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Race and crime. A late nineteenth century Italian debate

ABSTRACT: At the end of the nineteenth century, in Italy, a lively dispute about the relationship between racial belonging and crime tendency started up. The book of Alfredo Niceforo *La delinquenza in Sardegna* can be considered at the origin of this bitter controversy. According to Niceforo, whose scientific approach was of Lombrosian matrix, the high number of crimes committed on the island (as well as in the whole of Southern Italy) could be traced to racial factors. The hypothesis of a connection between race and criminality met with numerous showings of approval and few criticisms, at that time. After all, this racist thesis could be used by the Italian ruling class, between the nineteenth and twentieth century, as an instrument to govern the territorial complexity of a country that had only recently achieved political unity.

KEYWORDS: racist theories, history of criminal law, history of criminology

Some years ago, the Northern Irish psychiatrist Richard Lynn, analysing the results of the INVALSI text (given to the Italian students at the end of every school year), arrived at the conclusion that Southern Italians are less intelligent than Northern Italians because of a genetic medley with the peoples of the Middle East and the North Africa¹. Lynn's thesis, of course, gave raise to a bitter dispute. The ready retort of Roberto Cubelli, President of the *Italian Association of Psychology*, wanted to stigmatized not only the theoretical and methodological limits of the research, but also the ethical ones. In fact, the pinpointing of a close correlation between bio-genetic features and scholastic progress (disregarding the influence of social, political and economic factors) can offer – asserted Cubelli in his press release – some legitimizations to individual behaviors or political choices of a racist kind or of social discrimination².

Actually, Lynn's research is not the first one on this subject. It places itself in the long tradition of a series of studies aiming at demonstrating, by “scientific” arguments, the diversity and the inferiority of the Southern Italian peoples in comparison with the Northern Italians.

If we wanted to trace the source of this attempt to ground scientifically the anti-southerner prejudice in Italy, we should go back to the course of history of about a century. In fact, in the decades that followed Italian Unity, increased studies and publications that highlighted the existence of an almost unbridgeable gap between the degree of civilization reached by Northern and Southern Italy. A gap that originated, for several authors, not only from cultural, economic and social grounds, but also

¹ R. Lynn, *In Italy, north-south differences in IQ predict differences in income, education, infant mortality, stature, and literacy*, in “Intelligence”, 38, 2010, pp. 93-100, http://www.iperbole.bologna.it/iperbole/adi/XoopsAdi/uploads/PDdownloads/richard_lynn_north_south_differences_in_iq.pdf

² Roberto Cubelli's press release appeared in, *AIP smentisce lo psicologo Richard Lynn “minore intelligenza italiani del sud dovuta a alla mescolanza genetica con genti Africa”*, “LSWN”, 8/2/2010 http://www.lswn.it/comunicati/stampa/2010/aip_smentisce_lo_psicologo_richard_lynn_minore_intelligenza_italiani_sud_dovuta_alla_mescolanza_genetica

from a very definite racial difference that would have hindered, if not totally blocked, any attempt to build a real process of national unification.

To avoid misunderstandings it is necessary to say, in these preliminary remarks, that the intention of this article is not to go over the historical itinerary of such research again. It will limit itself to analyze those studies that tried to stress, between nineteenth and twentieth century, the existence of a causal relationship between the racial belonging of a person and his criminal tendencies. In the last pages of this paper I will try to evidence the reasons of the importance of such a subject. For the moment I would like to begin with the polemical confrontation that flared out in Italy, since the last decades of nineteenth century, about the topic “race and criminality”. A fight in which took part famous scientists and eminent figures of the Italian public life.

1. Alfredo Niceforo and the delinquency in Sardinia

In 1897 Italy, a book about delinquency in Sardinia written by a young researcher, Alfredo Niceforo³, was published. The author, who was in his early twenties, went to the island on behalf of the *Italian Geographical Society* and the *Roman Society of Anthropology*. He travelled with another young researcher, Paolo Orano, whose name achieved rather a high level of fame, in the following years⁴.

