

# Analysing the Film Si Puo Fare and Its Contributions to Psychology

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**Abstract:** This article portrays the story of the French film Si Puo Fare directed by Giulio Manfredonia, which refers to the history of cooperatives that emerged in Italy, tells the story of Nello, a trade unionist who, after being fired, starts working as a director in a cooperative formed by patients from extinct mental hospitals. after the anti-manicomial fight movement initiated by Franco Basaglia and the closing of the psychiatric hospitals and how psychology is related to the history of the cooperatives that emerged in Italy, after the anti-asylum movement initiated by Franco Basaglia and the closing of the psychiatric hospitals. In the course of the film, the development and improvement of the clinical picture of each character is followed, contrasting the idea that they are mentally ill, thus generating an analysis of Basaglia's law. The extinct insane asylums were abolished due to Law 180, known as Basaglia's law, passed in the 70's, which proposed a reform in the health system and psychiatric treatment of individuals, making it more humanized. The Basaglia Law, instituted in the 70s, in Italy, together with the instituting movement of the Cooperative, having as equipment the work they carry out, propose an analysis of implication. The film proves important to reflect the importance of major economic and social reforms and the importance of family and friends around the mentally ill.

**Keywords:** Basaglia, Anti-Asylum, Si Puo Fare

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## 1. Introduction

The Film Si Puo Fare portrays the struggle of people with mental disorders to be able to work and have recognition as capable and qualified people to learn new jobs and trades. The film begins when Nello, a union member estranged from the union, who becomes a member of a cooperative for the mentally ill, firmly believing in the dignity of work, convinces the mentally ill (called members) to replace welfare handouts with real work, inventing for each one, an activity adapted to their respective abilities.

The plot Si Puo Fare (translation: It Can Be Done), 2008, directed by Giulio Manfredonia, tells the story of Nello, a union member who, after being fired from his job, starts working as the director of a cooperative of patients in disappearing shelters. As from the moment Nello realised the potential in each one, he turns them into partners who start receiving a paycheck, transforming their source of income into parquet work (generally made of wood and assembled for flooring). Together, they learn how to run a business and

how to sell a business. They receive recognition and acclaim from important figures in society and develop relationships with the society that previously shamed them [10].

The whole film follows the development and improvement of the clinical picture of each character, contrary to the idea of psychosis. In the direction of this cooperative, Nilo is faced with a reality still consolidated as a madhouse, a reality in which individuals were reduced to psychopaths, medicated, living, daily, under the effect of psychoactive pharmacological drugs [8].

## 2. Basaglia's Law

The doctor Franco Basaglia was responsible for changing the law about insane asylums in Italy, where the movie takes place and portrays the mentally ill in the 80s. Since he entered the world of medicine, he criticised the traditional psychiatric attitude and what we may call the old biomedical model, which was widely used in the last century, but is still present nowadays.

Basaglia saw a major flaw in the relations between society and madness and took a critical position towards the classical psychiatry and hospital psychiatry, disapproving the old medical model followed at that time because it focused on the principle of isolation of the insane (internment as a treatment model), which he called a repressive technique that excluded even more people with pathologies from society. The film portrays this old model, the interned individuals were in a centre only for people with mental disorders, isolated, taking medicine and being doped up, they had neither adequate activity nor physical and emotional well-being [1]. Basaglia began to fight for fair rights for people with severe pathologies, he became an active critic in his country and abroad, which gave greater visibility to these people who needed care and attention from the government.

In the society portrayed in the film, instituted, and instituted agents are observed, such as the cooperative movement itself, when Nello took over the board, was an armed order, as the current order of cooperatives is passive highly medicated work, reporting and reproducing the then contemporary country's ethical values in relation to mental health and the treatment of psychiatric patients [7].

Basaglia's law, developed in Italy in the 1970s, together with the founding movement of the cooperatives, used as a device the work they performed, proposing an analysis of meaning, as all these structures exposed a change in the perception of mental health as an understanding organizational interaction, with emphasis on the operational logic of the intervention [6].

This old model which Basaglia criticised was the biomedical model, the dominant view of the 20th century, in which health was entirely linked to biological causes and was nothing more than the absence of disease, not considering the environment or the mind of the individual, focusing on visible signs and the body, thus bringing damage to the understanding of pathologies and the human being [2, 3].

Franco Basaglia was born in Venice on 11 March 1924 into a family that recognised the fascist state. In 1949, despite the war and prison, he graduated in medicine and dedicated the following decade to the study of psychiatry and philosophy. In 1952, at the age of 29, he obtained a specialisation in nervous and mental illnesses and the following year he married Franca Ongaro, who became his collaborator and helped him in the most important decisions of his life. In 1958, he obtained a free doctorate in psychiatry [9].

Basaglia began to understand the backwardness of Italian psychiatry - with almost one hundred thousand people in asylums in the early 1960s - compared to other countries (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the United States), as well as the dominant logic in academic research. The university psychiatric hospitals failed in changing the prevailing welfare model in Italy, in fact, they support a tendency towards asylum and repression. Basaglia knew Sartre's work, which he deeply haunted. He considered Sartre his mentor, with whom he met several times in Bologna and Paris [9].

