Violent Words and Aggressive Behaviors on and off the Pitch: A Study in Critical Discourse Analysis

Michela Canepari

University of Parma, Parma, Italy

The strong connections between the violence of football as a sport and the violence of the language used within and without the football field to describe and talk about it, have had important implications at many levels. In particular, as my paper intends to prove, the language adopted by the media during the period in which the problem of violence in and around football reached its climax (namely the last three decades of the 20th century), contributed, at least in part, to the problem. The aim of this paper is therefore to analyse—mainly from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis—the way in which some of the periodicals of the time depicted the phenomenon of hooliganism and, through a comparison with articles of recent publication, assess whether (and how) the language used nowadays by the press has changed. In particular, the paper will focus on a corpus of headlines which appeared in quality papers such as *The Times* and *The Guardian* and tabloids such as *The Sun* on occasions of important matches such as the European cup final from 1985, the world championships of 1986, 1990, and 1994, etc. These results will be then compared to the headlines which appeared on newspapers on the occasion of the European Championships and the world championships in the new millennium.

Keywords: language and violence, football, hoologanism

Introduction

The fundamental tenet of this paper is the fact that any involvement in sport should be identified as a complex social phenomenon. As a consequence, over the years many theoreticians have elaborated on the symbolic aggressiveness and the physical violence which often have characterized the world of football. However, the borderline between what is considered a legitimate form of violence (which is deemed intrinsic to the game itself and which is therefore tolerated by both participants and supporters) and the violence which, on the contrary, is perceived as totally illegitimate, cannot always be neatly identified and seems to depend on many cultural and situational aspects involving the players and the communities of their supporters.

Because of the large amount of materials available, I had to make very selective choices and after a brief excursus on the way the press, mainly in Britain, has portrayed football-related violence throughout history, I will focus on its approach during the dark ages of hooliganism (roughly from the '70s to the '90s of the 20th century), relating it to contemporary (British and otherwise) society. Indubitably, the strong connections between the

Michela Canepari, associate professor, Ph.D., Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Cultural Industries, University of Parma, Parma, Italy.

violence of football as a sport and the violence of the language used within and without the football field to describe and talk about it, have had important implications at many levels. Indeed, through language, identities are constructed also within the field of sports in general and football in particular, where dichotomies, such as "I" vs "Other" and "us" vs "them", are constructed through the linguistic choices made by all the people involved and surrounding football.

For example, even today, a strong emphasis is generally laid on the inclusive/exclusive "we", an aspect particularly evident in the following headline (and relative article), which appeared in June 2016 on the website of the ESPN (Entertainment and Sports Programming Networks):

> We're on the right path to rebuild the team
>
> We needed to freshen up the squad and make it more competitive. The classic example is that despite eight-10 players being out of the Laos match for various injuries, we are managing it—for the simple reason that I wanted to increase the pool of players. […] We now have a larger pool of young Indian players […]. I think we are on the right path. ("Football News and Scores", January 9, 2017)

In addition, in most sports commentaries, the semantic fields identified by the nouns, adjectives and idioms, and the journalists exploit refer to battle and war, pointing to that search for violence which is supposed to be satisfied on the field. This is the case, for instance, with the following article:

> A tale of twisted blood consumes Rooney in his bid to make Manchester United history against Liverpool
>
> Michael Owen claimed the rivalry in the north-west fades with time, but that is not the case when it comes to Rooney and his hatred of Liverpool Football Club. (*The Independent*, January 13, 2017)

Similarly, in the headline: "Manchester United may go for the jugular against Liverpool" (*The Guardian*, January 12, 2017), the images exploited by the idiomatic expression are equally violent.

However, even when the references to the semantic field of violence and war are not openly stated, articles such as the following: "Barcelona haven't lost to Villarreal in 14 games, with the Catalan club last succumbing to defeat back in 2008, when Villarreal recorded a 2-1 victory at the Nou Camp" (*The Independent*, January 12, 2017, my emphasis), as well as the words which render the context of football a (semi) specialized field to indicate the various roles assigned to players ("striker", "defender", etc.) are quite typical and all point to "battle" and "war" as privileged semantic fields for the game.

Thus, the fact that many team names and many articles on football should refer to the 13th century warrior William Wallace[1] comes as no surprise and contributes to what is generally defined as "Braveheart rhetoric". Indeed, the name "The Bravehearts" was selected by more than one team over the years, identifying for instance Devon and Exeter Football League; Scottish National rugby league team; Swansea City football club and Regional American Football League among others.

Furthermore, in many articles which refer to the Scottish football, references are often made to the same individual. Sometimes, Wallace is referred to as a historical figure, as in:

> Football: Captain Braveheart proud to be a fan on and off the pitch.

---

[1] Wallace, better known as Braveheart, was the 13th century Scottish warrior who led the Scots against King Edward I in the first war of Independence, and it is not by chance that the nickname "The Bravehearts" has long since been assigned to the Scottish national rugby league team.

In 1982, Colin Hendry [captain of the Scottish team] was in Torremolinos on tour with the Tartan Army. Today, he leads the Scots against Brazil. (*The Independent*, June 09, 1998)

or:

Berti the Bravehart

Vogts could be an enlightened appointment.