So the book was not destined to anonymity and this is testified, if nothing else, by the preface written by Enrico Ferri, the founding father (with Cesare Lombroso and Raffaele Garofalo) of the *Positive school of penal law*. Ferri, who praised the work of his pupil without reservation, was at that time one of the most well-known Italian jurists.

The goal of Niceforo's research, in general, was to pinpoint in the racial category of the peoples that lived in Sardinia, the reason for such a high contribution of the island to the number of crimes committed in Italy as a whole.

We can not say that the problems raised by Niceforo were absolutely original. The racial topic was a subject that interested the scientific community of the end of the nineteenth century⁵. Cesare Lombroso, in 1871, that is five years before the publication of *L'uomo delinquente*, printed a work entitled *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore*⁶ in which he tried to explain the origins of racial differences. Analogously, the study of the various races that lived in Italy had been started by several authors, including the anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi⁷. After all, also the idea that tendency towards crime differed according to the racial category had been already expressed. Lombroso

³ A. Niceforo, *La delinquenza in Sardegna. Note di sociologia criminale*, Palermo, 1897.

⁴ Before the publication of the book, several articles of Niceforo about his journey in Sardinia came out. Some of them had been written with Orano. On this subject see E. Ferri, *Prefazione* to A. Niceforo, *La delinquenza in Sardegna*, cit. p. 15, note 1.

⁵ And not only in Italy, as writes M. Gibson, *Nati per il crimine. Cesare Lombroso e le origini della criminologia biologica*, Milano, 2004, pp. 136 ff. (or. ed. *Born to crime: Cesare Lombroso and the Origins of Biological Criminology*, Westport CT, London, 2002).

⁶ C. Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore. Letture su l'origine e la varietà delle razze umane*, Torino, 1892.

⁷ G. Sergi, *Varietà umane. Principio e metodo di classificazione*, Torino, 1893. About the different scientific approach of Sergi and Niceforo see G. Riccardo, *L'antropologia positivista italiana e il problema del banditismo in Sardegna. Qualche nota di riflessione*, in A. Burgio (edit.) *In nome della razza*, Bologna, 1999.

himself did not omit to point out, in the various editions of his *L'uomo delinquente*⁸, the *atavistic* origin (category used by Lombroso, in the beginning, to describe the born criminal as a savage who had grown in a civilized country) of some phenomena like the mafia, the camorra and brigandage, operating in this way as a kind of “biologisation” of the social sphere⁹.

So, the peculiarity of Niceforo's book consisted in putting in order a disjointed series of considerations into a systematic work, emphasizing, maybe for the first time in such an explicit and argued way, the link between race and atavism. Niceforo, taking part in the controversy around the different races that populated the Italian State, pointed out the relationship between the racial grouping and tendency towards crime, that is to say the relationship between biological data and behavioral data.

The crescendo of Niceforo is actually noteworthy, from this point of view. The author started from the analysis of a particular zone of Sardinia, the Nuorese, called a *criminal zone* because of the very high number of crimes committed in its area¹⁰. Then, he pinpointed the cause of this peculiarity as a standstill of the civilization process that affected the peoples living in these areas (a kind of social atavism)¹¹. Finally, he extended his remarks to the rest of the island. «We believe – wrote Niceforo – that the anthropological influence of the human varieties that constitute the Sardinian population bears a crucial weight on the specific criminality of the island (theft-murder-armed robbery); both in the *criminal zone* and outside of it»¹². In fact, the belonging of the Sardinian people to the *Mediterranean* race, made it more prone to crime (unlike peoples of the *Celtic* race, surely less bellicose and bloodthirsty). Obviously, this remark brought Niceforo to extend his conclusions to the whole of Southern Italy, and this fact will appear evident in his two following books given over to the subject of the race, that is *L'Italia barbara contemporanea*¹³ and *Italiani del Nord e Italiani del Sud*¹⁴.

2. The debate on the “damned race” between (few) criticisms and (a lot of) approvals

Niceforo's book aroused great interest in Italy and precious few negative reactions, though his arguments were of Lombrosian matrix. However, if the idea of the born criminal conditioned by the atavistic reversion found a lot of detractors, on the contrary the hypothesis of a racial hierarchy, scientifically founded (even in relation

⁸ The book of Cesare Lombroso, *L'uomo delinquente*, had five editions in Italian: from the first one printed by the publishers Hoepli in the 1876, to the fifth (very increased and published in three volumes and an iconographic atlas) printed by the Fratelli Bocca Editori, between the 1896 and the 1897.

