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ITALIAN PHILOSOPHERS OF EDUCATION,
1945-1965

by

CHARLES ROBERT WOLF

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate
School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY

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VITA

Charles Robert Wolf was born in Chicago, Illinois, on April 1, 1942. He attended public schools in Chicago and was graduated from that city's Nicholas Senn High School in 1960. He studied English and education at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1964.

From 1964 to 1969, Wolf served in the United States Army. In 1970, he enrolled at Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, Illinois, and received the degree of Master of Science in Education in 1972.

Wolf was employed as a secondary school teacher by the Department of Education, New South Wales, Australia, in 1972 and 1973, and by Nazareth Senior Secondary School, Bankstown, New South Wales, Australia, in 1974 and 1975. In 1977 and 1978, he was the English teacher at the House of the Good Shepherd, Chicago, an institution for emotionally disturbed adolescents.

In 1978, Wolf began doctoral study in the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago. He has been employed as a part-time research associate by the Spencer Foundation since 1979.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study begins with a rather simple premise, nicely stated by a popular Italian author:

Whatever has to do with Italy cannot be uninteresting. With all our (Italian) faults and weaknesses, it remains true that the modern world was born in Italy. It was born by means of the work of the Renaissance, that rethinking of the ancient world in philological, historical, and critical terms. We say that the world in which we live was invented by the Italians. America, inasmuch as it is the supreme expression of the modern world, must be interested in those things that have to do with Italy.¹

As Bassani's words suggest, Italy is by no means the least among the nations that have made significant contributions to modern Western civilization. In classical times and in the Renaissance, the Italian peninsula was a center of intellectual activity and a place of ferment in human institutions. The genius of the Italians produced major developments in government, commerce, religion, education, and the various arts and sciences. Although warfare and political instability have sometimes robbed Italy of its unity and strength, the Italian people have shown an admirable resilience that sustains them in time of difficulty and national challenge.

¹Giorgio Bassani, "L'italiese e il ghetto," Italia nostra 195-196 (January-February 1981):4.

In our own century, the Italians have passed through two world wars, two drastic changes in government, and decades of political strife. For all that, Italy enjoys the strongest economy in southern Europe and is a key member of the European community of nations, playing a key role in such organizations as the European Economic Community, the United Nations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It should not be necessary to catalogue the historic accomplishments of Italian scholars or the contemporary involvements of the Italian public and private sectors in international affairs and the regional and world economy. It should be enough to say that, if one considers the area of Europe south of the Alps, Italy is there as a fact that exists, persists, and must not be ignored.

While the achievements of Vittorino Da Feltre or Baldassare Castiglione may excite the Renaissance scholar or the historian of ideas, it is an injustice to the Italians to wave away the subsequent centuries of their cultural development, as is sometimes done. Certainly there are high points in their more recent history that are worthy of notice. The reflections of Italian enlightenment thinkers and the artistic outpouring that accompanied the nineteenth century struggles for national independence and unity bear mentioning.

Early in our own century, American and northern European intellectuals became aware of the pronouncements of the philosopher Benedetto Croce, whose prominence in English-speaking countries was aided by the translations and biographical material provided by R. G. Collingwood.

Nor were the Italians silent in education; the Gentile Reform of 1923 attracted some attention among American educators, and several articles on that reform and related matters appeared in the 1920's and 1930's in the Yearbook of Teachers College, Columbia University.²

Unfortunately, those Italian educational efforts that attracted international attention in the 1920's and 1930's took place under the aegis of Fascism, and in retrospect they are tainted by association with that system. When World War II ended and the Fascists were defeated, America sent an expert on education to help rebuild the Italian system of schooling. Then the English-speaking world, it seems, forgot about Italy except as a place to spend vacations and a source of delightful music and cuisine. Few American or British university scholars followed the course of postwar Italy in terms of intellectual and educational developments. A few books and journal articles have appeared on Italian education in general, or on limited aspects of Italian education, but none has concentrated on the work of specific philosophers of education. Since 1945, only one doctoral dissertation has been completed in the United States concerning any aspect of philosophy of education in Italy: it is a dissertation filed in 1970 by Gari Lesnoff-Caravaglia on the educational implications of the philosophy of Nicola Abbagnano, an existentialist.

²For example, see Ugo Spirito, "Italy," in I. L. Kandel, ed., The Educational Yearbook of the International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University, 1924 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), pp. 331-352.

If it is judged to have no other value, the present study should demonstrate that Italian philosophy and philosophical pedagogy did not wither after the Second World War. There were definite cultural changes, to be sure; but the crucial enterprises of learning, thinking, and educating continued in a most vigorous way.

The Cultural Aftermath of War

If comparisons are dangerous, it is risky to compare pre-World War II Italy to prewar Germany, or to any other "ideological" dictatorship. Certainly, Mussolini and his followers attempted to mold Italy according to their liking, but their success was never complete. There was a peculiar ad hoc character to Italian Fascism, a tentativeness that resulted in the announcement of grandiose plans followed by a vacillation in their execution. Moreover, the element of theatrics in Fascist ideological posturing often contradicted the undertones of violence. The Italians, with their natural sense of irony and instinct for self-protection, tolerated Mussolini but took him hardly more seriously than any other ruler who had appeared in recent times. That there was oppression under the Fascist regime is indubitable, but it was probably a less onerous oppression than that suffered under other totalitarian regimes. It is revealing to note that many Italians take a peculiar comfort in the knowledge that the worst atrocity of World War II in Italy, the slaughter of three hundred Jews and political dissidents in the Ardeatine caves outside of Rome, was committed not by Italians but

by occupying Germans.³

The insightful and entertaining historian and journalist, Giorgio Bocca, describes the Mussolini era in these words:

Mussolini was an Italian and he modeled his government upon the tastes of Italians, on their inclination toward public goodness and secret or private wickedness, on magnanimous gestures from the podium and hidden blows. He was violent, but he did not behave cruelly toward his adversaries; he made revolution, but so that he could soon put on a morning coat and present himself at court. After the time of armed groups and violence . . . Fascism settled down into an easy police state: innocuous anti-Fascists were left in peace; workers hostile to the regime became "sleeping" enemies, even if only drowsing; even the state of prisons and house arrest was relatively tolerable, certainly better than the prisons that the democratic republic uses for terrorists.⁴

Confirmations of Bocca's opinion appear in the historical records of the period: Croce, for example, who in his later years was an open critic of the regime, was bothered by the Fascist police only once.