Scotland are poised to appoint German World Cup winner Berti Vogts as their first foreign coach. BBC Sport Onlin's John May profiles the man known as "Der Terrier". Berti Vogts has several things going for him as he tries to revive Scottish football. (*BBC News*, March 12, 2002)

On other occasions, the reference is to the cinematographic rendition of the character depicted in Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* (1995), as in the following example:

Fight like "scene from Braveheart"

On 18 March 2000, Sunderland Association Football Club were playing at home to Middlesbrough.

As usual, for safety, Newcastle United had been scheduled to play away. (*BBC Sport*, March 12, 2002)

Naturally, these references, together with the images that accompany these articles, activate a series of references which, through strong (verbal and visual) cohesive devices such as the repetition of lexical items or the insertion of images such as the following (see Figure 1 & 2), will bring to mind images such as Figure 3, thereby assimilating the violence of the battle to the violence of the game itself bringing the latter back to its more or less ancient origins:

Figure 1. Contemporary supporters of Scotland.

Figure 2. Standstill.

Figure 3. Standstill.

Initially, football matches were actually disputed between teams of hundreds of men, who engaged in tribal aggressions as a means to define the identity of the respective teams/communities, whereas in less ancient times, as reproduced in Figure 4 and 5, football games were little more than massive street fights:

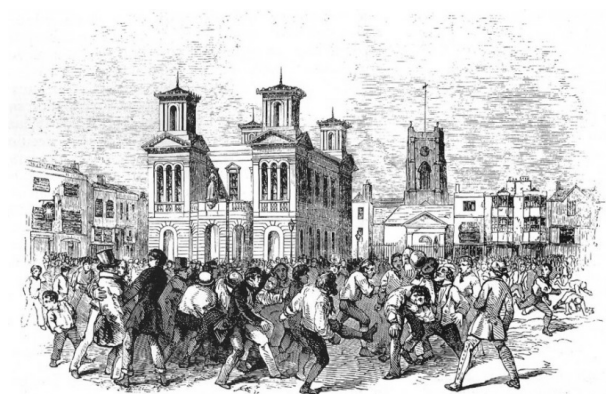*Figure 4.* A football match in Mediaeval times.

Figure 5. A football game between two clubs in London in 1846.

It is therefore because of its origins that football has often been associated with aggressive behaviors and that the use of intertextuality has often become fundamental, activating specific scenarios—the "Scottish resistance" against the English and the football game at large—and "scripts" (Schank & Abelson, 1977) namely

"representation[s] of a process rather than a static set of data and accommodate the notion of expectancy [that is, the expectation of how the text will develop]" (Gran & Taylor, 1990, p. 24), creating the expectation of some form of physical and verbal violence.

In actual fact, many critical discourse analyses have emphasized that there is a strong connection between the violence of football as a sport and the violence of the language used to describe and talk about it, in particular by the media.

Throughout history, the press has maintained very different attitudes in relation to the issue of violence in football. Between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the general trend was mainly one of tolerance for all forms of disturbance which did not directly interfere with the game itself and it was precisely this attitude that led for example to the creation of the myth, before the first World War, of the image of the football fan as a "gentleman", even though, as Hutchinson remarked: "Riots, unruly behaviour, violence, assault and vandalism, appear to have been a well-established behaviour at football matches at least from the 1870s" (Hutchinson, 1974, cit. in Vamplev, 1983, pp. 21-22).

Similarly, the general idea that during the period between the two wars there was a decrease of violence in football can be defined only as a further myth. In actual fact, it was precisely at the beginning of the Thirties that the diffusion of Fascist and Nazi ideals led to an increased politicization of football and a dramatic increase of the intimidation techniques it involved. During this period, also the language of German football changed considerably, so that "A match was a *Kampf*, a battling footballer a *Kämpfer*, and to play in a battling manner was *kämpferisch*" (Kuper, 2003, p. 174), and also racism in football increased considerably. However, the press of the time (for instance, on the occasion of a friendly match between England and Germany disputed on December 5, 1935, namely just a couple of years before an Austrian player died in mysterious circumstances after refusing to play for the Germans, Kuper, 2003, pp. 46-47), made a great effort to "collaborate", releasing articles such as the following, where the emphasis is all on the friendly atmosphere on and off the pitch, which seems in contradiction with the violence that was evidently perpetrated (as testified by the fact that at least seven people were arrested): "The game was played through the friendliest of spirit" (*The Times*); "Greater than the game was the atmosphere of good fellowship in which it was played" (*Sporting Life*); "There was not the slightest disorder. Of course there was a lot of flag waving but no jarring note to mar a fine afternoon's entertainment" (*The New Chronicle*).

The press of the time thus became a sounding board for the attempted collaboration with the Germans in the creation of a friendly relationship, which resulted in further symbolic actions: for example, the nazi saluted the English team on the occasion of a friendly match with Germany (see Figure 6), an episode which would then become infamous and a great source of embarrassment:

Figure 6. The England team give the nazi salute in Berlin (1938).

