides, or mountain crests to migrate, whether they fly solo or in groups, whether they migrate night after night consistently or they take breaks along the way, why and where.

Why do males not migrate? Why do only about half of the females migrate? Can a female that was born in the migratory segment of the population switch to non-migratory and vice versa? And how is it that they are able to conduct those great, long-distance flights, powered only with sugar water? So many questions!

Bird banding, or bird ringing, is essential to effective bird conservation. The banding of millions of birds annually worldwide contributes greatly to the study of birds' habits that can lead to a greater understanding of their needs. With that information, conservation efforts can be better focused to help keep birds safe, healthy, and thriving.

BANDING

What Is Bird Banding?

Bird banding is the process of attaching a small metal or plastic band or tag around a bird's leg in order to identify individual birds from the band's unique number. Banding has been used for centuries, with the first bands being used on falconry birds or other captive birds so they could be identified and returned if they were stolen or strayed from their owners. Today, millions of wild birds are banded around the world each year.

Types of Bird Bands

There are several different types of bands used on different bird species. Bands can be metal or plastic, and the unique identification number of each band may be etched or engraved onto the band. Some bands are brightly colored so they can be read at a distance without disturbing the birds. More detailed bands may have informational codes that identify where and when the bird was first banded. Some countries and banding organizations use bands that have the address of the relevant conservation organization right on the band.

Bands commonly used on birds include:

- Butt-End Bands: These bands clamp closed with blunt ends. This is the most common type of band and is suitable for most bird species, including passerines, ducks, and hummingbirds.
- Lock-On Bands: These bands have small flanges that will be bent over one another when the band is affixed to the bird's leg so it cannot be pried open. This type of band is most commonly used on small and medium-sized birds of prey, such as kestrels or small hawks, that may work to bend or pry a ring off.
- Rivet Bands: These bands are riveted closed and are impossible to pry open. These strong bands are typically placed on large birds of prey such as eagles, whose powerful bills may remove or destroy less secure bands.

In addition to leg bands, some birds, such as geese or swans, can wear identification collars. Wing clips can also be used on large raptors, such as California condors. Both of these types of identification tags are useful for noting the bands at a distance without disturbing the birds. Collars, for example, are easily visible on swimming, long-necked waterfowl, while large wing clips can be read while birds are in flight as well as perched.

Regardless of the type of band used, they do not hurt the birds. The bands have no sharp edges, and they are carefully sized so they will not be tight enough to cramp or pinch the bird in any way. At the same time, the band is not loose enough to slip off or snag on any twigs or other materials. Bird bands are made from nontoxic materials and are lightweight enough so the birds are largely unaware of wearing them.

How Birds Are Banded

Many types of birds are banded, including migratory songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and birds of prey. Endangered birds are frequently banded, as are any birds in sensitive areas where conservation study is needed.

Birds can be banded in several ways. In some cases, birds are banded after they have been entered into a wildlife rehabilitation facility because of illness or injury. Some birds, particularly birds of prey, may be temporarily captured from a nest in order to be banded. Bird banding stations are often set up during fall migration at migratory hotspots where birds, especially birds just hatched a few weeks or months earlier, may be caught in mist nets.

When a bird is caught, trained volunteers handle it carefully to avoid stressing or injuring the bird. The band is affixed to the proper leg, and depending on the species, the bird may be measured and weighed as well. The wingspan may be noted, and the bird can be examined for any signs of illness or injury, as well as to determine the gender if possible. All this information can be valuable for conservation studies.