For Italy, the end of World War II meant more than a mere cessation of hostilities. It was the end of the political system that had dominated Italian life for twenty years, sustained by the personality of a strong ruler and a widely publicized ideology. Mussolini's last attempt at political survival, the Salò Republic, failed in April 1945, and few can forget the grisly tale of Mussolini's corpse dangling upside

³An example of the Fascists' restraint in matters of social policy may be drawn from the favorable references to Jews in the Enciclopedia Italiana, the encyclopedia created as a cultural project by the Fascist government. See Enciclopedia Italiana, 1st ed, s.v. "Ebrei," by Giorgio Levi Della Vida and Gioacchino Sera. In general, pressures to persecute minorities in wartime Italy originated in Germany and were part of the price of Mussolini's alliance with Hitler.

⁴Giorgio Bocca, In che cosa credono gli italiani? (Milan: Longanesi & C., 1982), p. 80.

down from a signpost at a Milan filling station. Although King Vittorio Emanuele III had remained nominally in power throughout the war, his gestures of dismissing Mussolini as prime minister and of approving the subsequent governments' rapprochement with the Allies were not sufficient to guarantee the survival of the Italian monarchy. The referendum of June 1946 determined that Italy would become a republic.⁵ With the Fascist party destroyed, new political parties came to the fore: the Italian Communist party, closely associated with the anti-Axis partisan movement; the Christian Democrats, linked to the church; two democratic socialist groups, and a number of smaller, non-Fascist parties of the center. Political changes, however, were only part of the upheaval that occurred in Italy as the aftermath of the war.

Bocca writes of that turbulent time in this way:

Twenty years of Fascism, and then twenty months of civil war, as well as full-scale warfare, fought in the cities and in the countryside, with slow destruction of houses and factories, of railways and bridges, from Reggio Calabria and Taranto onward, throughout the peninsula traversed by the Anglo-Americans in cautious advance and the Germans in slow retreat. And then, in that April of 1945, the end of our war, the sudden realization of the actual condition of our country; of its destruction, and of its dualities, of that which had been borne in the belly for millennia and that which had just arrived in the wake of the conquering armies--jeeps and nylons, democracy and consumer goods. . . .⁶

⁵For a lucid summary of the historical events, see H. Hearder and D. P. Waley, A Short History of Italy (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 232-235.

⁶Giorgio Bocca, Storia della repubblica italiana (Milan: Rizzoli Editore, 1982), p. 5.

Fascism had tried to create a totalitarian society that controlled every aspect of life, including economics, culture, education, and the press. In reality, the Fascists not only did not manage to control the Italians completely, but the Fascists themselves lacked the unity they would have imposed on their country. Still, many of the intelligentsia in the postwar era believed in the need for a purge of "Fascist elements" from those institutions that the party had touched. In effect, a cultural revolution was called for in those years. Part of the postwar reaction against Fascism was a reaction, among intellectuals, against the brand of philosophy that had served the Fascist state. Reordering the philosophies that were to be respectable in academic circles had inevitable consequences for education in its several aspects.

The Enduring Italian Values

Although the end of World War II brought about political and cultural changes within Italian society, it would be wrong to suppose that the postwar era saw cultural changes of such magnitude that all traditional values were swept away. In fact, history reveals no examples of such drastic events: even the revolutionary Russians and Chinese express fondness for some of their ancient ways. What the intellectuals demand and how the masses respond may well be two different matters.

The well-known author Luigi Barzini suggests that the failure of Fascism was due, to a large extent, to the Italians' ability to see

through the sham and theatricality of the regime, something Mussolini himself was evidently unable to do.⁷ Italians, Barzini suggests, are naturally skeptical of ideologies and political systems:

They believe that all ideologies are equally right and wrong, that there is no abstract solution to their problems, that the world can somehow be made to function under whatever political institutions seem easier to accept at the moment, because all of them will always function defectively in Italy, where they have all failed, at one time or another, and will all fail sooner or later.⁸

As a correlate of this general skepticism regarding the state and its programs and laws, ". . . all official institutions are weak and unstable in Italy: the law is flexible and unreliable, the state discredited and dominated by powerful persons or groups. . . ."⁹

What keeps Italian society from disintegrating, Barzini suggests, are certain traditional concepts and a code of social rules. Early in life most Italians learn ". . . that life is fundamentally a merciless game; that man should find his protection in the warp and woof of society; that curbs on man's instincts constitute the essence of civilized living."¹⁰ In that game, they learn that individual capacities and shrewdness are major sources of personal security. The shrewd (furbo) individual is usually admired by all, even by his enemies. But beyond individual genius lies a more important entity: the power of the

⁷Luigi Barzini, The Italians (New York: Atheneum, 1965), chapter 5, passim.

⁸Barzini, The Italians, p. 220.

⁹Barzini, The Italians, p. 181.