During the war, the aggressiveness of the regime conferred a particularly violent character to the game itself and the language that surrounded it, and since language is never, simply, language, the consequences were often dramatic. For instance, it became very dangerous to win over the Germans, as

> The defeat represented an affront to all that the German occupation stood for […]. Some of the players even thought the Germans may let them get away with victory, but that was never going to happen [...] And so it was, that some time after the match [between the Germans and Kiev's team], the Start players were taken away from the Gestapo for three weeks. After that they were deported to the death camp at Babi Yar and it was there the Nazis finally ensured that these men would live on in the collective consciousness and in folk tales, for at the camp three of the players were killed [...] they were slaughtered one by one, standing in a line, with no great escape to save them. (Online)

It was partly as a psychological consequence of the previous collaboration, that, during the following years, when the world had to face the horrors of the war, the British press assumed opposite attitudes, treating violence around football (whose perpetrators were often identified and constructed as neo-nazis), much more harshly.

The Dark Ages of Hooliganism

Indeed, during the "dark ages of hooliganism", the style adopted by the press for example on the occasion of such disasters as that of Birmingham (when a supporter was killed, 125 were arrested and 176 people were injured) and, clearly, Brussels in 1985 (when 39 supporters of the Juventus club from Italy were killed during the finals of Champions League against Liverpool in 1985), was characterized by sensationalism and hyperboles whose aims were often openly political. As such, it contributed to what Stuart Hall and his colleagues defined as an "amplification spiral of violence" (Hall, Critcher, & Jefferson, 1978), which led to the creation of what Cohen called a "moral panic" within British society (Cohen, 1973, p. 30). It is precisely this moral panic which was created by the language found in headlines such as "TERRIFIED" (*News of the World*, January 29, 1977), or through colors, as in the following, where the title "Football terror" is given emphasis through the use of red (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Front page of a British tabloid.

Similarly, feelings of shame were fueled, as in the following examples, through the use of highly connotative lexis, capitals letters, and colors (see Figure 8 & 9):

Figure 8. Bolton Football fans.

Figure 9. Composition of British newspapers.

In addition, newspapers often adopted an almost prophetic styles in headlines, such as "Football's savages—Warming up for the new season" (*Daily Mirror*, August 20, 1973), or "When is it going to end?" (*Liverpool Echo*, May 30, 1985) or again "What comes next?" (*Toronto Star*, May 30, 1985)—which can be considered responsible, at least partially, for the creation of the culture of violence at the basis of hooliganism creating expectations as far as outbursts of violence were concerned. "The expectation", however, "creates the expected" (Brooke-Rose, 1984, p. 19), and indeed already in 1967 a supporter of Chelsea, who was arrested because of carrying a razor, defended himself by saying that he had read in the newspaper that the supporters of West Ham would have caused troubles at the match and did not want to be unprepared.

It is therefore clear that the press, by strategically exploiting typographical devices such as capital letters and dramatic images (see Figure 10 & 11), as well as exclamation and question marks (see Figure 12), and by carefully selecting both lexical and morphosyntactic strategies, provided hooligans (and other British perpetrators of violence of the time such as Mods, Rockers and Skinheads) with an important echo, constructing the football field as a war zone. Headlines, such as "The <u>Killing</u> Field" (*Sunday Times*, 1985, my emphasis); "This is not a Sport. This is a <u>War</u>" (*The Times*, 1985, my emphasis); "<u>War</u> games" (*Toronto Sun*, 1985, my emphasis), as well as the one reproduced in Figure 12, were produced constantly at the time:

Figure 10. The Ferry Riot (1986).

Figure 11. Urban guerrilla on the field.

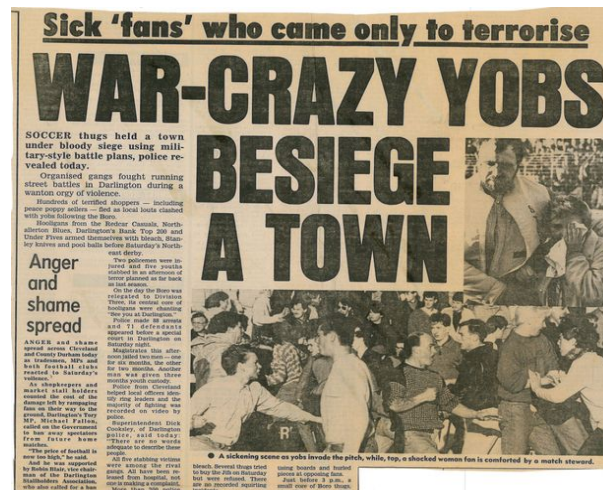*Figure 12.* Hooliganism and the British press.

Figure 13. Hooligans at Highbury (1980).

In particular, the language used to construct the category of the hooligans, on the basis of which other events would be further elaborated and interpreted by readers, favored the process of amplification referred to above. Clearly, contrary to claims, such as Marsh's (1977), hooliganism cannot be simply identified with a construction of journalists' hysteria, just as what was stigmatized as actual violence cannot simply be considered the explicitation of the ritualistic and symbolic patterns exploited by players and supporters to exhibit virile virtues safely. Yet, it is indubitable that this transformation of a symbolic form of aggressiveness into a de-ritualized form of violence was influenced and stimulated by the attitude the media adopted in their discussions of the phenomenon.

