

*Željka Matijašević*

## **THE NEW AUTHORITARIANISM IN ITS HOMOPHOBIC FORM: CROATIA 2013**

### Introduction

In the first part of this article I will analyze and put forward the link between authoritarianism and narcissism in order to show that what can be termed “new authoritarianism” is intimately linked to the narcissistic personality structure. This new authoritarianism is on the rise worldwide, but I will refer to the case of the new authoritarianism rising in the Republic of Croatia, a former communist state, a post-transitional society, but also a post-war society.

My contention is that the explanation of this “new type” of authoritarianism has already been described in the works of the authors of the Frankfurt School. It is beyond doubt that the Frankfurt School analyses were related and applied to the cases of fascism and Nazism which the members of the School witnessed historically, and thus, their insights should be regarded as related to totalitarian regimes. I will sketch briefly from the beginning the difference between the old and new authoritarianism, their structural distinctions, which is grounded in my reading of the difference between Freud’s work on group psychology and Adorno’s article on fascist propaganda. In the first section of the article, I will pay particular attention to Adorno’s article on fascist propaganda as this article represents a very clear articulation of the foundation of authoritarian behaviour in narcissism.

While the old authoritarianism relies on the figure on the father, the new one is related to narcissism and its catastrophic consequences. In this sense, Freud’s narcissism of minor differences appears to be the most fruitful concept in the consideration of the new authoritarianism, and this is fully corroborated by Adorno’s article, and, to a lesser extent, by Horkheimer’s account of the relation between authority and family. Can we

explain this difference as the move from the Oedipal structure to a pre-Oedipal structure?

In the second part of the paper, I will analyze the case of the homophobic referendum, held in Croatia in 2013, to show how homophobia, as an offshoot of authoritarian behaviour, relies heavily on the narcissistic disposition. In this sense, the new authoritarianism in Croatia should also be related to the ongoing process of the narcissistic ethnic structuring which commenced in the late eighties and which culminated in the nineties as “narcissism of minor differences”, and the latter is still dangerously operative in Croatian society. I will relate in this article to the current state of affairs as I perceive that the homophobic referendum in Croatia held in 2013 has to be inserted into the maddening process of minor differences being the factor of divide.

The results obtained in the research which was undertaken by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, in May 2013, clearly show how the gay population and the Serb population are the victims of harsh discrimination. The sample consisted of 1500 respondents between the age of 14 and 27. A high level of intolerance and discrimination was detected in the attitude towards the Serbs: only 7 percent of the respondents would have a Serb for a marital partner, and only 15 percent would accept them as neighbors. The attitude towards the gay population indicates that 40 percent of the respondents would not want them as neighbors. The higher level of discrimination was manifested only in relation to the Roma people: 70 percent of the respondents would not allow them to live in Croatia. (<http://akuzativ.com teme/399-autoritarna-licnost>)

## Psychoanalysis and authoritarianism in the works of the Frankfurt School authors

For Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse late capitalism is related to the individual as a social atom and not the family as the main agency of the society; it is the move from repressive familiarism to narcissistic individualism, as the child identifies not with the father, but with the repressive social instances. As Peter Dews suggests, the id and the super-ego collaborate, and the result of that collaboration is a “subjectless subject” (Dews 1987: 227), in Adorno’s words. The consequence is “the malleable narcissistic personality” (Dews 1995: 58), the individuals who are, on the surface, well adjusted, but internally very cold, prone to the adoration of power and masochistic submission. For Adorno, the breaking down of the barrier between the ego and the id implies the weakening of the ego, and in the mass culture society, the individuals are susceptible to the identification of narcissistic type,

towards the identification with totalitarian leaders by which primitive defence mechanisms come to the fore, such as projection. For Adorno, narcissism is strictly opposed to Oedipal internalization, and it clearly represents the inability to gain the status of the autonomous subject, as the society triumphs over the individual.

It has to be mentioned that there are two aspects of relating narcissism as clinical and social or cultural phenomenon (Diamond 2004). The first side is represented by Adorno, Horkheimer, Adorno, and Lasch with their negative views on narcissism related to Otto F. Kernberg's clinical view of narcissism as highly destructive, as a false concept of the self created for the sake of primary integration, and, therefore, pathology-laden. The other side is represented by Marcuse and Aaronowitz who point at the emancipatory potential of narcissism, related to Kohut's clinical view that puts forward healthy narcissism, and implies that healthy and pathological narcissism are related to parallel developmental processes. This positive view of narcissism resonates well with Marcuse's hypothesis in *Eros and civilization* where Prometheus, as embodying repression, i.e. the surplus-repression, is juxtaposed to Narcissus and Orpheus who represent the evasion of repression.