¹⁰Barzini, The Italians, p. 180.

family. "The first source of power is the family," writes Barzini, ". . . a stronghold in a hostile land."¹¹ Within the family, explains that author, the ancient ideals of the Italians are preserved and protected from contaminating alien influences. It is the duty of each individual to contribute to the well-being of the family, to defend it, to enrich it, and to make it feared and respected. This devotion to the welfare of the family is often the cause of what appears to be an Italian's political unreliability and opportunism. One forms alliances and changes them as circumstances dictate so that family members will not suffer. It is important to be part of one power group or another, but it is undesirable to be too conspicuous in any group: "One should always leave open doors behind one," advises Barzini. "This is also one of the reasons why one should always try to have friends among one's opponents."¹²

The discussion of families inevitably leads to the matter of children. Parenthood and particularly motherhood are still considered highly desirable states by the Italians; perhaps no other people venerate mothers as enthusiastically as the Italians, among whom mamma mia! and madonna! are common interjections in many situations, and senza mamma ("motherless") is widely considered the worst condition that can befall a person. As children represent the continuation of the family, they are greatly valued by most Italians, often to the extent of being

¹¹Barzini, The Italians, p. 190.

¹²Barzini, The Italians, p. 222.

pampered and spoiled. Barzini remarks on the spectacle of a crowd gathering around a pretty baby.¹³ Parents strive to make their children attractive: nowhere do the shops sell more elaborate children's clothes than in Italy.

Children attend schools, of course. Schooling serves to advance family interests by allowing the young to ascend the social ladder if they are able, and parental pressure to succeed in school is often powerful. It is common for middle class parents to press their children to attend classical schools in preparation for professional study at the universities.

The almost universal desire for the advancement of the younger generation keeps the matter of schooling topical in Italy.¹⁴ Ironically, most of the schools are state schools, which suffer from the same bureaucratic weaknesses as other government agencies; nevertheless, they are expected to perform efficiently and well, and the fact that too often they do not is the subject of much political debate. From the controversy arise frequent attempts to reform or reorganize the schools, attempts that are usually frustrated by necessary concessions to opposing power blocs in the Italian parliament. An example of this chronic problem is the ill-fated work of the Gonella commission, a group of

¹³Barzini, The Italians, p. 193.

¹⁴The investigator, riding on a Rome streetcar, once overheard two middle aged, middle class women discussing the state of schooling. They deplored youth's general lack of discipline and blamed it on the schools, which, they agreed, discipline the young insufficiently and demand too much of their time and attention. "The school ought to serve the family," both agreed, and not the converse.

parliamentarians involved from 1947 to 1949 in an effort to draft a proposal for restructuring Italian schools.¹⁵ The result of this parliamentary inquiry was the draft of a reform bill that attempted to please all groups and in the end was pleasing to none. A more modest reform program was enacted in 1955; the subsequent stormy legislative history of Italian schooling may be traced in various sources.¹⁶

One may conclude that the Italian school is perpetually in peril, caught between two conflicting values: the Italians' disdain for government and state organizations, and their love for the family and children. Thus the meaning of education and the ideal shape of schooling were and are controversial issues in Italy, and those matters have lent themselves to interpretation, research, and scholarship.

Schools and Universities in Italy

While most Italian philosophers of education hold that the terms "education" and "schooling" are not synonymous, it is nevertheless obvious that much of what those scholars say and write refers specifically to schooling and is intended to influence the practices of teachers and school administrators. Such persons, of course, constitute much of the clientele of those involved in the academic discipline of education. Schooling, the system of formal education, is therefore a vital matter

¹⁵A report on this group's activities is provided in Giorgio Canestri and Giuseppe Ricuperati, La scuola in Italia dalla legge Casati a oggi (Turin: Loescher Editore, 1976; 1981), pp. 234-239.

¹⁶For example, Canestri and Ricuperati provide a careful documentation of political initiatives regarding education.

to the philosopher of education.

It may be useful at this point to summarize the essential features of the Italian school system, as these schools are mentioned in the literature of education that is either quoted or referred to in this study.

At the beginning of a child's life is the possibility of attending a scuola materna or asilo nido, a preschool that may enroll children as young as two years and keep them until they are old enough to attend elementary school. Most of these schools are in the nonpublic sector; they are private or run by religious orders or special nonprofit groups. A few are controlled by local government bodies (the "communes"), while some kindergartens are attached to state teacher-training schools.

Ordinarily, state schooling begins at the elementary level. Under the law of December 24, 1957, elementary schools enroll children at the age of six years or older. The period of elementary schooling is normally five years, divided into a three-year and a two-year term, each of which is followed by oral and written examinations. According to the school law of 1955, the curriculum of the elementary school must include: religion, civil and moral education, gymnastics, history, geography, natural history, penmanship, singing, and manual and practical training. The state attempts to provide special elementary schools for those children who do not meet the physical or mental standards of the ordinary elementary school.

The Italian Constitution guarantees private and religious organizations the right to establish schools and educational institutes, but in order for their diplomas or certificates to be recognized, those schools must meet the standards for state schools as set by the Ministry of Public Instruction.¹⁷

Teachers for elementary schools are trained in teachers' institutes that operate at the upper secondary level. Additional information about those institutes is provided in the discussion of upper secondary schools.