An analysis of some of the semantic fields exploited in the newspapers of the time showed that during those years, as testified by Figures 8 and 11 above, the press reacted to the violent language of hooligans with an equally violent language. Indeed, hooligans were regularly described in terms of their bestiality—"The animal terrorising of ordinary people" (*The Sunday Mirror*, March 23, 1967) and their alleged primitivism, as in the title reproduced below (see Figure 14):

Figure 14. Legitimate fans and hoologanism.

thereby constructing them as "Others" also in terms of the dichotomy "human" vs "sub-human". Indeed, hooligans' lack of rationality—"One of the worst and most senseless outbreaks of soccer supporter trouble this year" (*The Sunday Mirror*, May 7, 1967) and madness—"United don't need these lunatic louts to help them win" (*The Sunday Mirror*, October 26, 1975); "The madness on the terraces" (*The Times*, May 31, 1985) was often at the basis of newspapers headlines, repeatedly denying their humanity:
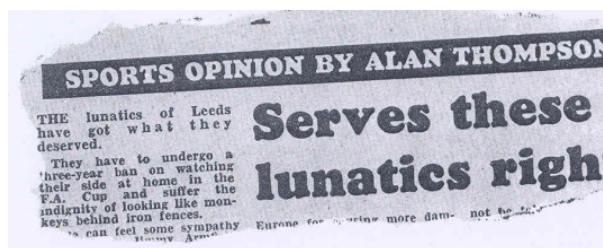

Figure 15. Stadium bans.

At the same time, however, the press underlined their dissociation from the team and their irrelevant numbers, an attitude which was actually corroborated by the various reports published by pseudo-governmental agencies (Harrington's report of 1968 and John Lang's report of 1969),[2] which emphasized the pathology of single individuals, ignoring the social issues at the basis of the phenomenon: "99% of them are blokes who know their football, who respect its dynamic chief […] it's the remaining 1% who make us furious" (*The Sunday Mirror*, October 10, 1965); "we cannot tolerate a situation in which a few louts can terrify thousands of people" (*The Daily Mirror*, August 13, 1970). The approach which both the media and the government held at the time therefore appears rather contradictory to say the least. Obviously, this attitude finds a justification in the fact that it was certainly easier to blame a small number of abnormal individuals rather than to analyze (as later on others would do) (Clarke, 1973; 1978) the political and social forces involved. By so doing, the problem of violence was kept, once again, away from football itself and from society at large, and there were pressing (and equally violent) demands for intervention on the authorities' part: "Get tough with soccer hooligans" (*The Daily Express*, March

---

[2] The reaction of Marxist scholar Ian Taylor was immediate: "Simply to employ a psychiatrist for a national government report is to legitimate the idea in the popular mind that 'hooliganism' is explicable in terms of the existence of essentially unstable and abnormal temperament, individuals who happen, for some inexplicable reason to have taken soccer as the arena in which to act out their instabilities. The psychological label adds credibility to the idea that the hooligans are not really true supporters […] and that they can be dealt with by the full force of the law and (on occasions) by psychiatrists" (Taylor, 1971a; see also: Taylor, 1971b).

24, 1969), "Smash these thugs!" (*Sun*, October 4, 1976), "Birch 'em'" (*The Daily Mirror*, August 30, 1976), and "Cage the Animals" (*The Daily Mirror*, April 21, 1976).

Similarly, the problem of racism in football (which for obvious reasons began to worsen during the Nazi period), was treated in a rather superficial way by the media,[3] despite the acknowledgement of the close connection between football, nation, and Empire (see for instance: Hargreaves, 1986; Stoddart, 1988; Mangan, 1992; Hutchinson, 1996). Unfortunately, for reasons of space I cannot address this complex issue at present, but let it suffice to say that just as British popular press has often been accused of encouraging fundamentally racist attitudes and xenophobic tendencies in society at large, this attitude was obviously mirrored in football-related events. Headlines, such as these: "We beat them in 45…Now the battle of 90" (*The Sun*, 1990); or "Achtung! Surrender. For you Fritz ze Euro 96 Championship is over!" (*The Daily Mirror*, June 24, 1996); "Mirror declares football war on Germany" (*ibidem*); or again "Let's blitz Fritz" (*The Sun*, June 24, 1996), and "Herr we go" (*The Daily Star*, June 24, 1996) corroborated by the visual elements we find for example on this front page (see Figure 16), clearly refer back to the war period and could only lead to intolerance, at least "helping", as MP Kaufman claimed in 1990, the disorders that broke out in London and Brighton at the time. In addition, by using slow-motion and standstills, close-shots, etc., television seemed to contribute to the problem, adding horror to horror and rendering the perpetrators of violence more visible.

Figure 16. England vs Germany (1996).