Before analyzing more closely the origin and the causes of authoritarianism in the work of the Frankfurt School authors, I will relate to Freud's "narcissism of minor differences", as I consider that narcissism is at the root of the new authoritarianism, and in this sense, Freud's concept represents a necessary passage towards Adorno's theses, perhaps even more than Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. In his article "The Dread of Sameness" Karl Figlio considers the narcissism of minor differences precisely in relation to the ethnic conflict in former Yugoslavia, which is rooted in the creation of the ethnic identity, and the conflict is related to the creation, not to the consequence of difference. Figlio summarizes Jeffrey Murer's account of ethnic hatred in Bosnia as the Dayton accord has created three identities—Serb, Croat, and Muslim.

"They are ethnic groups, not political parties in a nation, and they act as ego ideals. Any erosion of identity constitutes a rift between ego and ego ideal, an absolute loss that sparks violence in order to demonstrate belonging by defending the group ego ideal. Murer has identified a certain comfort in holding to the conviction that these differences are immutable and antagonistic, and can only be mitigated by quelling them. This conviction maintains a fragile equilibrium, but the more similar are these identities, the more they threaten to dissolve into each other, the more easily disturbed is the equilibrium, and the more readily they turn to violence to rebuild their differences." (Figlio 2012: 9)

The quoted passage clearly demonstrates that the analyses of ethnic hatred oscillate between relating it to a group identity and the group ego ideal on one hand, and the idea

that there is a latent fear of the loss of identity, ethnic identity, the fear which only solidifies that very identity, on the other hand. In my analysis of the homophobic Croatian referendum I will interpret homophobia as an offshoot of authoritarian behaviour, while nationalism is still its most salient form. However, both discriminatory attitudes are related, in my view, to the fear of losing one's own self, of merging with the other, and, in this respect, the defence mechanisms build up and magnify minor differences as the sole strategy of defining/creating the ego/identity, be it sexual or ethnic.

Before approaching the relation of narcissism to authoritarianism, what has to be mentioned in the discussion on authoritarianism are Reich's analyses in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, and the emphasis he places on the identification with "the little Hitler", which Adorno calls "the little great man". Wilhelm Reich in the most important chapter of his book, "The Race Theory" sets up the parameters of the production of totalitarian ideology and its relation to the unconscious, by enumerating the most significant mechanisms of Nazi ideology which can be considered as the pattern of most totalitarian ideologies: the purity of race and blood threatened by bastardization; the paranoid-megalomaniac discourse about the mission bestowed upon the higher race by the Creator; the identification with the little great man, "the little Hitler". In the subchapter "Nationalistic self-confidence" Reich suggests that the nationalist leader is the embodiment of the nation, but that he also represents the father figure, which is the reason why he can be ideologically operative, because he activates those fears which were active in relation to a protective and domineering father.

Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* is an extremely revealing work where one-dimensionality overlaps with the docile, obedient subject, and it is defined as comfortable slavery, harmless negation, and the closure of the political universe and critical thinking – as repressive de-sublimation. Marcuse repeats Adorno's attack on the notion of an integrated personality, or the structured ego. In contemporary society, he argues, the possibility of genuine individualism is practically nil. "Freud destroys the illusion of the idealistic ethics: the personality is but a broken individual who has internalized and successfully utilized repression and aggression" (Jay 1996: 109).

Early studies on authority by the Frankfurt school (*Studien über Autorität und Familie*, 1936), and the initial section which comprises the three essays written respectively by Adorno, Fromm, and Horkheimer, reveal that fascist ideology and the shaping of the authoritarian personality are to be found in the family as the main agency of the reproduction of authoritarian personalities. Although the Frankfurt School authors have, later on, produced independent works in which authoritarianism is considered, the works

such as Fromm's *Escape from Freedom*, and Adorno's *Authoritarian Personality*, Martin Jay is of an opinion that *die Studien* represent the best material on authority ever produced by the Frankfurt School, and that in the analysis of Nazism these authors explored with great interest "the psychosocial mechanisms of obedience and sources of violence" (Jay 1996: 166).