A law passed on December 31, 1962, established the single lower secondary school (scuola media unica), abolishing the older differentiated schools. Lower secondary school classes extend over a period of three years, and attendance is compulsory. Tuition is free at state elementary and lower secondary schools, but not at private schools. The curriculum of the lower secondary schools includes religion, Italian language and literature, history, civics, geography, modern foreign languages, mathematics, natural science, art, technology and graphics, music, and physical education. Latin is an elective for third-year pupils who wish to attend classical high schools. Special classes are provided for slow learners. The state schools also provide an "after school" program of subsidiary studies and complementary activities, all of which are elective. Oral and written exams are administered at the

¹⁷Information about elementary schools is drawn from Facts About Italy 2: The Elementary or Primary School (New York: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1969), p. 2.

end of the third year, and their outcomes determine the levels of upper secondary schooling to which pupils will be admitted. Teachers in the lower secondary schools must have academic degrees, and they are appointed to state secondary schools based on the results of competitive examinations. Teachers with five years' teaching service may take eligibility examinations for principalship.¹⁸

True differentiation along vocational lines appears in the upper secondary schools, of which there are five major types and a number of subtypes. The duration of upper secondary enrollment is generally four or five years depending on the type of school attended. For those who are planning to attend state universities to study liberal arts, medicine, or law, the appropriate secondary training is a five-year course in the upper gymnasium and classical lyceum; as the names of the schools suggest, the studies provided there are heavily classical in nature. The scientific lyceum enrolls students for a five-year period and prepares them for university study in the sciences. Unlike the classical lyceum, it requires no preparation in ancient Greek. The normal school, or teacher-training institute, is a four-year secondary school that prepares teachers for elementary schools. A variety of technical and professional secondary schools exist, providing specialized instruction in such vocational fields as business, industrial arts, surveying, navigation, agriculture, viticulture, foreign languages, tourism, home

¹⁸Information about lower secondary schools is drawn from Facts About Italy 3: The Lower Secondary School (New York: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1969).

economics, nursing, and social work. There are also various artistic schools and academies that provide secondary-level instruction, generally on a four-year basis, to those interested in fine arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama, and dance. Teachers in upper secondary schools are usually persons with university degrees in the subjects they teach.¹⁹

Italian universities are divided into several facoltà, which correspond roughly to the American university's "schools" or "divisions." Within the facoltà are various istituti (institutes) to take charge of particular courses of study or research, and they are subdivided into cattedre ("chairs") representing the prescribed subjects of study within the istituti. There is a single degree, the laurea, the pursuit of which may require five or six years of study depending on the requirements of the facoltà.

In Italian universities, the study of education (pedagogia) occurs both in the facoltà di magistero (teacher-training division) and the facoltà di lettere e filosofia (division of literature and philosophy). The facoltà di magistero was originally intended to be an institution for preparing secondary school teachers, who must have university degrees and are entitled to be called professore. Frequently, the magistero is attended by elementary school teachers who have diplomas from licei magistrali (normal schools) and who wish to teach in secon-

¹⁹Information about upper secondary schools is drawn from Facts About Italy 9: The Upper Secondary School (New York: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 1970).

dary schools. It also accepts students who do not intend to become teachers but who wish to take advantage of its modest admission standards while preparing to transfer to another division of the university. Preparation for secondary school teaching involves specialization in a subject and not in teaching per se. In fact, the aspiring teacher need not attend a magistero; any facoltà will suffice as long as the degree earned is appropriate to the teacher's specialization. Courses in the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching are offered in the magistero for those who elect them. There is no practicum involved at this level of teacher training, and selection for a position is by competitive examination following completion of the degree.

Education at the most theoretical level, pedagogia, is considered a subdiscipline of philosophy and it is therefore usually taught by professors of philosophy in the facoltà di lettere e filosofia, which may have its own istituto di pedagogia. Such courses do not actually compete with those offered by the magistero. Those who take them are usually not preparing to be teachers; they are philosophy students who wish to take examinations in pedagogy in order to qualify for chairs in pedagogy at state universities, either in a magistero or in another facoltà di lettere e filosofia.²⁰

²⁰Interview with Dr. Massimo Carlucci, Librarian, Division of Literature and Philosophy, University of Rome, 20 May 1982.

The Vocabulary of Education

To understand the educational enterprise in any society, it is useful to know the meanings of terms that are used by that society's educators. One of the difficult tasks of translation is to find close equivalents in the reader's language to specialized words used in original sources. The difficulty is so great that the reader often ends up quite confused; hence it is useful at some point to provide fuller explanations of the terms which will be encountered.

What follows is an explanatory listing of some of the most common specialized words found in Italian sources on education. The first group consists of words for and about education and the activities of teaching.

Educazione is, in its primary sense, ". . . activity intentionally directed at promoting the development of the human person and his or her integration into the life of society."²¹ In educational discourse, the social sense of the word is usually emphasized. Another reference defines educazione in this way:

. . . the transmission and learning of cultural techniques. . . of custom, production, and behavior, by means of which a human group is able to satisfy its needs, to protect itself against the hostility of the physical and biological environment, and to work and live together in a more or less orderly and peaceful way.²²

²¹Mauro Laeng, Lessico pedagogico (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1978), p. 158.

²²Nicola Abbagnano, ed., Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "educazione."

This source points out that in advanced civil societies, the transmission of culture is really focused on the individuals and it aims at their mastery of techniques, their character formation, their maturation, and therefore the development of something called "individual culture." In common parlance, educazione is used in much the same sense as "individual culture" or "acceptable behavior," and its evidence is in the refinement and good taste of a person's comportment. A rude, ill-behaved person is referred to as maleducato (literally, "badly educated"), whether or not the person in question is illiterate or a university graduate. Thus the common understanding of educazione is often far from anything having to do with schooling. This may be one of the reasons why educazione appears in writings on education less frequently than the term pedagogia.

Pedagogia is the province of the scholar; it is the systematic study of education. Although such a phrase as "philosophy of education" is not unintelligible to the Italian scholar, the preferred term is pedagogia, and one who practices it is a pedagogista. In effect, all of the individuals who are included in the following chapters are pedagogisti, and not always, strictly speaking, "philosophers of education." Pedagogia ". . . presupposes an art of education, and upon this it carries out the reflections of philosophy and the sciences in order to expand upon it and to improve its practices."²³ Abbagnano's dictionary elaborates thus:

²³Laeng, Lessico, p. 249.

