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## “LA HAINE” (HATE)

### **Abstract**

Sociological reflections based on the film “La haine” (Hate), directed by Mathieu Kassovitz and released in 1995, whose plot takes place over the next twenty-four hours of a night of riots and heavy clashes with police in a slum on the outskirts of Paris, in which the protagonists, three teenagers, walk the streets in an atmosphere of violence between gangs and constant conflicts with the police.

**Keywords:** Hate, violence, marginality, social work

The film describes a day for three teenagers from a marginal neighborhood on the outskirts of Paris (a Jew, an Arab immigrant, and a black amateur boxer), after a night of riots and strong clashes with the police caused by an altercation, in which a young man was seriously injured after receiving a beating at the police station. The plot takes place over the next 24 hours, in which the protagonists roam the streets in an atmosphere of violence between gangs and constant conflicts with the police.

The film begins with the following sentence: “A man is falling from a fifty-story building. To reassure himself, as he falls into the void, he keeps repeating: so far everything is fine, so far everything is fine, so far everything is fine. But the important thing is not the fall, it is the landing.” And ends with the same sentence, but where now it is society that falls: “It is the story of a society that falls, as it falls, to reassure itself, it repeats endlessly: So far everything is going well, so far everything is going well, so far everything is going well, the important thing is not the fall, it is the landing.”

It is a really shocking film, the description of the environment that surrounds the three characters is bleak, gloomy buildings, lonely and dirty parks, violence, drugs, constant conflicts with the police, environments where unemployment and lack of social aid cause social insertion and making their way in society becomes an impossible task. The problems and social abandonment of these environments are perfectly reflected, and the situation with no way out in which young people find themselves immersed. We see how the use of the resource of its black and white filming helps to convey this reality.

The protagonists alternate with other young people from the neighborhood with whom they fight, argue, insult, but it is also possible to see how there are also positive aspects such as friendship and camaraderie. The age of the protagonists, similar to mine, inevitably leads to a reflection on how the fate of where we were born marks our lives and how lives parallel to ours are marginalised, forgotten, and mistreated by society without making nothing or very little about it, how the wealthy classes look the other way letting time pass without doing anything about it. We must not, therefore, forget that a large part of our trajectory in life is the result of luck, of the place, family, and environment in which we were born, do not depend on the individual and we must value it at all times, an issue that, if kept in mind, it helps to increase our objectivity, sensitivity and empathy towards these population groups and social problems.

It draws my attention and it saddens me to see the relationship between young people and the police where there is a constant and violent confrontation, where the police act mechanically toward young people without discrimination and violence. Perhaps, we could also consider this social group, the police, as a victim where, given the situation in which they find themselves immersed, they do not know how to act in another way, and the lack of social help has led to guidelines and ways of acting that they do not help solve the problem.

The marginalisation and lack of adaptation is reflected, not only in their usual environment, but also when they move through wealthy neighborhoods throughout the night, where they are treated with fear and mistrust, resulting in tense situations, where the Hate is once again reflected in this social sphere as well.

Seeing how these young people are trapped without a solution, living a life in which they find no way out, helps to understand their reactions and ways of acting. As a social worker, these are aspects that I think should be taken into account.

The phrase with which the film begins and ends, referring to a society that does not stop telling itself that everything is fine, is a message that twenty-six years after the premiere of the film, 1995, I consider acquires even more meaning. given that the social problem described in the film continues to be fully valid since the problem continues to exist and where we could even say that it has increased in severity, where society since then “continues to fall”, saying to itself that “everything is going well”. Society of which we are all a part and where we as young people who will soon start our professional career must contribute to making society aware that, probably, not everything will go so well.

It is a subject known to all of us, but viewing such an impressive film has shown me aspects and details that have made me reflect, helping me to increase empathy for the problems of these young people and to consider how, with my future professional career, I could participate in actions related to the fight against this type of social problems. Since I am a psychology student, I consider that my academic studies could be useful in a career in social work, forming part of multidisciplinary teams aimed at helping in these social circles.

## Reflections

One of the aspects that has been most inspiring for me has been the ages of the protagonists, which, being very similar to mine, has helped me reflect and increase my degree of empathy towards them. Being three friends of different characters, with their discussions, approaches and jokes, they have made me feel, in a certain way, reflected as when I am with my friends, where I see that deep down we are not so different, and that, in a way inevitably, the reflection arises on how the chance of where we have been born marks our lives and how lives parallel to ours are marginalised, forgotten and mistreated by society.

There are two issues that have had a great impact. On the one hand, as I have already mentioned in the previous point, the fact of seeing people with whom I identify because of their age, plunged into a situation in which society does not give them any chance to get ahead. And another issue that also strikes me is the relationship with the police. On occasions, I have witnessed scenes in the street where the police were acting, which I have not considered fair, in addition to seeing news worldwide where certain altercations have led to true injustices. Unfair scenes also happen in the film. For this reason, I think that, perhaps, we could also consider this social group, the police, as a victim where, given certain situations in which they find themselves immersed, they do not know how to act in another way and the lack of social help leads to some guidelines and ways of acting that do not contribute to solving the problem.

The aspect that we could highlight as the most significant, in terms of what the film has taught me, has been the increase in empathy towards a population group of which we know of its existence, but we forget about them in our day-to-day. Many times, in addition, we fall into the trap of stereotypes labeling people without stopping to reflect, inappropriately judging their way of acting.

On the other hand, on a cultural level, it has given me a perspective of the problem of marginal neighborhoods in Paris, a wonderful city that, when we think of it, it is not precisely this type of neighborhood that comes to mind and whose problem is. It can be extrapolated to many other European cities, where what may change are the origins of marginal social groups, but the bottom line of the question and the problem is the same.

The effect exerted by this and other films, in addition to other information that reaches me through other means, such as the news, reading books, articles we read at university is profoundly changing my attitude and my way of understanding the people involved in these kinds of problems. For this reason, my vocation as a psychologist is increasingly oriented towards a line of social work where I hope that my knowledge and my desire to help others serve to do my part to improve society.