Far from dismissing the concept of authority as such, the Frankfurt School authors see the authority in its rational form as valid and legitimate: the authority of reason, as opposed to its irrational forms, or, rather, the reduction of rationality to its instrumental dimension:

"Critical Theory's holistic, syncretic outlook prevented it from developing a theory of specifically political authority. To do so would imply a fetishization of politics as something apart from the social totality... More than once they attacked the anarchists for their impatience. Until a true social transformation occurred, they stressed the necessity of rational authority similar to that exercised by an educator over his pupils." (Jay 1996: 118-120)

Fromm, in his analyses of authority, attempted to integrate the historical causes with psychosexual concepts derived largely from Freud. Anticipating his later argument in *Escape from Freedom*, he offered the sadomasochistic character as the epitome of the authoritarian personality. Fromm concluded his essay by discussing the types of reactions against authority, by making a distinction between rebellions and revolutions, as rebellions are pseudo-liberations in which the individual was really seeking a new irrational authority while, on the surface, allegedly discarding any figure of authority. "The resentful anarchist and the rigid authoritarian were thus not as far apart as they might appear at the first glance." (Jay 1996: 129)

Adorno in his "Freudian theory and the pattern of fascist propaganda" defines what will be articulated and meticulously analyzed in his later work (Adorno 1993) as the authoritarian personality, the new anthropological type, where Adorno implies that hierarchical wishes are in complete keeping with the wishes of the sadomasochistic character, and he quotes Hitler's 'famous' formula: "responsibility towards above, authority towards below" (Adorno 1991: 123). The most important thing about Adorno's essay is that he departs, in my opinion, significantly from Freud's theses, although he claims that his own insights were already anticipated in Freud. Thus, he commences his article with a short overview of Gustave Le Bon's *Psychology of Crowds* published in 1895, to continue with Freud's analyses in *The Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, where Freud clearly places the emphasis on the libidinal bonds which hold a mass together, and on the figure of the leader-father.

Freud does not put into question Le Bon's well-known account of masses as being largely deindividuated, irrational, easily influenced, prone to violent action and altogether of regressive nature, but asks an important question: What makes masses into the masses?, to continue with the investigation of the psychological force which transforms individuals into a mass (Adorno 1991: 116-117). The bond which holds together the members of a mass is of libidinal nature, and the gratification is obtained from surrendering to a mass. Another important issue in Freud's work is that he does not consider those who become submerged in masses as primitive men but as displaying primitive attitudes contradictory to their normal rational behaviour (Adorno 1991: 117). Asking the question about the mechanisms which transform primary sexual energy into feelings which hold masses together, Freud's main answer is regression, which is viewed as a primary mechanism; it is the regressive path from the level of the individual to the level of a mass.

However, as I consider that Freud's and Adorno's respective interpretations differ significantly in the role and the meaning of the father, i.e. the leader, I will quote Freud's famous paragraph:

“The uncanny and coercive characteristics of group formation, which are shown in the phenomena of suggestion that accompany them, may therefore with justice be traced back to the fact of their origin from the primal horde. The leader of the group is still the dreaded primal father: the group still wishes to be governed by unrestricted force; it has an extreme passion for authority: in Le Bon's phrase, it has a thirst for obedience. The primal father is the group ideal, which governs the ego in the place of the ego ideal.” (Freud 1991: 160)

Adorno acknowledges that the personalization of fascist propaganda is effective because only the psychological image of the leader “is apt to reanimate the idea of the all-powerful and threatening primal father” (Adorno 1991: 119), suggesting that a great part of Freud's book is devoted to the analysis of identification, and that the problem of identification should be subjected to closer scrutiny. “It has been observed by several authors that the specifically fascist leader type does not seem to be a father figure such as for instance the king of former times.” Adorno contends that precisely the role of the father and the identification with that figure should be re-examined although he states that “this inconsistency is superficial” (Adorno 1991: 120), by which he means that a different interpretation of identification should still bring the argument about the father-leader back to Freud, in the sense in which Freud's “discussion of identification may well help us to understand, in terms of subjective dynamics, certain changes which are actually due to objective, historical conditions” (Adorno 1991: 120).

Although Adorno attempts to relate his analysis of fascism as still being grounded in Freud's father figure, I think that his interpretation departs significantly from Freud, and his novel approach helps us indeed to establish Adorno's analysis as a corollary and a pattern for all subsequent forms of totalitarianism, while his analyses are being applied to fascism. Thus, the main import of Adorno's brilliant essay is in establishing the frame for our contemporary examination of the formation of the authoritarian personality. This main difference is evident in the emphasis which Adorno places "on the pre-oedipal component of identification which helps to bring about the separation of the leader image as that of an all-powerful primal father, from the actual father image" (Adorno 1991: 120).