⁹ D. Frigessi, *Cesare Lombroso*, Torino, 2003, p. 368 and, by the same author, *La scienza della devianza*, in D. Frigessi, F. Giancanelli and L. Mangoni (edit.), *Cesare Lombroso. Delitto Genio Follia. Scritti scelti*, Torino, 1995, pp. 351-352.

¹⁰ A. Niceforo, *La delinquenza in Sardegna*, cit., p. 29.

¹¹ Ivi, pp. 48 ff.

¹² Ivi, p. 90.

¹³ A. Niceforo, *L'Italia barbara contemporanea. Studi e appunti*, Milano-Palermo, 1898.

¹⁴ A. Niceforo, *Italiani del Nord e italiani del Sud*, Torino, 1901.

with tendency towards crime), met with more approval than criticism¹⁵.

Among the few authors that criticized unconditionally Niceforo's ideas there was, certainly, Napoleone Colajanni (but also important figures like Vilfredo Pareto¹⁶ and Gaetano Mosca¹⁷ will show more than a doubt or two regarding the relationship between race and crime). In an article destined for fame, and entitled *Per la razza maledetta*¹⁸, Colajanni not only showed all the scientific and methodological deficiencies of the Niceforo research, but evidenced how the idea of racial inferiority could be used (as happened in the case of the colonial conquests) for taking wealth and resources away from some territories and transferring them to others¹⁹. To the same conclusions will arrive, a little later, Antonio Gramsci, who will highlight the historical function that the biological conception of "barbarism" of the southern peoples had had in the politics of the Italian ruling class²⁰.

In any case, the criticisms of Colajanni to Niceforo's writings were concentrated on the most evident contradictions of the racial theories. First of all, the confusion about the concept of race and the classification itself of the races that populated the Italian State. Every author proposed his own classification, with variants that often were indicated without justifying, from a scientific point of view, their distinguishing traits²¹. Secondly, craniological observation (on the basis of which the main racial diversities were grounded) could have, at most, a simple classifying value. So, it was impossible to think that the conformation of the skull could play a role in the tendency towards the crime of a person²².

According to Colajanni, the reasons that influenced the crime rate in some Italian areas, on the contrary, were reasons of a social or financial nature and not biological-racial. The issue has been held by Colajanni in other writings (in particular in *La delinquenza in Sicilia e le sue cause*²³). Actually, Niceforo himself had addressed his attention to the miserable circumstances of Sardinia. His book was partially given over to the economic problems of the island. The socialist ideas shown by the young Sicilian criminologist supported this direction of his analysis; but when he arrived to the point, when he could establish which was the most important factor that pushed a person to commit more crimes in a certain area compared with another, he did not

¹⁵ M. Gibson, *Nati per il crimine*, cit., p. 160.

¹⁶ V. Pareto, *L'uomo delinquente di Cesare Lombroso*, in "Giornale degli economisti", November 1896, pp. 449-454 and June 1897, pp. 502-506, now in *Écrits sociologiques mineurs*, edited by G. Busino, Genève, 1980.

¹⁷ G. Mosca, *Elementi di economia politica*, in *Scritti politici*, edited by Giorgio Sola, Torino, II, 1982, p. 556, or. ed. Torino, 1896.

¹⁸ N. Colajanni, *Per la razza maledetta*, Palermo, 1898. An extract of the work appeared before in "Rivista Popolare", III (1897), pp. 102-107.

¹⁹ N. Colajanni, *Per la razza maledetta*, cit., p. 2.

²⁰ A. Gramsci, *Quaderni dal carcere*, IV ed., Torino, 1975, p. 2482. Gramsci harshly criticized the Socialist Italian Party for the credit given, at that time, to figures like Lombroso, Ferri, Niceforo and Sergi (the same protagonists as this dispute on the Italian races), whose political ideas were, according Gramsci, very ambiguous. On this point see D. Frigessi, *Cesare Lombroso*, cit., p. 381.