This term that originally meant the practice or profession of the educator has come to mean theory of education in general: one understands by theory not only an orderly and generalized elaboration of the modalities and possibilities of education, but also an occasional reflection on some of the presuppositions relevant to educational practice.²⁴

Abbagnano points out that in classical antiquity, pedagogy was not considered autonomous but was either a part of ethics or politics; hence it is historically concerned with both ethical and social reflection.

Didattica is the science and art of teaching, typically as applied in the classroom. It ". . . enters fully into pedagogy as the science and art of education, constituting a section or specific branch of it."²⁵ Didattica is necessarily less philosophical and theoretical than pedagogia, from which it descends, and in turn it gives rise to specific practices. The term appears in a major philosophical encyclopedia as ". . . a complex of conventions that arise from pedagogy and concern the practice of teaching (especially in schools) and its method; thus it is often considered the same as methodology."²⁶

Insegnamento is either the act or the content of teaching, and it is the object of didattica. It is considered to be synonymous with istruzione ("instruction") and the relatively obsolete term dottrina, "teaching activity," although the latter term carries a connotation of authority that suggests "indoctrination" to some ears. Insegnamento is further elaborated as ". . . the 'expressive' moment of teaching activ-

²⁴Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "pedagogia."

²⁵Laeng, Lessico, p. 134.

²⁶Enciclopedia filosofica, 2d ed., s.v. "didattica".

ity. . . where it is an extension and indication of the 'sign' (segno) and of its relation to the meaning. . . " of the sign in the mind of the learner.²⁷

One who teaches (especially at the elementary level) is a maestro or maestra, derived from maggiorente, meaning one who is elder or greater (from the root mag from which also comes magnus). "The term," writes Laeng, "encompasses the two principal aspects of authority and competence: and as such it has been transferred to academics from ancient times."²⁸

Inasmuch as education is supposed, by its definition, to induce or transmit certain kinds of knowledge as well as socially acceptable behavior, it may also be useful to explain some of the psychological and epistemological terms that are employed by Italian scholars.

Consapevolezza frequently appears in pedagogical writings. It evokes ". . . the possibility of paying attention to one's own mode of being and one's own activities, and of expressing them in language."²⁹ It is similar to the English-language concept of awareness. It is considered to be the factual basis on which a higher philosophical notion, that of coscienza, is built.

²⁷Laeng, Lessico, p. 207.

²⁸Laeng, Lessico, p. 231.

²⁹Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "consapevolezza."

Coscienza is an important term in the more abstractly philosophical literature. Although in common speech it is sometimes confused with consapevolezza, the philosopher tends to presuppose that ordinary meaning and to add to it the notion of ". . . a relation of the soul to itself, of an intrinsic relation of the 'interior' or 'spiritual' man, by which he can know himself in an immediate and privileged way and thus judge himself in a sure and infallible manner."³⁰ The notion of judging suggests that the philosopher is dealing with the moral aspect of knowledge, which is seen as closely related to the possibility of self-knowledge. In the nonbanal sense, it is roughly equivalent to "conscience". Abbagnano discerns a contemporary decline in the importance attributed to coscienza. This decline he ascribes to the influence of empirical science, mistrust of private testimony, and a failing general belief in individual responsibility.

Conoscenza, in ordinary usage, is similar to "acquaintance." For the philosopher, it means ". . . a technique for the ascertainment of any object whatsoever, or the possession or ability to use such a technique."³¹ Although it suggests a process of ascertainment or confirmation, it may be used in a weak sense to mean familiarity with or factual knowledge about some object or state of affairs.

³⁰Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "coscienza".

³¹Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "conoscenza".

Saggezza might be translated as "prudence" or "wisdom," and it refers to the rational conduct of human affairs. It is ". . . not knowledge of high or sublime things, remote from the human community, as is sapienza: it is the knowledge of human affairs and the best way to conduct them."³²

Sapienza, rarely stated as a goal of education, is wisdom of the highest kind. Its object is that which is most sublime, as, for example, the divine. "In modern philosophy the term has conserved its meaning as perfect knowledge whether by means of its completeness or by the nature of its object."³³

Mente is the usual psychologist's word for the mind. It is roughly equivalent to intellect or understanding. Less frequently, it is a synonym for spirito, mind conceived of as ". . . the aggregate of the superior functions of the soul, intellect, and will."³⁴

Intelletto is quite comparable to mente in its more empirical sense, signifying first of all the faculty of thinking in general, and more specifically a particular cognitive activity.

Anima is generally translated as soul but need not be used in a purely metaphysical or supernatural sense. For the Italian, it is ". . . the principle of life, of sensibility, and of spiritual activities (however understood and clarified), insofar as they constitute an

³²Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "saggezza."

³³Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "sapienza."

³⁴Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "mente."

entity by itself or a substance."³⁵ It is considered to be the manifestation of an irreducible autonomous (individual) principle, and thus it is comparable to the Greek psyche, which is perhaps more readily understood by English-speaking readers.

Spirito is the most difficult to translate of the "mental" terms, yet it is widely used, particularly by idealist and Christian spiritualist philosophers. It is analogous to the French esprit and the German Geist. In its older Latin form it appeared in the writings of the Christian scholastic philosophers as the rational soul, a concept at once psychological and theological. Its ancient origin is recalled by its relation to the pneuma or animating breath in Stoic philosophy and its possible application to incorporeal entities such as angels, demons, or the souls of the dead.³⁶ There is no single word in English that conveys this dual sense of intellect and spirit; its very ambiguity has made it attractive to certain philosophers who may wish to imply either more or less than they are actually saying. In this study, the word has been translated as either "mind" or "spirit" depending upon the context in which it is used and the probable intentions of the author. Spirituale, its adjectival derivation, may be understood as mental or spiritual, and if both senses are evidently intended, a clumsy but useful compromise is possible in translating the word as "psychospiritual."