The second difference is expressed in Adorno's view that "the child's identification with his father as an answer to the Oedipus complex is only a secondary phenomenon", by which he clearly points to infantile regression which may go „beyond this father image and through an anaclitic process reach a more archaic one" (Adorno 1991: 120).

Although Adorno claims that the reasons for rectifying Freud's theses are historical, I would rather connect them to the difference in the personality structure, or the way the personality structure was explained in Freud's era, and then, in Adorno's era. Whitebook suggests that "as opposed to the ideal-typical 'classical patient'... who suffered from oedipal-level neurotic pathology – for example, obsessions, hysteria, phobias, and inhibitions... a new type of patient has been appearing in the consulting room with increasing regularity. This patient typically suffers from pre-oedipal, narcissistic and borderline character disorders – often centering on problems in separation-individuation and the coherence of the self" (Whitebook 1995: 139-140).

At this point it would be helpful to draw a similarity, or rather a difference between Lacan's approach, and those of the Frankfurt School authors. In his article "The Crisis of Oedipal Identity: The Early Lacan and the Frankfurt School" (1995), Peter Dews suggests that Lacan's first articles such as "The Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual" from 1938 still display historical and sociological perspectives, and that the mentioned article represents an account of the crisis of the nuclear, Oedipal family. In this respect, Lacan's later, allegedly transcendental model of the symbolic order could be considered as an answer to a specific historical crisis (Dews 1995, 54-55). In his work *Lacan: The Absolute Master* (1990) Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen (1990: 270) suggests that Lacan simply closes the problem opened in "The Family Complexes" by transforming the Oedipus complex into a transcendental structure, while, however, being fully conscious that the Oedipal norm no longer corresponds to the dominant processes of the formation of the individual.

Dews (1995: 60) considers that the specific virtue of Oedipal identity is compressed in the twofold role of the same sex parent who is the factor of sexual prohibition and the very example of its transgression (Lacan 1938: 95). The ambivalent fatherly injunction: “Be like me, and do not be like me” comes to be resolved in Lacan’s writings through a clear differentiation of various instances, the super-ego, the ego ideal and the ideal ego. In his first seminar from 1953, in the chapter “The ideal ego and the ego ideal” (1975: 149-164), Lacan says that the ego ideal formulated by Freud determines all those patterns which direct our symbolic relation towards the authority figure. While the level of the Imaginary determines our ideal ego, in the sense that it establishes who we want to appear likeable to, the level of the Symbolic is related to our ego ideal in the sense of the symbolic point from which we observe ourselves as likeable to ourselves. In simpler terms, I look up to my ideal ego and wish to become like it, because it is a narcissistic self-image which has been determined by the ego ideal, the internalized point of paternal injunction: “Be like that and you shall be liked/loved by me”.

Dews’ comment on the difference between Horkheimer and Lacan exemplifies the difference between Lacan, and Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse altogether. For Horkheimer, the crisis of individuation happens when the bureaucratization of capitalist economy removes the need for individual creativity, judgment and conscience, while for Lacan the process of individuation as such represents a problem. Dews suggest how Lacan describes the condition in which the Oedipus complex is no longer functional, and that we are witnessing the birth of narcissistic personalities, considering how Lacan is one of the first thinkers who discovered the narcissistic deviation of libido, while maintaining that the Oedipal formation is necessary for transference (Lacan 1938: 98).

I have made this excursus into Dews' article on Lacan and the Frankfurt School in order to show that, although Adorno pinpoints historical reasons of his revision of Freud, I am of an opinion that his reasons clearly tackle the problems of individuation and separation, and, therefore, the importance he attaches to narcissism as the core of authoritarianism is much more evident. Precisely by merging narcissism and authoritarianism, Adorno establishes his analysis as most relevant, as the contemporary self cannot be explained without recourse to narcissism, and its multiple and various forms.

Adorno emphasizes the pre-oedipal level of identification and the key role of narcissism in the identification with the leader because by magnifying himself via the image of the leader, and by making the leader his ideal, the subject loves himself, but narcissistically aggrandized, at the same time freeing himself of those frustrations which are related to the real self: “The primitively narcissistic aspect of identification as an act of

devouring, of making the beloved object part of oneself, may provide us with a clue to the fact that the modern leader image sometimes seems to be the enlargement of the subject's own personality, a collective projection of himself, rather than the image of the father" (Adorno 1991: 121).