²¹ On this point see M. Gibson, *Nati per il crimine*, cit., p. 174.

²² N. Colajanni, *Per la razza maledetta*, cit., pp.17-18.

²³ N. Colajanni, *La delinquenza in Sicilia e le sue cause*, Palermo, 1885.

omit to assign the highest value to the racial component²⁴.

Lombroso promptly took his pupil's side. He did so by an article published in the "Corriere della Sera" of 29 October 1897. Entitled *Razza e criminalità*, it was a defense without reservation of Niceforo's thesis (who will provide to his self-defense by an article brought in the newspaper "La Stampa" of 28 April 1898, entitled *La razza maledetta*). Certainly, Niceforo's ideas disavowed a previous conviction of the Veronese psychiatrist, namely the fact that in Sardinia, for racial factors, the tendency towards crime was lower in comparison with other southern Regions²⁵. But the thing seemed of little value; in fact, what interested Lombroso was the conviction, in his opinion scientifically validated by Niceforo, that race and crime were connected by a causal relationship. In confirmation of that, added Lombroso, we could take the blacks of America, whose propensity to crime was higher than that of the immigrants belonging to every other ethnic group. If the financial situations had been decisive, asserted the Veronese psychiatrist, since Italians, Irish and blacks were in the same social status, they would have committed, more or less, the same percentage of crimes.

3. Gennaro Mondaini and the peculiarity of the Italian racial debate of the end of the nineteenth century

If Lombroso had waited a while, he would have read, the following year, Gennaro Mondaini's book on *La questione dei negri nella storia e nella società nord-Americana*²⁶. Book in which the author asserted that *Afro-American* or *colored* people (terms that Mondaini preferred since it was considered more politically correct, as we say nowadays) had just been freed from slavery, and this fact made them, an absolutely particular people in the wide and fragmented social composition of the country, even with regard to the tendency to crime.

Even if Mondaini's book can not be fully inserted among those given over to Italian races, it stresses how in Italy, at the end of nineteenth century, the debate on the races was eminently concentrated on the observation of the situation of the Peninsula. In fact, this work is the first one that intervenes on an issue that in other European countries already had a wide literature. But Italy had difficulty in building a colonial Empire, and so it "scientifically" faced the problem of African races, even on the criminological plane, only when the colonial question appeared with the traits of the urgent up-to-dateness²⁷.

Gennaro Mondaini became, in following years, one of the more expert Italian scholars of colonial questions. At the time of the publication of the book, he was a

²⁴ This ambivalent position was typical of Lombroso and his School. However the militancy of most of these authors in the ranks of the Socialist Party left open rooms of reflection about the issue of the appalling social and economic conditions of the southern populations. Nevertheless, the most important thing, as stresses Delia Frigessi, is the fact that Lombroso (and the scholars that followed his theories) was read and considered, both by his contemporaries and during the nineteenth century, like the pre-eminent supporter of the close link between race and crime (D. Frigessi, *Cesare Lombroso*, cit., p. 378).

²⁵ M. Gibson, *Nati per il crimine*, cit., p. 148.

²⁶ G. Mondaini, *La questione dei negri nella storia e nella società nord-Americana*, Torino, 1898.

²⁷ M. Gibson, *Nati per il crimine*, cit., p. 140.

young socialist. Later he joined to the fascist movement, following the same path of a lot of the authors previously quoted. In any case, Mondaini saw the only workable solution of the *Negro problem* in the United States of America in racial integration. The psychiatrist Enrico Morselli, in the preface of the book, will take a totally different position. Morselli, though he appreciated the overall framework of the book, criticized its conclusions. Racial integration, in this case, was not a desirable perspective. To leave to Afro-Americans the institutions and the politics of the United States would have been like giving the leadership of a big country to young adolescent boys, to whom the *colored* races could be likened. The gap of civilization, of culture, of anthropological potentialities between whites and blacks were too marked and absolutely unbridgeable on the evolutionary plane²⁸.