What We Learn From Banded Birds

While the process of banding birds is informational as individual birds are studied, the real use of bird banding comes from recovering or recapturing previously banded birds. Hunters and birders may report sightings of banded birds, and roughly five percent of banded birds are eventually caught during another ban-

ding session and can be identified by their bands. Correlating the data that was initially gathered on the bird compared to when it is recovered can provide information on:

- Migration: Tracking banded birds can show migratory flyways and where birds may detour along a migration route, as well as when they migrate.
- Bird Ranges: If banded birds are captured in two completely different areas, it can help define where their different ranges are, or note if their ranges are shifting. This can be critical for protecting necessary habitats for breeding or wintering birds.
- Longevity: Recapturing birds can give conservationists an idea of the birds' ages based on when they were first banded. This can show how populations are being sustained in different areas, and can offer clues about different species' survival rates.
- Behavior: After a bird has been banded, it may be able to be identified by passive observation if that band is read in the field. This can give ornithologists the opportunity to study the bird's behavior when feeding, mating, nesting, or engaging in other activities.

Bird banding is a non-invasive, long-term method of observing and studying birds without interfering with their natural behavior. This practice provides conservationists and ornithologists with vital information to protect critical bird habitats and pass other conservation measures so birding will always be available to enjoy.

materiali 00 / Birds and people: from conflict to co-existence

The current research focused on the issues related to human-bird conflicts and subsequent alternatives adopted by the migratory birds at Uppalapadu Lake (India). The study collates the information from field observations and literature surveys and draws conclusions based on the observation data. The study highlights the ways the local community, Forest Department, activist groups and other organizations participate in protecting the birds from harm. It also focuses on some of the management initiatives taken by the Forest Department that are helping the birds during their breeding periods. Overall, the research identifies the ecological importance of the lake with respect to birds and stresses the need for its protection and further expansion.

Wetlands are important aquatic ecosystems that provide services in the form of provision of water for various human uses, groundwater recharge, support of aquatic biodiversity, and are the location of various recreational activities [1-3.] These wetlands act as critical breeding sites for different species of birds within India and overseas [4.] Many migratory birds visit water bodies (lakes, ponds, etc.) to lay eggs and raise their young and go back to their place once the young chicks are able to fly. Tourists are attracted to wetlands to see the birds. In turn, local people earn income from the tourism [5.] The primary needs of the birds during their breeding period are to have suitable habitat to lay their eggs (generally some kind of trees or shrubs) and a food source. For breeding to be successful, birds require minimal human disturbance and no other threats from humans [6, 7.]

Human activities, however, are deteriorating wetland water quality. The main sources of pollution of Indian wetlands are discharges from industries and urban sewage systems [8, 9.] Once these pollutants enter into the birds' bodies, they

impair their basic physiological processes and hamper their metabolic activities, which can result in the death of the animals [10, 11.] The same impacts occur to both resident and migratory birds [12-16.] Migratory birds are affected by the deteriorated quality of food and water, which is especially harmful during the breeding period. Local people often threaten these migratory birds with their activities, precluding the possibility that the birds will return to the wetlands [17-20.] Given the aforementioned problems, we have chosen Uppalapadu Lake (India) as the location of a case study which will highlight the issues related to human and bird interactions. The study primarily addresses (i) reasons for the alternative habitat selection and adaptation by birds at Uppalapadu, (ii) resource limitation and water quality deterioration, and (iii) conservation initiatives and management activities undertaken by local people, the Forest Department, and activist groups to protect and retain the population of avian fauna for future generations.

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Parents often conflict over how much care to provide to their offspring. This conflict is expected to produce a negative relationship between male and female parental care, the strength of which may be mediated by both ecological and life-history variables. Previous studies have observed such trade-offs, but it is not known how generally they occur. Traditional views of sexual conflict place great importance on ecological factors in determining levels of parental care, whereas alternative views propose that the key determinant is mating opportunity. We carried out a broad-scale comparative study of parental conflict using 193 species from 41 families of birds. Using phylogenetic comparative analysis, we establish the generality of intersexual parental care conflict. We also show that parental conflict, as indicated by the disparity in care between the male and the female, depends on offspring development and mating opportunities, since in precocial species both males and females responded to increased mating opportunities. Altricial birds, however, failed to show these relationships. We also found little influence of breeding climate on parental conflict. Taken together, our results suggest that sexual conflict is a key element in the evolution of parental care systems. They also support the view that the major correlates of the intersexual conflict are mating opportunities for both sexes, rather than the breeding environment.

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