It is even possible to explain the shift from Freud to Adorno in terms of the shift from the father towards his obedient sons, or, rather, from the image of the leader towards the image of those who obey to him, and the processes through which they form their pledge of allegiance. In this respect, with this shift of emphasis, projective processes are deemed important insofar as they describe the path of desire which leads from the subject to the leader. The question of the essential bond between totalitarianism and the unconscious has acquired a new dimension: it is no longer an issue of defining and profiling the totalitarian leader, but rather the issue of analyzing the susceptibility to authoritarianism via the identification with the figure of the leader. This susceptibility to authoritarian behaviour is precisely the main objective of Adorno's later work, written with his associates, *The Authoritarian Personality*, where Adorno even sets up a scale, which has been, for good reason, extensively criticized, to measure the potential for non-democratic, authoritarian attitudes.

Adorno analyzes the process of identification through which the subjects identify themselves with the leader, that "great little man": "While appearing as a superman, the leader must at the same time work the miracle of appearing as an average person just as Hitler posed as a composite of King Kong and suburban barber", while the leader is a person who suggests "both omnipotence and the idea that he is just one of the folks", and thus, the leader's image "gratifies the follower's twofold wish to submit to authority and to be the authority himself" (Adorno 1991: 121). The leader is little enough to enhance identification, and great, big enough, in psychopathic and megalomaniacal fashion to take over, by proxy, the fulfilment of unconscious desires of every fearful subject. As Adorno says, the leader can guess the psychological wants and desires of those susceptible to his propaganda because he resembles them, "and he is distinguished from them by a capacity to express without inhibitions what is latent in them, rather than by any intrinsic superiority" (Adorno 1991: 127).

In the following paragraph Adorno suggests that his analysis is anticipated in Freud's theory, although the identificatory processes he puts forward differ significantly from Freud's insights: "Even the fascist leader's startling symptoms of inferiority, his resemblance to ham actors and asocial psychopaths, is thus anticipated in Freud's theory. For the sake of those parts of the follower's narcissistic libido which have not been thrown

into the leader image but remain attached to the follower's own ego, the superman must still resemble the follower and appear as his enlargement” (Adorno 1991: 122).

In Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s *Dialectics of Enlightenment* authoritarianism can be viewed through the lenses of conformism and the complete annihilation of the individual. The principle of self-preservation which culminates in the choice between survival and destruction is related to the bourgeois fear of losing oneself. Odysseus is the prototype of the bourgeois individual, he loses himself in order to find himself, he is a wandering self, annihilating himself in order to preserve himself, and his cunning is a mere cunning of instrumental reason. “With his cunning, Odysseus attempts to elude mythical fate and achieve mastery over nature by rationally calculating the renunciation of his own internal nature” (Whitebook, 1995: 146), while the promise of 'happiness' is equated with the prospect of ego loss and merger. Commenting on Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Peter Dews suggests that for Adorno “the archaic features of the unconscious suggest the ever-present possibility of regression” (Dews 1987: 141).

In the chapter “Synthesis as Violence: Lacan and Adorno on the Ego” (1995) Joel Whitebook suggests that Lacan and Adorno advance the same three interconnected theses: “1. the unity of the ego as such is rigidified, compulsory, and coercive; 2. the ego is a narcissistic (or paranoid) structure insofar as it can apprehend the object only in terms of its own reflection (or projections); 3. The rigidly integrated ego is deeply implicated in the will to power and the domination of nature” (Whitebook 1995: 133). By clearly placing the problem of the ego as central to Adorno’s approach, Whitebook suggests that, for Adorno, what remains in the totally administered world is „the exaggerated empty appearance of individuality in the standardized form of ‘self-expression’ afforded by consumerism and the ‘personalities’ of the culture industry” (Whitebook 1995: 138).

For Horkheimer, in his seminal essay “The Authority and the Family” the authoritarian shaping of the individual is strictly related to the nuclear family, and the result of paternal education are individuals who always blame themselves, while *la petite bourgeoisie* manifests cruelty and the masochistic impulse to submit to any form of authority, and the gratification consists in the impulse of submission. It is precisely this reified concept of authority which Horkheimer applies to the political leader in the authoritarian state, while authority is for him a basic category for understanding the world.