Mondaini writes in a crucial year, for Italian history, 1898. A year of intense political and social tensions. But it is also a year in which a lot of works on the issue of the Italian races is published. Niceforo's book *L'Italia barbara contemporanea*²⁹ comes out; Colajanni's pamphlets *Per la razza maledetta*³⁰ and *Settentrionali e meridionali*³¹; Giuseppe Sergi's book *Arii ed italici*³²; and sent into print again, but with some significant modifications, is the diary of Lombroso *Tre mesi in Calabria*³³, republished with the title *In Calabria*³⁴.

4. Criminal Calabria

The republication of *In Calabria* by Lombroso is quite an interesting publishing operation. The two books, that of 1863 and that of 1898, for the most part are identical. But the few modifications made by Lombroso to the second edition of his book change its main inspiration. The considerations developed by Lombroso in the 1863 edition are still those of a young medical officer steeped in patriotic spirit. The description of the backwardness of the region seems in any case to leave open, to the horizon, the possibility that the process of national unification can trigger a virtuous

²⁸ E. Morselli, *Prefazione* to G. Mondaini, *La questione dei negri nella storia e nella società nord-Americana*, cit., pp. XXII-XXV. To a little more than a century of distance, in the 2007, the molecular biologist James Watson, one of the discoverers of DNA, asserted that the African peoples have a different intelligence in comparison with other races. This position raised some strong polemical reactions that forced Watson himself to come back on his statements in a self-critical way (*Clamorosa teoria del pioniere del DNA: "I neri sono meno intelligenti dei bianchi"*, in "la Repubblica.it", 17 October 2007, http://www.repubblica.it/2007/10/sezioni/scienza_e_tecnologia/james-watson/james-watson/james-watson.html; *Dopo le frasi razziste Watson chiede scusa: "Ma come ho fatto a dire certe sciocchezze?"* in "la Repubblica.it", 19 October 2007, http://www.repubblica.it/2007/10/sezioni/scienza_e_tecnologia/james-watson/watson-mortificato/watson-mortificato.html).

²⁹ A. Niceforo, *L'Italia barbara contemporanea*, cit.

³⁰ N. Colajanni, *Per la razza maledetta*, cit.

³¹ N. Colajanni, *Settentrionali e Meridionali: agli italiani del Mezzogiorno*, Milano-Palermo, 1898.

³² G. Sergi, *Arii ed italici: attorno all'Italia preistorica*, Torino, 1898.

³³ C. Lombroso, *Tre mesi in Calabria*, Torino, 1863.

³⁴ C. Lombroso, *In Calabria. 1862-1897*, Soveria Mannelli, 2009 (or. ed. *In Calabria 1862-1897. Studii con aggiunte del dr. Giuseppe Pelaggi*, Catania, 1898).

cycle of growth even for such an underdeveloped region³⁵. In the work of 1898, this trust seems by now blurred by the data given by the author that seem to show how the problems, within a quarter of a century, have not been resolved at all. On the contrary, to the old problems were added the new ones, connected to the process of national unification. Analysis of the judicial statistics, that shows a constant growth of the criminal rate within the Region, brings Lombroso to link the criminal behavior of the Calabrian population more and more to its racial origins. As regards also the writings of the now socialist Cesare Lombroso, there is no missing the account of a series of social injustices that beset those territories, it seems that for him, as for Niceforo, race (so, a factor hard to modify) represents the main cause of the high criminal rate in the Region.

The controversy regarding race and criminality continued in the following years. The year after, 1899, Antonio Renda initiated an extensive survey concerning the *southern problem*, addressing numerous Italian scientists, politicians and intellectuals some questions on the condition of Southern Italy. Replying to these answers, all the authors in the previous year's debate reasserted their own point of view³⁶.

The issue came up again on the occasion of one of most spectacular criminal cases of the beginning of the twentieth century, that is the trial held against the Calabrian brigand Giuseppe Musolino³⁷. Maybe the last real Italian brigand, even if, admittedly, the phenomenon of brigandage, as Italy had known it following national unification, was, by then, completely finished several years previously. In any case, within the Musolino trial, in the pages of the psychiatric examinations written by the defense and the prosecution, were two positions that, even if they were given life by the same scientific milieu, they met with a different degree of approval among the ruling class and the public opinion of the country (including magistrates).