Not only this, but, as Young well demonstrated (1986), the same paradigms which define newsworthiness emphasize the privilege granted not only to negative news, but also geographically closer episodes, which led for instance to an unbalanced treatment of a cyclone which, in the same period of Brussels' disaster, hit Bangladesh, causing the death of thousands of people and creating the impression that the death of white people was more newsworthy and significant when compared to the death of non-whites. All this fomented strong racist attitudes,

---

[3] It is precisely this kind of attitude, that television (whose development acquired over the years a fundamental importance in sports, while perpetuating stereotypes in terms of race and/or gender), ignored. Actually, scholars such as Barnett and Whannel maintain that reporters often refer to ethnic and racial stereotypes to describe foreign players, while giving much less visibility to female performers in comparison to their male counterparts (see Barnett, 1990; Whannel, 1979; Whannel, 1992).

which found expressions also in hooligans' slogans and songs: "Stand by the Union Jack, send those niggers back. If you're white you're al right, if you're black, send 'em back'"; "Those yids from White Hart Lane, the gas man's got them"; "Ssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssssss".

Yet, on several occasions, both press and television dismissed racist verbal abuse as part of the electric atmosphere surrounding important matches and justified verbal attacks against foreign players as attacks directed to particular players as members of the opposite team and not as Africans, Caribbeans, or Asians. Indeed, also within the administrative sites, racism became apparent. More than one trainer and manager have actually expressed themselves in racist terms, defining for example black players as "black antelopes" (Merkel, 1999), praising their speed while simultaneously emphasizing their lack of "intellectual capacity" or the fact that, in their opinion, they have "an innate lack of discipline and consistency", "are no good in mud", "have no stamina", and "lack bottle" (*Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research*, 2017), thereby legitimizing certain types of supporters. And yet, none of these statements was commented on by the media. As a consequence, the fundamental racism surrounding football was not exposed as such and these claims were simply registered as the norm.

Representing Football in the Twenty-First Century

Certainly, after decades of critical linguistics, critical discourse analysis, cultural and postcolonial studies, endless discussions on issues of political (in)correctness, etc., many aspects have been brought to the fore and addressed critically. Consequently, the linguistic approach to football has changed considerably, and on many occasions, the racism implicit in particular behaviours, words, and expressions, has been openly recognized. Partly, this is due to a greater awareness of the impact that language can have on every aspect of human life. Partly, this different approach mirrors a change in society. In a world torn apart by conflicts and wars which, because of the new media and globalisation, are easily accessible and touch everybody's life, attention has often focused mainly on international policies, war, terrorism, and religious conflicts and these dimensions have often found a way into the football field as well. Indeed, just as the very notion of newsworthiness seems to have broadened, in that the focus is often on what happens abroad, so the interests of football have similarly shifted to broader themes such as religion and war. For instance, in articles, such as the following, the BBC addresses the rivalry between the two Glasgow clubs of the Rangers and the Celtic in terms of different religious creeds, with titles such as: "A rivalry tied up in religion" (*BBC News*, August 26, 2006), whereas the following year, *The Boston Globe* brings to the fore the "religious conflict in Harvard Football Schedule" (*The Boston Globe*, August 17, 2007), thereby clearly juxtaposing "football" and "religious rivalry/conflict" and assimilating the global concerns of our contemporary society. Similarly, the article, "Football tackles conflict on the front lines" (*The Washington Post*, May 26, 2015), emphasizes the relevance of the topics of war in today's world, and in a similar way, rugby was experienced in South Africa shortly after Mandela's election, football is posited here as an emblem of aggregation and comradeship, thanks to which the game "brings a lot of joy and happiness" (*ibidem*). In spite of the fact that, in some parts of the world such as Syria and Afghanistan, "playing football can be a life-threatening risk" (*ibidem*), playing and supporting football becomes a powerful statement, not in the direction of a disruption of the current social order, as in the dark ages of hooliganism, but in terms of the possibility of a new, different world, where both the players and the supporters might enjoy the game. In actual fact, football is here exploited to keep young men away from potential hazards such as extremism or drugs and the notoriety of footballers has become a

weapon in the interests of democracy by encouraging people to vote in elections. Clearly, the transformation in the social tensions which during the '70s, the '80s, and the '90s found expressions in the violence perpetrated by hooligans and its replacement by different national, political (and sometimes religious) concerns, is mirrored in the way football is described and talked about. This holds at least partially true for the period in which hooliganism seemed to have subdued. However, since the game has actually remained throughout highly "political" (as exemplified for instance by headlines such as: "Soccer becomes a political football in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict", *BBC News*, September 02, 2016) when hooligans began to resurface after various years of silence (indeed, in 2000, a report by the National Criminal Intelligence Service revealed that football hooliganism in Britain had increased for the first time in ten years), the strategies adopted simply replicated those exploited 20 years before. Despite the fact that the number of people involved in football related violence remained relatively small, that the falling arrest rates at matches over 20 years suggest troublemakers are a rogue minority, and that scholars such as Pearson maintained that episodes of hooliganism such as those occurred on the occasion of Millwall's visit to West Ham in the second round of football's Carling Cup (which led to thirteen arrests) do "not represent a resurgence of the high-profile clashes of the past" (*BBC News*, August 26, 2009), the tabloids immediately resorted to the same style that characterized them during the 20th centuries.

Thus, the press proposed the same shocking images (see Figure17 & 18):

Figure 17. Europe League clashes (2017).

Figure 18. Riots at Euro 2016.