Investigating the individual mechanisms which operate in shaping the authority-oriented character within the family, Horkheimer singles out the lack of independence, the deep sense of inferiority, the centering of the child’s psychic life around the ideas of order and subordination, considering that the concepts of repression and sublimation as the

outcomes of the conflict with social reality have contributed to a great extent to any understanding of the shaping of the individual.

“For the formation of the authority-oriented character it is especially decisive that the children should learn, under pressure from the father, not to trace every failure back to its social causes but to remain at the level of the individual... The human types which prevail today are not educated to get to the roots of things, and they mistake appearance for substance... The outcome of such paternal education is men who without ado seek the fault in themselves.” (Horkheimer 2002: 108-109)

Horkheimer’s essay reveals also a certain cynical nostalgia towards strong paternal figures, and I think that both Horkheimer and Marcuse, the latter particularly in his article “The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man”, share an opinion that the existence of strong paternal figures enables the development of the ego, and that the ego is formed through a necessary conflict with paternal figures. With the historical loss of such figures, the ego results as underdeveloped, shattered, weak, undifferentiated. It is evident that neither Marcuse nor Horkheimer envisage the negative side of the conflict with a strong paternal figure, which can also result in a totally shattered ego, completely disabled to enter into any form of a conflict, or fearing the conflictual itself.

From this perspective, what is articulated in Adorno’s essay is that authoritarian ideologies operate so ‘successfully’ because the defence mechanisms that they offer correspond to the principal defence mechanisms operative in narcissism, and authoritarian ideologies act ‘salutary’ upon the fears behind narcissism: the fear that our ego will dissolve and merge into sameness, the fear of the loss of psychic integrity. The central thesis of Otto F. Kernberg in *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* is that the coherence of the pathological narcissistic self compensates for the lack of the normal structure of the self, as the primary integration has the purpose of holding the self together, in the fashion of the false self. And this false, weakened, undeveloped self represents the perfect ground for the ‘recruitment’ of authoritarian personalities, as the narcissistic self, which has not undergone a proper separation nor individuation, is always at a risk of merging itself with the authoritarian object/objects, of losing oneself in omnipotent authoritarian otherness.

## The case of the homophobic referendum in Croatia

A conservative organisation called *In the Name of the Family* in 2013 presented its plan to gather signatures calling for “the marriage referendum” which will amend, in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the definition of marriage as a union between a woman and a man. The voters were asked the question: “Are you in favour of the con-

stitution of the Republic of Croatia being amended with a provision stating that marriage is matrimony between a woman and a man?” The initiative was supported by the conservative political parties and the Catholic Church. On June 14th 2013, the mentioned organisation presented to the Croatian parliament the list containing 749.316 signatures of Croatian citizens; 710.000 Croatian citizens signed the petition in two weeks alone. The referendum was held on December 1st 2013, and its results were the following: 65.87 percent voted for the amendment, and 33.51 voted against it.

Among bigger towns, Pula in Istria had the highest percentage of the votes against the amendment – 63.64 percent, while one of the most homophobic towns, according to the polls, is the town of Kaštela in Dalmatia, ninth by size, with 86,19 of those who voted for. The analysis of all areas showed that the conservative vote was the highest where there is a larger population of low educated and illiterate people, especially in the mainland of Dalmatia. Vice versa, the counties and towns with the highest percentage of educated population had a high percentage of the vote against, such as Primorje-Gorski kotar county with Rijeka as its center and Istria county with Pula as its center. Split, the center of southern Dalmatia voted with 68.13 percent for. Overall, all the bigger towns along the Adriatic coast, with the exclusion of Rijeka and the towns in Istria county, that is, Zadar, Šibenik, Split and Dubrovnik had very high percentages of “for” votes.

The referendum on the constitutional definition of marriage was held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013, and Croatian citizens had to declare themselves and vote if they wanted that the definition of marriage from the existing Family Law be introduced in the Constitution, marriage as a union between a man and a woman. As the results were 65.87 percent for, and 33.51 percent against, the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia has now been “enriched” with the definition of marriage as “a union between a man and a woman”.

The sad and alarming thing, among many others, is that this was the third referendum that Croatia has witnessed since its establishment. While the two previous referendums were held because of highly important issues, the first held in 1991 about the declaration of independence, and the second in 2013 about joining the EU, it is obvious that this referendum certainly had nothing to do with crucial national interests. This was the first referendum which was held on the basis of the petition and collected signatures of Croatian citizens.