The former, that position of the defense, drawn up of eminent figures of Italian psychiatry like: the professors Leonardo Bianchi and Mariano Patrizi³⁸, affirmed the epileptic condition of the brigand and demanded the reduction of the sentence owing to his limited mental capacity. The latter, drawn up by the prosecution, made up of equally famous psychiatrists like: Enrico Morselli and Sante De Sanctis³⁹, considered the ethnic belonging to be the main factor of Musolino's behavior. This position, even if it considered the social and home environment as an important factor of the tendency towards crime, it did not diminish the criminal liability of the defendant at all⁴⁰.

³⁵ On this issue see D. Frigessi, *Cesare Lombroso*, cit., p. 373 and C. Petraccone, *Le due civiltà. Settentrionali e meridionali nella storia d'Italia*, Roma-Bari, 2000, pp. 153-156. About the disenchantment that followed the Italian unification see V. Teti, *La razza maledetta. Origini del pregiudizio antimeridionale in Italia*, Roma, 1993, pp. 11 ff.

³⁶ A. Renda, *La questione meridionale. Inchiesta*, Milano-Palermo, 1900.

³⁷ On Musolino's trial see S.F. Inglese, M. Bologna, *Re d'Aspromonte. Imperatore del Cosmo: Il Caso Giuseppe Musolino*, in "Dedalus", IV (1991) 6, pp. 9-45.

³⁸ M.L. Patrizi, *Fisiologia di un bandito (Musolino)*, Torino, 1904.

³⁹ E. Morselli, S. De Sanctis, *Biografia di un bandito. Giuseppe Musolino di fronte alla psichiatria e alla sociologia*, Milano, 1903.

⁴⁰ S. F. Inglese, *Razza tellurica, razza criminale: il «carattere» calabrese nella mitografia scientifica della prima metà del Novecento*, in "Dedalus", III (1990), p. 123.

In conclusion, this second point of view will prevail. But then again, the idea given by Lombroso of the inhabitants of Calabria as persons prone to crime will soon be used by the magistrates to justify their own repressive interventions. After all, the “culpability” of a whole Region, without facing the issue of individual liability, seemed a good argument to use in the courtrooms as well as not relaxing the repressive action exerted against the population of some territories considered to be of high-risk for the collective security⁴¹.

Regarding Lombroso. The Veronese psychiatrist too wrote two articles on Musolino, more or less similar, one published in the “Archivio di psichiatria”⁴² and the other in the “Nuova Antologia”⁴³. Lombroso, to whom a photograph had been sufficient to make a full anthropological diagnosis of the brigand, considered Musolino a born criminal (even if he was halfway between a real criminal and a *criminaloid*) and the epileptic fits that affected him was the clearest evidence of this. In these two writings, there was no missing (particularly in the latter) references to the racial factors of the bandit’s behavior. Musolino – wrote Lombroso – belongs to the «Calabrian race». Race characterized, in some zones of the Region, «by a really lower level of a moral sense» and for whom «revenge is considered a right».

5. Criminal races and national building

In any case, beyond these different points of view, we can not deny that the Lombrosian idea of a born criminal was used, by the Italian ruling class at that time (but the consideration could be extended to all the principal European countries), to spot a minority of the population that should have represented a kind of “shadow” of the virtuous citizen. A negative figure that helped, by contrast, to pinpoint the reasons of the racial category and the features of “normal” citizens⁴⁴. After all, Lombroso had sensed that the enemies of the new State were not only those that brought its foundations into dispute, like the anarchists, but also the common criminals, like thieves and prostitutes, that represented a short of defiance to nation building and to the creation of a single homogeneous population. Criminal *atavism* was an obstacle toward the modernization process of every State⁴⁵.

For some recently formed countries, like Italy, the problem assumed even a different and new aspect. In fact, in this case it was necessary to build a national character and identity, starting from extremely fragmented political and historical experiences and, in many ways, different⁴⁶. Thirty-five years ago, in a really interesting

⁴¹ Regarding this see A. Papparazzo, *I subalterni calabresi tra rimpianto e trasgressione. La Calabria dal brigantaggio post-unitario all’età giolittiana*, Milano, 1984, p. 125, and S. F. Inglese, *Razza tellurica, razza criminale*, cit., p.120.