The same headlines, where block capitals, colors, lexical choices, work in synergy to conjure up—yet again—the image of the football field as an actual battle field, as in:

"IT'S A WAR ZONE"

With Dortmund's hooligans notorious for their blood-thirsty ways, many will be eager to ensure they return home without any scratches.

 or:

DISGRACE

Europa League clash between Lyon and Besiktas delayed as fans pile onto pitch following shocking violence in stands

Supporters ran for cover and the Europa League game was delayed after disgraceful scenes in the stands in Lyon

home supporters flee onto the pitch in terror after being attacked by visiting fans.

The travelling Besiktras supporters launched a terrifying attack on the home end

Fans fled for their lives onto the pitch to try and escape the attacks

A small child snapped along with thousands of Lyons fans fleeing onto the pitch in terror

Blood streams down a supporter's face after clashed in the city this afternoon. (*The Sun*, April 12, 2017)

However, whereas in the 20th century, when hooliganism began to emerge, the style of the press was, as suggested above, prophetic and looked with fear to the future, in the 21st century, the same press looks in fear to the past (*The Daily Mail*, June 12, 2016), thus contributing to the creation of a different (albeit equivalent in its effects) expectancy:

Figure 19. Outbursts of violence at Euro 2016.

Furthermore, the new technologies and social networks provide ulterior means of resonance, not only because, as for instance we read in an article the BBC published in 1999 titled "Soccer Hooligans organise on the Net" (BBC News, August 09, 1999) or as Jason Burke maintained in "Hooligans link up on the Net to plot mayhem at Euro 2000" (*The Guardian*, April 02, 2000), English hooligans began using Internet and text messages to set up fights or provoke rival gangs into fights, but also because these technologies enable fight participants to post live commentaries on the Internet, fueling the excitement and recruiting more participants. This is for example what happens on the occasion of Millwall's visit to West Ham in the second round of football's Carling Cup (which led to thirteen arrests):

> "Cardiff Millwall Live Commentary":
>
> YEAH IT'S KICKING OFF RIGHT NOW AS I SPEAK HAS BEEN ALL MORNING, TIME NOW 1:45PM. BACK SOON FOR AN UPDATE. DON'T MISS THE TEAR UP OF THE YEAR:
>
> Nothing happen TOO MANY OLD BILL. BUT IT'S GOING OFF IN PLACES. JUST WAIT NOW FOR AFTER THE GAME . MY MATE ON THE MOBEY RECKONS IT'S GETTING PRETTY HOT IN THE GROUND TOO. (*BBC News*, August 09, 1999)

At the same time, the new technologies become complicit in the creation of that same panic I referred to before, as for instance one user on Facebook wrote via *The Daily Star*: "My pal has just messaged me and said it's like a war zone over there, everywhere is on lock down and closed up" (*The Daily Star*, March 22, 2017).

Not only this, but because of the possibilities offered by hyperlinks, etc., on the page of an article such as "Germany v England: Three Lions fans filmed wreaking havoc in Dortmund 'WAR ZONE'", where already the selected images and the lexical items used emphasize the catastrophic reach of the events, readers have the possibility to interactively retrieve the most dramatic moments of football hooliganism, for a "full immersion" which can only fuel negative feelings and create devastating scenarios within which readers will place current events (see Figure 20):
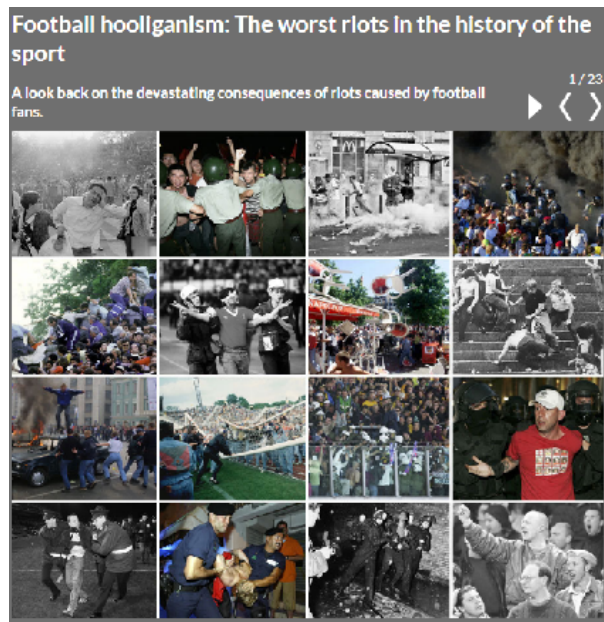

Figure 20. "Football's wall of shame".

Similarly, forums and blogs might play an important role in giving even more visibility to hooligans, violence, and their attempted disruption of the game of football, spreading either tolerant or intolerant attitudes and vicious behaviors, thus perpetuating, most of the times, animalistic stereotypes of the hooligan (see Figure 21, 22, & 23):

Figure 21. The Liverpool Echo Forum (2017).