Basaglia was the founder of the democratic psychiatry movement that brought great advances in psychiatric issues to Italy, where after much struggle and in the year he died, the psychiatric reform of Italy was created the so-called "Law 180", or "Italian Psychiatric Reform Law", also popularly known as "Basaglia Law" [1]. This law is mentioned at the beginning of the film, where in its period it was beginning to be introduced and had a certain repudiation by the doctor who ran the centre, despite the difficulties Nello, a left-wing trade unionist, managed to set up a cooperative, there was a lot of work and he had to take money from his pocket, but the cooperative worked against all the talk of negativism. Nello can be compared to Basaglia in the fight for the cooperative that ended up helping people with mental disorders, not giving up even if the system says one must [3].

On May 13, 1978, the Italian Parliament passed Law 180 (known as Basaglia's Law), which determined the definitive closure of Italian psychiatric hospitals, the main objective of Franco Basaglia's long and tireless struggle. On that day, there were 98 shelters in Italy, where around 100,000 people were detained [11]. Patients with mental health problems are also human beings with rights. The norm reinforced the extension of the constitutional right to voluntary medical assistance: "Preventive, curative and rehabilitative interventions related to mental illness are generally carried out by out-of-hospital psychiatric services" [6].

The Basaglia Law, as it is known is the only one of its kind in the world, because madness and the mentally ill began to be treated in a new way by society, and thus placing a series of public services and practices for people with mental disorders or vulnerability [5]. The film shows the beginning of the implementation of this law and how difficult it was to implement it because of medical and personal prejudices.

The film has the same name as the cooperative they created and reports on the functioning of cooperatives in asylums, which began in the 1980s in Italy, and then spread to Europe as society began to realize its usefulness.

Social cooperativism began in Italy after Basaglia's law and its objective is the distribution of services and goods to the community, workers in search of autonomy and freedom from the traditional market, thus dividing profits and blame as portrayed in the film [15].

### 3. In Brazil

In Brazil, social corporativism was regulated by Law 9.867 of 10 November 1999, before the Brazilian psychiatric reform, and establishes its principle of inserting disadvantaged people in society, i.e., drug addicts and the mentally ill, into the economic market through work. Its principle is almost the same as that of Italian corporativism, both seek a place in society and in the labor market for people who are disadvantaged or excluded from society.

Basaglia was in Brazil many times to participate in conferences and congresses on mental health in the last century, which was marked by great manicomial conflicts and harsh criticism of the political period of that time in

Brazil.

In Brazil during the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, madness was present in the social life, individuals considered insane were placed in prisons or convents so that they were excluded from society. Only in the nineteenth century madness began to be recognized as a disease of great social impact [12].

It was in the nineteenth century that the first Brazilian asylum called Hospício D. Pedro II was inaugurated in Rio de Janeiro, capital of the then Empire. Although doctors were found, the control remained religious and was practiced in the Santa Casa. After the proclamation of the Republic, at the end of the 19th century, madness was removed from the religious discourse [14].

The individual affected by the pathology of madness had many needs that the psychiatry and medicine of that time could not meet. Basaglia wanted to put an end to psychiatry because, according to him, it was ineffective for the complexity of madness; a reform in the way of treating individuals affected by this pathology would be necessary [1].

Despite all the discussion and the fact that theoreticians with strong names such as Foucault and Basaglia came several times to Brazil to talk about the importance of psychiatric reform, of a new way of looking at these people with disorders, the country only started this discussion after the end of the military dictatorship, as it prevented, in a certain way, the scientific advances and major reforms to the society.

The first discussions about mental health began in the 1970s but, due to the political period, these were only resumed in the early 1990s and taking into account Pinel's phrase that the insane should be treated and not beaten, they should be "re-educated" in their morals and reinserted into the community when cured, this inspired the fight for the rights of people with mental disorders and influenced the pro-reform movements [4].

The Brazilian reform was greatly influenced by the Italian reform, following the guidelines of reducing beds in psychiatric hospitals, ensuring adequate resources, social support, and other issues. However, it is known that the reform in Brazil was late; it was only in 2001 that it was approved, and even then, it was not followed correctly [13].

## 4. Conclusion

Great criticism has been and continues to be made of the Brazilian psychiatric reform, which, although it has given rights to people with mental disorders, has forgotten crucial points. There are no more insane asylums, but there are not all the appropriate places to admit people with pathologies, if they commit crimes they need to be locked up with common prisoners because there are no psychiatric prisons and treatment in the country.

The film *Si Púo Fare* brings a reflection about the psychiatric reform in Italy and how social cooperativism can help disadvantaged people in society to find their way and

learn new trades, thus bringing a connection with the reform imposed in Brazil almost thirty years after Italy and when this law is still a scuse with mentally ill people, but if it were not for it, they would be excluded even more from society and would not have the minimum of proper treatment. The film makes us reflect on the importance of major reforms and the profit it brings to the mentally ill and the people around them. The film shows that it is possible to treat patients in freedom, making it possible for them to recover their autonomy and their citizenship, and it shows the importance of the Income Generation Programmes, because when the patients started to have a life project it was possible to reduce the medication and a great improvement was observed in these patients. And what remains for us to reflect on is the importance of gradually changing this culture of incapacity of the mentally ill and enabling society to live with differences..

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