⁴² C. Lombroso, *Giuseppe Musolino*, in “Archivio di psichiatria”, XXII (1902), pp. 1-10.

⁴³ C. Lombroso, *L’ultimo brigante – Giuseppe Musolino*, in “Nuova Antologia”, 1st February 1902, 97, pp. 508-516.

⁴⁴ On this point see: O. Bosc, *La foule criminelle. Politique et criminalité dans l’Europe du tournant du XIX^e siècle*, Paris, 2007, pp. 61 ff. and D. Pick, *Faces of degeneration a European disorder, c. 1848-c. 1918*, Cambridge, 1989, p. 109 (It. tran. *Volti della degenerazione, una sindrome europea 1848-1918*, Firenze, 1999).

⁴⁵ M. Gibson, *Nati per il crimine*, cit., p. XVI.

⁴⁶ Interesting considerations on the use made of the Lombrosian criminology in the building of the

essay, entitled *Nazione e lavoro. Saggio sulla cultura borghese in Italia 1870-1925*⁴⁷, Silvio Lanaro, among other things, reconstructed the “narration” that the intellectuals and the Italian ruling class, after national unification, developed in order to define the features of the new Italian citizen, for giving him the traits of uniformity and modernity. By “narration” I mean, more or less, what Colajanni meant when, talking about Niceforo’s book on criminal Sardinia, defined it an «anthropological novel». That is to say, a story presented as an objective description of reality, but that implies, on the contrary, a plot strongly oriented (perhaps even unconsciously) on the plane of the goals they wish to attain.

The subject of the Southern race, meant as a criminal race, after all, negatively represents what the novel *Cuore* by Edmondo De Amicis or *Testa* by Paolo Mantegazza (only giving two quotations in literature) try to do in a positive light⁴⁸. Lombrosian criminology, from this point of view, beyond its scientific claims, was a true *political science*⁴⁹, able to help the liberal State in making out and using the complex territorial and social composition of the country; not least because the liberal ideology showed a limit of understanding regarding these operations. In this perspective, the real target of criminal anthropology was the building and the consolidation of the national State. A State that needed forms of knowledge which are able to include or exclude from the political project persons, groups and even whole populations. The redefinition of the economic, social and political set-up of the Italian State demanded the support of a knowledge that was capable of justifying certain choices on the basis of supposed scientific truths. Faced with industrial processes, transfer of resources and populations of impressive dimensions, criminal anthropology offered a well-organized proposal of conduct of the complexity. Impoverished and rebel masses, regions lacking development could be ruled through well structured repressive policy that aimed to separate the criminal man or the criminal territory from the good citizen or from the hard-working region. After all, it is truly from this division and re-composition of the social fabric that the rhetoric of the building of a positive national identity will be defined in the end

nation-state in Italy and in the United States of America are developed by J. Simon, *Positively Punitive: How the Inventor of Scientific Criminology Who Died at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century Continues to Haunt American Crime Control et the beginning of the Twenty-first*, in “Texas Law Review”, (2005/2006), 84, pp. 2135-2172.

⁴⁷ S. Lanaro, *Nazione e Lavoro. Saggio sulla cultura borghese in Italia 1870-1925*, Venezia, 1980.

⁴⁸ The year after the publication of Edmondo De Amicis novel *Cuore*, brought out the book of Paolo Mantegazza, *Testa* (who dedicated his book just to Edmondo De Amicis). Mantegazza did not want to oppose his pedagogic theories, grounded on the reason, to that one of De Amicis, grounded on the feeling; he wanted, at the contrary, to propose an educational project in which reason and feeling coexisted and integrated, contributing to fit the Italian citizen and worker of the rising generations.

⁴⁹ On this issue see O. Bosc, *La foule criminelle. Politique et criminalité dans l'Europe du tournant du XIX^e siècle*, cit., pp. 8-9 e 198 ff.