³⁵Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "anima."

³⁶Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "spirito."

Designating Theoretical Orientations

While it may be useful to understand the vocabulary of a nation's educators, in the Italian setting it is equally important to know the theoretical orientations of educators. One of the major purposes of this study is to identify Italian philosophers of education according to theoretical groupings. It is not an exercise in arbitrary pigeonholing. Each particular school of educational thought is based on common assumptions and, to some extent, on a specialized vocabulary. To know the orientation of a philosopher or educator is to know much about the assumptions that person shares with others in the field and how particular statements are intended or interpreted. Conversely, an examination of the distinctive vocabulary and manner of reasoning of a given educator may influence the reader's assignment of that person to a certain theoretical group.

It is commonly said that in Italian social and political life there are only three orientations: Catholic, Marxist, and laic. Like many generalizations, this is an oversimplification. Although the Marxist and Catholic groups were fairly discrete and identifiable in the 1945-1965 period, the same was not true of the laics. They were divided into several schools of thought, including the idealist, historicist, problematicist, and Deweyan orientations. An example of these groupings, often called correnti (currents) or filoni (strands), makes up a considerable portion of this study. To better understand what will be encountered in the ensuing pages, some further definitions are presented here:

Laicismo (laicism) is defined by its defenders as ". . . the principle of autonomy of human activity; that is, the necessity that such activity proceeds according to its own rules that may not be externally imposed, or by ends or interests different from those that inspire it."³⁷ In particular, it stands for a principle of separation of church and state. Laics do not necessarily express antagonism toward religion; they may believe that it is in the interests of all to sustain laws and institutions that all can accept, free of sectarian influence. Laicism's critics claim that it is ". . . rationalism, immanentism, absolute humanism;" and that it engenders a belief that ". . . historic destiny can be actuated only by historic forces."³⁸ They tend to equate it with anticlericalism, an antagonistic struggle against organized religion that nevertheless claims to respect religious sentiment.

The form of laic philosophy that pervaded the Mussolini era and gradually declined in the 1950's and 1960's was idealismo (idealism). Its definition, according to Kant, is ". . . the theory that declares the existence of objects in space outside of oneself either simply doubtful and indemonstrable or false and impossible."³⁹ An absolutistic idealism derived by Italian scholars from Hegel declares that Mind or Spirit (spirito, corresponding to Hegel's Geist) is the single principle of history, outside of which nothing can exist. In Mussolini's time,

³⁷Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "laicismo."

³⁸Enciclopedia filosofica, 2d ed., s.v. "laicismo."

³⁹Quoted in the Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "idealismo."

that form of neo-Hegelian idealism was restated in terms of political immanentism, in which the state is conceived as a living absolute, the supreme determination of Mind in history. After World War II and the overthrow of Mussolini's regime, those idealists who remained in the fold had to devise more widely acceptable interpretations of their philosophy.

Storicismo, or historicism, also has a Hegelian origin but is less rigid about the all-importance of the state. Historicists conceive of education as ". . . the autonomous and progressive history of man's formation, whose educational institutions are only instruments; and pedagogy as the history of culture, in whose dialectic its (education's) problems are produced and resolved."⁴⁰ Historicist educators tend to emphasize culture and the moral development of humanity.

Problematicismo (problematicism) is a form of philosophical agnosticism that opposes absolutistic concepts of knowledge of any kind. Its partisans affirm that ". . . the content of knowledge under consideration is not a principle, but rather a problem."⁴¹ Problematicism is less a discrete school of philosophy than an attitude of "radical anti-dogmatism" shared by certain philosophers.

⁴⁰ Santino Caramella, Pedagogia: Saggio di voci nuove (Rome: Armando Armando Editore, 1967), p. 110.

⁴¹ Enciclopedia filosofica, 2d ed., s.v. "problematicismo," by E. Severino.

Attivismo, or activism, was a major presence in Italian pedagogy in the 1950's and 1960's. Although it is most often associated with Dewey, its sources are actually much broader, encompassing most of the experimental and progressive educators of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. Attivismo is defined in the Dizionario di filosofia as ". . . the attitude (sometimes rationalized in philosophical theory) that assumes as its principle that of subordinating all values, including truth, to the requirements of action, or rather to the outcome or success of action."⁴² That definition of attivismo brings it close to the pragmatism of William James and the instrumentalism of John Dewey. In general, it is built upon the primacy of practical activity over speculation. It is opposed to abstract or mechanical schemes of education and the passive absorption of instruction; it emphasizes educational activities that elicit the free and autonomous forces within learners. It ". . . exalts the creative activity of mind, the deed, from which every value takes meaning."⁴³

Marxismo (Marxism) as a political concept should be no novelty to the reader. As a philosophy it relies upon the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and others, but to derive a theory of education from it has often required Marxist educators to interpolate heavily. Italian Marxists have a valuable source of pedagogical reflection in the works of Antonio Gramsci, an early and articulate Italian Communist leader.

⁴²Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "attivismo."

⁴³Dizionario delle idee, 1977 ed., s.v. "attivismo."

Christian theories of education are generally collected under the heading of spiritualismo ("spiritualism"). Spiritualismo in any sense (not necessarily the Christian sense) is a doctrine that draws the data for philosophical or scientific research from human consciousness. It tends to negate the reality of the external world except as a locus for objects of consciousness. It reduces science to imperfect or false knowledge and finds sufficient data in consciousness to construct the world of nature and history. Usually, spiritualists find a divine principle in consciousness which they equate to the Judeo-Christian God. They are also likely to find manifestations of that divine principle in the world of human institutions and traditions which they then defend in a vigorously conservative manner. Spiritualismo depends heavily on a theory of moral conscience as the interior reflection or introspection that guides experience and speculation. This philosophy posits ". . . the spirituality of the soul, liberty, responsibility for actions, moral obligations, unselfish virtue, the worthiness of justice, the beauty of charity;" and the existence of a transcendent God.⁴⁴

Of Universities and Publishers

Although it is not a matter of paramount significance, it is sometimes useful to be able to confirm an opinion as to a scholar's theoretical orientation by other means than textual analysis or biographical research. It has been pointed out by Professor Nanni of the Pontifical Salesian University of Rome that philosophers of education of given

⁴⁴Dizionario di filosofia, s.v. "spiritualismo."

orientations have gathered at certain universities and have tended to be published by certain publishers.⁴⁵ Thus it is sometimes possible to deduce scholars' intellectual positions from their university affiliations or even from publishers' imprints in their books.