This referendum can be considered as the inception, surely not solely a symbolic one, of what was to follow in the past two and a half years, to reach its peak after the general election held in November in 2015 when the right-wing coalition formed a very unsta-

ble government as none political party had enough mandates to form the government. The mentioned government was dissolved in June 2016, and Croatia is awaiting a new general election in September 2016. The eight months of that government will be remembered for an extreme speeding up of the following undemocratic processes: historical revisionism related to the Ustasha regime, to the Independent State of Croatia, a fascist puppet state during the World War II; historical revisionism related to the Holocaust; a serious blow to the left-oriented media, to the NGOs, as well as to civil and human rights.

So, what is the sinister importance that I will attribute to this referendum which came as a striking shock to democratically oriented citizens, and why was it perceived as such a blow to all democratic processes that Croatia has been striving towards since 2000?

The referendum was aimed to redefine, or, rather, to add a restriction to the definition of marriage, so that “gay marriages” should not be even mentioned publicly as they are unconstitutional. A paragraph from the article entitled “Three extremely important historical implications of the marriage referendum in Croatia” deserves to be quoted:

“Two years have passed since the first referendum initiated by its citizens alone. The referendum on marriage held on the first Sunday of Advent, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 by its outcome has presented a shock to very loud advocators of the same sex and it has silenced their “cultural revolution”, the strategic aim of which has been to impose institutionally, on Croatian society, “gender ideology” and so-called gay marriages. The two-thirds majority, 66 percent of citizens who voted at the Advent referendum decided that marriage be constitutionally protected as a union between a man and a woman. Today, one doesn’t have to be a prophet in order to grasp the epochal implications of this referendum and its long-term importance. The Irish case, as a reverse mirror image of the Croatian situation (where 62 percent voted diametrically opposed to 66 percent of Croats) shows how far sighted has been the civil initiative *In the Name of the Family*. Ireland shocked us by its unexpected liberalism, as much as Croatia shocked the progressivists with its “conservatism”. The Western domino effect did not happen in our country, and while the West, as a rule, has bowed before gender ideology and has institutionalized the same-sex union as if it were its cultural identity card, and not an immense historical discontinuity and a precedent, Croatia has locked and constitutionally put the cipher lock for further intrusion of gender ideology.”

This pathetic text written by one Zoran Vukman appeared on the official site of the organization *In the Name of the Family*, whose site is dedicated mostly to texts and comments of the same tenor. (<http://uimeobitelji.net/zoran-vukman-koje-su-tri-iznimno-bitne-povijesne-implikacije-referenduma-o-braku-u-hrvatskoj/#more-2816>).

In his article “The Dread of Sameness”, Karl Figlio convincingly argues that the antipathy of the narcissism of minor differences “does not arise as a consequence of dif-

ference, but in creation of difference. The problem is not managing difference, but managing the endogenous unease in human society” (Figlio 2012: 8). In this respect, he takes as an example the Freudian articulation of the difference between male and female, “the disjunction between conscious perception of difference, and the unconscious phantasy of sameness that provokes hatred” (Figlio 2012: 10). As Figlio suggests, it was precisely on this difference as a sign of castration that Freud based the concept of the narcissism of minor differences. “We don’t detect the differences in the other, then hate that other for these differences. Instead, we create other as a psychic reality” (Figlio 2012: 18). “The manifest differences between male and female are a matter of indifference; the virtual differences are immensely important. The sight of the female genital confirms the reality of castration only within a fantasy of castration. In this psychic reality, the issue is not the observation that a woman has no penis, but the fantasy that she has been castrated” (Figlio 2012: 19).

We can also explain this homophobic referendum and the urge to define marriage as a union between male and female as an urge to establish sexual difference as the main difference, which does not have only sexual value. For Freud, the psychic consequences of sexual difference are castration anxiety, and castration anxiety can also be interpreted as a fear of psychic and mental disintegration, the fear of the loss of the integrity of the physical self, and, therefore, as an offshoot of the death drive.