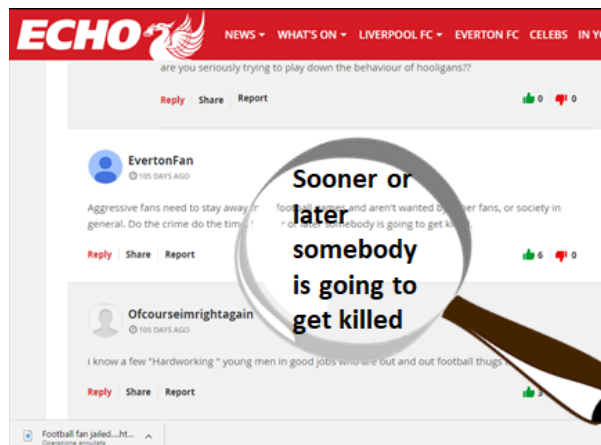*Figure 22. The Liverpool Echo Forum (2017).*

Figure 23. The Liverpool Echo Forum (2017).

It is perhaps also for this reason that, in the 2000s, death threats from English hooligans became more common, despite a decline in hooliganism in England.

Conclusion

Certainly, football hooliganism is a highly visible phenomenon, as journalists and TV cameras are present at virtually every match and everything can be recorded from different angles, run in slow motion, and played again and again. The British press—both paper and online—therefore seems to have ignored (and keep doing so) the recommendation of the European Parliament, according to which the media should avoid sensationalism when reporting episodes of hooliganism in that it has been since long recognized that hooligans relish the media coverage they receive and often positively seek it with rival groups actively competing for column inches and mentions in sensational headlines (see Armstrong, 2003).

It is unlikely that football will ever be totally free of disorders, as this aspect, as maintained above, is to a certain extent inherent in the game itself. However, it is certainly to be hoped that a way can be found to have more control over the "unruly" press, that the analyses conducted at academic level can have a more direct impact on the way language is exploited at various levels of society, and that scholarly studies, for example, critical discourse analyses, can find a way to work in synergy with the marketing (and political) interests which often lay behind the sensationalism the press actively seeks.

References

Armstrong, G. (2003). *Football hooligans: Knowing the score (Explorations in anthropology)*. Oxford: Berg.

Barnett, S. (1990). *Games and sets: The changing face of sport on television*. London: BFI.

Brooke-Rose, C. (1984). *Amalgamennon*. Manchester: Carcanet.

Clarke, J. (1973). *Football hooliganism and the skinheads*. Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Studies.

Clarke, J. (1978). Football and working class fans: Tradition and change. In R. Ingham (Ed.), *Football hooliganism: The wider context*. London: Inter-Action.

Cohen, S. (1973). *Folk devils and moral panics: The creation of the mods and rockers*. St. Albans: Paladin.

Gran, L., & Taylor, C. (Eds.). (1990). *Aspects of applied and experimental research in conference interpretation*. Udine: Campanotto.

Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T. (1978). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state, and law and order*. London: McMillan.

Hargreaves, J. (1986). *Sport, power and culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hutchinson, J. (1975). Some aspects of football crowds before 1914. *The Working Class*. University of Sussex Conference Report.

Hutchinson, R. (1996). *Empire games: The British invention of twentieth-century sport*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company.

Kuper, S. (2003). *Ajax, the Dutch, the war*. London: Orion.

Mangan, J. A. (1992). *The cultural bond: Sport, empire, society*. London: Frank Cass.

Marsh, P. (1977). Football hooliganism: Fact or fiction? *British Journal of Law and Society, 2*.

Merkel, U. (1999). Football identity and youth culture in Germany. In G. Armstrong and R. Giulianotti (Eds.), *Football cultures and identities*. London: MacMillan.

Schank, R. C., & Abelson, R. P. (1977). *Scripts, plans, goals and understanding*. Hillsdale (New Jersey): Erlbaum.

Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research. (2017). Fact sheet 6: Racism and football. University of Leicester, available at: www.le.ac.uk/footballresearch, last access: January 24, 2017.

Stoddart, B. (1988). Sport, cultural imperialism, and colonial response in the British Empire. *Comparative Studies in Society and History, 30*.

Taylor, I. (1971a). Soccer consciousness and soccer hooliganism. In S. Cohen (Ed.), *Images of deviance*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Taylor, I. (1971b). "Football Mad"—A speculative sociology of soccer hooliganism. In E. Dunning (Ed.), *The sociology of sport: A selection of readings*. London: Cass.

The match of death: When Dynamo Kiev defied the Nazis. (August 2005). Retrieved from https://amateursport.wordpress.com/2005/08/01/the-'match-of-death'-when-dynamo-kiev-defied-the-nazis/, last access: November 03, 2017.

Vamplev, W. (1983). Unsporting behavior: The control of football and horse-racing crowds in England, 1875-1914. In J. H. Goldstein (Ed.), *Sports violence*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Whannel, G. (1979). *Football, crowd and the press*. Birmingham University: Academic Press.

Whannel, G. (1992). *Fields in vision: Television, sport and cultural transformation*. London: Routledge.

Appendix 1: Articles

The Times, December 05, 1935.

Sporting Life, December 05, 1935.

New Chronicle, December 05, 1935.

The Sunday Mirror, October 10, 1965.

The Sunday Mirror, March 23, 1967.

The Sunday Mirror, May 7, 1967.