Before World War II, the neo-Hegelian idealists who were the official philosophers and educators of the Fascist state had their first bastion at the University of Pisa; it was followed by strong positions at the universities of Florence and Rome, although of course the Mussolini regime attempted to establish sympathetic scholars at all universities. After the war, the University of Florence became the center of Deweyan doctrine, whence Deweyans dispersed to the universities of other major cities. A sizable group assembled at the University of Rome, where Deweyanism became a dominant force.

The Catholic philosophers of education have been closely associated with the Sacred Heart University of Milan and various papal institutions, as might be expected; moreover, Catholic educators appeared in numbers in certain state universities, notably at the universities of Padua, Genoa, and Messina.

As of 1965, neither Marxists nor problematicists had established redoubts in particular universities, although the quality of G. M. Bertin's (problematicist) work at the University of Bologna generated respect and a certain following in later years.

⁴⁵Interview with Fr. Carlo Nanni, Pontifical Salesian University, Rome, Italy, 1 April 1982.

It is no accident that most of the Deweyan scholars have published through La Nuova Italia Editrice of Florence with notable regularity. That house has had a long and close association with the Deweyan scholars at the University of Florence, inasmuch as it was founded by Ernesto Codignola, who also had much to do with the establishment of the Deweyan-activist School of Florence. For Catholic educators, a major publishing house is La Scuola of Brescia, and two of the smaller exclusively Catholic publishers that have issued educational books are Vita e Pensiero of Milan and A.V.E. of Rome. The Marxists have tended to publish through Editori Riuniti of Rome, a specifically Marxist-oriented concern. Material of a laic and critical or politically left-of-center sort, including the work of problematicists, has been published by Armando Armando of Rome, while similar material has come forth from G. C. Sansoni of Florence.

The use of a specific publisher is not an infallible indication of an author's sympathies, nor is university affiliation; however, grouping tendencies are discernible. Such tendencies may be taken as evidence of the political nature of publishers and universities in Italy.

Problems of Language and Translation

Most of the published sources examined in the course of this investigation are available in the Italian language only. It was a principal task of the investigator to read them, paraphrase them, and translate appropriate selections. All quotations in the following chapters are his own translations unless indicated otherwise in text or

footnotes. He alone is responsible for errors in translation or interpretation, and he solicits comments and criticisms from those whose knowledge of Italian may be more extensive.

Inasmuch as translation is rarely a simple matter, it may be well to point out for the reader what peculiar difficulties are encountered in preparing Italian material for English-speaking readers.

Italian is a much more inflected language than is English. This fact explains certain notable characteristics of Italian academic prose style. All nouns, pronouns, and adjectives have both number and gender, and there is no "neuter" gender. This lends a certain "sexist" appearance to Italian prose. For example, such words as "student" and "professor" (lo studente and il professore) are masculine, and pronouns that refer to either word must also be masculine. Feminine forms of these words exist, but they are awkward (la studentessa and la professoressa) and are seldom used. To be faithful to the original sources, the translator must use the corresponding masculine pronouns (e.g., "he" or "him"), but the reader should understand that no contemporary Italian educator proposes that education be only for boys and men.

The inflection of adjectives and relative pronouns allows a writer to introduce strings of adjectival phrases and relative clauses into the body of a sentence, each of which is headed by an adjective or a pronoun that refers to only one of the antecedent nouns. The result is clear enough in Italian, but it is unintelligible if rendered literally in

English. Such sentences require considerable revision in the course of translation.

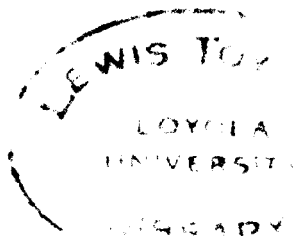
In general, inflection permits a looser, lengthier sentence structure, and the difficulty of comprehending such sentences is compounded by the fact that there is no rule in Italian against the comma splice. Independent clauses are often joined by commas only, and the translator must decide whether to change a comma to a semicolon, add a conjunction, or end the sentence and begin a new one. On the other hand, there is no rule against verbless sentences, and the translator must decide whether to let such sentence fragments stand or to supply them with likely verbs.

Italian historical writing may be confusing at first because of the variety of tenses employed. The language has three past tenses (excluding special compounds), but the specifically "historical" past (the passato remoto) is used most frequently in the South and is considered inelegant by some northern writers. Many historians prefer to write history in the present tense, probably for the sake of simplicity, while some affect the future tense as if they themselves were standing at some point in the past regarding what is yet to come. In such cases, the translator can only ask what the writer probably intended and what would be acceptable to English-speaking readers.

The possibility of writing ambiguously is always present and attractive to Italian writers. Italian, it has been observed, lacks the clarity of French. Italian writers seem to enjoy exploiting the possi-

bilities offered by the imprecision of their language. The ambiguity of such terms as coscienza and spirito has been commented upon in a previous section of this chapter. Similarly, in interpreting biographical material one may be confounded by the use of such terms as nipote and cugino, literally "nephew" and "cousin" but nipote may be used to mean "grandchild" or "great-grandchild" or almost any descendant, while cugino may apply to a broad range of relatives, including those who are technically in-laws. Parente, a false cognate of "parent," actually means any older family member such as an uncle or aunt. For the biographer, what appears to be important is that a person belongs to a certain family, but to investigate the relationship too closely may border on indelicacy.