But we can also view sexual difference as the fact where our capacities for either the dread of otherness or the toleration of otherness come to be tested. Is our reaction to the perception of the anatomic difference between the sexes multifaceted, as it is a difference anatomically so striking that, in our psychic reality, we have to respond to it, we cannot stay neutral? So, if this is an epitome of difference as such, what are the possible answers: I hate the fact that the other is not like me, and that everyone is not like me; therefore, everybody should be like me. This narcissistic request for sameness then operates in the area of sexual differences, and it manifests itself as the devaluation of the other sex. Our capacity for difference can be easily thwarted at the age of three and it silently operates until it comes to its belligerent phase, as is the case of those who bless the union of a man and a woman and ostracize the union between two men or two women.

The second possible answer is that this homophobic referendum suggests that any group identity, and in this case we are talking about religious, right-wing, pro-life, anti-gay groups, as harbinger of group psychology is immune to any form of individual psychology. In this respect, the homophobic group identity is formed in the fashion similar to the ethnic group identity. The group identity is built exclusively on the difference from

the other group which is perceived as an enemy to one's own group identity, and that group is demonized through projective identification. The group identity reposes on a set of differences which, if removed, would ravage the identity as such. On the other hand, the differences, when they point at sameness, are most fearful as they threaten the very identity of every member of the group. In this respect, the group should fight with all possible means the process of de-differentiation.

The referendum in Croatia is precisely the case of a desperate attempt to fight as a member of the group for the group identity, as well as one's own identity. If the line between male and female is not strong, if marriage is at a risk of becoming a union between two men or two women, what fears does that provoke within the group? The fear of losing the identity operates behind every discriminatory policy, and this referendum triggered the later events in Croatia as well as harsh polarizations which should be as clear as distinct as those between the Sun and the Moon, in words of one of the members of the Croatian parliament: "Men and women are attracted to each other as the Sun attracts the Moon."

From this perspective the relation of narcissism to homophobia, the fear of sameness, rather than heterophobia as the fear of difference, explains the narcissistic structure which builds up protective walls in order to ensure a false coherent self, built around the fear, and around the wish to protect oneself from the disintegration into oneness, into sameness, into non-differentiation. In this respect, the narcissist, lacking the internal structure, and fearful of chaotic drives and impulses, literally craves to be structured by someone else, craves to be shaped outwardly, and that shaping can have multiple discriminatory forms for all existing others.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ADORNO, THEODOR W. (1991): Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda. In: *The Culture Industry*, ed. J. M. Bernstein, London: Routledge.
- ADORNO, THEODOR W. ET AL. (1993): *The Authoritarian Personality (Studies in Prejudice)*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- ADORNO, THEODOR W., & HORKHEIMER, MAX (1995): *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.
- ADORNO THEODOR W., HORKHEIMER, MAX, & FROMM, ERICH (1936): *Studien über Autorität und Familie. Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialforschung*. Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan.
- BORCH-JACOBSEN, MIKKEL (1991): *Lacan: The Absolute Master*. Stanford University Press.

- DEWS, PETER (1987): *Logics of Disintegration: Poststructuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*. London: Verso.
- DEWS, PETER (1995): The Crisis of Oedipal Identity: The Early Lacan and the Frankfurt School. In: *Psychoanalysis in Contexts: Paths between Theory and Modern Culture*, eds. Elliott, Anthony and Frosh, Stephen, London: Routledge.
- DIAMOND, DIANA (2004): Narcissism as a Clinical and Social Phenomenon. In: *Relatedness, Self-Definition and Mental Representation: Essays in Honor of Sidney J. Blatt*, eds. John S. Auerbach, Kenneth N. Levy, Carrie E. Schaffer. New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- FIGLIO, KARL (2012): The Dread of Sameness: Social Hatred and Freud's "narcissism of minor differences". In: *Psychoanalysis and Politics: Exclusion and the Politics of Representation*. Ed. Lene Auestad. London: Karnac.
- FREUD, SIGMUND (1991): *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. The Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 12: *Civilization, Society and Religion*, London: Penguin.
- HORKHEIMER, MAX (2002): The Authority and the Family. In: *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, New York: Continuum.
- KERNBERG, OTTO FRIEDMAN (1975): *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- JAY, MARTIN (1996): *The Dialectical Imagination*. Berkeley: The University of California Press.
- LACAN, JACQUES (1938): Les complexes familiaux dans la formation de l'individuel. Paris: Navarin.
- LACAN, JACQUES (1975): *Le séminaire – Livre 1: Les Écrits techniques de Freud (1953-1954)*, ed.: J.-A. Miller, Paris: Seuil.
- REICH, WILHELM (1970): *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- WHITEBOOK, JOEL (1995): *Perversion and Utopia: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.