The Daily Express, March 24, 1969.

The Daily Mirror, August 13, 1970.

The Daily Mirror, August 20, 1973.

The Sunday Mirror, October 26, 1975.

The Daily Mirror, April 21, 1976.

The Daily Mirror, August 30, 1976.

The Sun, October 4, 1976.

The News of the World, January 29, 1977.

The Liverpool Echo, May 30, 1985.

The Toronto Star, May 30, 1985.

The Sunday Times, May 30, 1985.

The Times, May 30, 1985.

The Toronto Sun, May 30, 1985.

The Times, May 31, 1985.

The Sun, 1990.

The Daily Mirror, June 24, 1996.

The Sun, June 24, 1996.

The Daily Star, June 24, 1996.

The Independent, June 09, 1998.

BBC News, August 9, 1999, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/414948.stm, last accessed: September 28 2017.

BBC News, August 09, 1999. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/ nature/414948.stm, last access: September 28, 2017.

The Guardian, 2 April, 2000, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/football /2000/apr/02/newsstory.sport7, last access: September 28, 2017.

BBC News, March 12, 2002: available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/1731552.stm, last access: June 02, 2017.

BBC Sport, March 12 2002: available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1869482.stm, last access: June 02, 2017.

BBC News, August 26, 2006. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/5289202.stm, last access: June 07, 2017.

The Boston Globe, August 17, 2007. Available at: http://archive.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007 /08/17/religious_conflict_in_harvard_football_schedule/, last access: June 07, 2017.

BBC News, August 26 2009. Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/mobile/uk_ news/8222857.stm, last access: September 27, 2017.

The Washington Post, May 26, 2015. Available at: https://newsela.com/articles/israelipalestinian-soccer/id/10034/, last access: June 07, 2017.

The Daily Mail, June 12, 2016. Available at: http://www.squawka.com/news/how-newspapers-across-europe-reacted -to-hooligans-in-marseille/694576#eEGFoQTscIkVYC4u.97, last access: October 5, 2017.

BBC News, 02 September 2016. Available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/business-37153684, last access: June 09, 2017.

"Football News and Scores", January 09, 2017, available at: http://www.espnfc.com, last access: January 10, 2017.

The Guardian, January 12, 2017.

The Independent, January 12, 2017.

The Independent, January 13, 2017.

The Daily Star, March 22, 2017. Available at: http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/599075/Germany-England -Dortmund-football-fan-violence-hooligans-riot-police-war-zone, last access: September 28 2017.

The Sun, April 12, 2017, available at: https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/football/3328924/europa-league-clash-between -lyon-and-besiktas-delayed-as-thousands-of-fans-pile-onto-pitch-following-violence-in-stands/, last access: October 02, 2017.

Appendix 2: Figures

Figure 1: Available at: http://scottishfa.co.uk/scottish_football.cfm?page=3777, last access: June 02, 2017.

Figures 2 and 3: Standstills from: Gibson, M. (dir.), Braveheart, Paramount Pictures, USA, 1995.

Figure 4: Available at: http://www.livejournal.com/media/194689.html, last accessed June 02, 2017.

Figure 5: Available at: http://www.livejournal.com/media/194689.html, last accessed June 01, 2017.

Figure 6: From Kuper, S. Ajax, the Dutch, the War, London, Orion, 2003.

Figure 7: Available at: http://www.football-hooligan.com/footballhooligannews.html, last access: October 01, 2017.

Figure 8: Available at: http://vivereultras.forumcommunity.net/?t=52726175, last access: October 01, 2017.

Figure 9: Available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/6141770.stm, last access: October 02, 2017.

Figure 10: Available at: http://vivereultras.forumcommunity.net/?t=52726175, last access: October 01, 2017.

Figure 11: Available at: http://www.millwall-history.org.uk/Millwallversusthemob.htm, last access: September 29, 2017.

Figure 12: Available at: http://www.millwall-history.org.uk/Millwallversusthemob.htm, last access: September 20, 2017.

Figure 13: Available at: https://it.pinterest.com/pin/234046511866107782/?lp=true, last access: September 27, 2017.

Figure 14: Available at: http://bleacherreport.com/articles/2375447, last access: Septermber 27, 2017.

Figure 15: *The Daily Express*, January 28, 1978.

Figure 16: Available at: https://www.kuleuven.be/iccp/2000/iccp12/language.htm, last access: September 27, 2017.

Figure 17: *The Sun*, March 22, 2017, available at: https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/football/3151174/germany-vs -england-fans-on-lockdown-with-football-hooligans-targeting-them-as-riot-police-surround-dortmund/,   last   access: September 28, 2017.

Figure 18: *BBC News*, June 12, 2016. Available at: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36510671, last access: September 20, 2017.

Figure 19: *The Mail on Sunday*, June 12, 2016.

Figure 20: *The Daily Star*, 22 March 2017. Available at: http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/599075/Germany-England -Dortmund-football-fan-violence-hooligans-riot-police-war-zone, last access: September 28, 2017.

Figures 21, 22 and 23: *The Liverpool Echo* (16 February 2017), online forum, available at: Theliverpoolecho.co.uk, last access: September 29, 2017.