It is common among Italian writers to affect certain literary references and figures of speech. Extended metaphors are often present in scholarly writing, but a bit of analysis is usually sufficient to understand the origin and direction of such metaphors. What is sometimes disconcerting is the Italian habit of personifying abstract entities. This is particularly evident in material about intellectual movements. A writer is likely to say, for example, that "personalism teaches thus-and-so," when it would be more accurate to say that "personalists teach thus-and-so." A possible explanation is that a movement is considered to be a collection of human minds, and it takes on a collective human identity; thus it teaches (or believes or denies) whatever its individual members teach (or believe or deny). Another



favorite rhetorical device of Italian writers is the synecdoche, by means of which a single example is understood to stand for an entire class of things. Instead of speaking of "schooling" or "the schools," a scholar may write about "the school" (la scuola), meaning any school and every school. Similarly, one may encounter references to "the university," "the student," and so forth; this stylistic device is well-known enough in English to present no particular problem of interpretation, but alternate translations may be required to avoid unduly pretentious or awkward prose.

Some words, such as names of persons and places, cannot be translated. Great care has been taken to respect individual names. Unlike some British scholars, who prefer to render Vittorio Emanuele III as "Victor Emmanuel III," the investigator holds that this practice leads to difficulties and absurdities, the least of which is that "Victor Emmanuel" simply was not the king's name. Although the investigator has seen Antonio Rosmini renamed Anthony Rosmini in an older English source, he will refrain from anglicizing Benedetto Croce and Ugo Spirito into Benedict Croce and Hugh Spirito, or worse still, Benedict Cross and Hugh Mind. Let Italians be Italians.

In some cases, minor adjustments have been made in capitalization or punctuation of names. For instance, there are complex rules governing the capitalization of prepositional particles such as di, dei, and da, but in these chapters they have been capitalized uniformly in order to emphasize the fact that the particle is legitimately part of the

person's name. In an Italian library or reference book, the name "di Laghi" appears under "D" rather than "L"; the investigator was shocked to find the name "de Bartolomeis" listed under "B" in the card catalog of the United States Library of Congress. To assist American scholars in locating such reference materials, those names are rendered in a capitalized style whether they are normally written that way or not. Similarly, double surnames have been rendered with hyphens, which are usually optional, to emphasize to American readers that they are in fact double surnames. For example, one should understand that Lucio Lombardo-Radice is not someone whose first name is "Lucio," middle name "Lombardo," and last name "Radice," even though he generally omits the hyphen from his surname. If the hyphen were left out, the hapless researcher might well seek his name under "R" rather than "L", where it belongs.

In past centuries, European people developed the execrable habit of tampering with foreign place names. When the English and French visited Italy, they altered Milano to "Milan," Torino to "Turin," Padova to "Padua," Venezia to "Venice," Firenze to "Florence," Roma to "Rome," Napoli to "Naples," Genova to "Genoa," and (absurdity of absurdities!) Livorno to "Leghorn." Unfortunately, these altered forms are now standard in English-language atlases and dictionaries; thus they have been reluctantly retained in these chapters. The smaller towns seem to have escaped such linguistic destruction.

The titles of books and other publications indicated in text or footnotes are rendered in the original Italian bibliographic style. Normally, only first words and proper nouns are capitalized.⁴⁶ A few reference works such as the Enciclopedia Italiana receive upper-case treatment. In such cases, the name of the encyclopedia is the same as the name of the enterprise that produces it, just as, in this country, Encyclopedia Britannica is the name of a publishing company as well as the name of a set of books.

The Plan of the Following Chapters

Immediately following is a chapter of historical material for the general orientation of the reader. There are then six chapters of expository material, each devoted to an identifiable grouping of Italian philosophers of education in the 1945-1965 era. A chapter of addenda and general reflections concludes the study.

⁴⁶ This practice agrees with the recommendation of The Chicago Manual of Style, 13th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 251.

CHAPTER II
EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY
IN MODERN ITALY

Three Forms of Italian Education

As in all societies, education in Italy is closely related to other social institutions, and the value-systems and ideologies that have nourished it are related to developments in the economic, social, political, and intellectual history of the country. Moreover, the social and intellectual history that has influenced education has several aspects because "education" is not strictly speaking one formal social institution, but rather a complex of several. It is often necessary, for example, to separate the factors that have affected elementary-school education from those that have affected the preschool, the secondary school, or the university.

In terms of origins, Italian education is much like that of other European countries in having two main historical sources: the church and the state. It is the habit of contemporary scholars in comparative education to devote their attention to the development of state (government-sponsored) institutions of education--those variously called national or state, or in American usage, "public" schools--probably

because those schools are unmistakable phenomena of modern times and have become matters of great public concern in most societies. Educational scholarship has had this focus even in Italy, although in that country the Roman Catholic Church is a strong force to be reckoned with, educationally and culturally. There is also a small "private" sector of education of which only a little needs to be said.

In the following pages, there will be no particular effort to differentiate the history of "education" from that of "schooling." Although the terms are not always synonymous, most Italian educational thinkers have shown an interest in schools of one sort or another, while the existence of schools has inspired criticism and further educational thought. For convenience, and because of the abundance of published material regarding state schooling, the following discussion will begin with that aspect of Italian education before passing on to the others.

Education in the History of the Italian State

State education in Italy is closely linked in history to the struggles for the liberation and unification of Italy--the process referred to by the Italians as the Risorgimento --the "re-awakening." Even before the political events that shook Western society at the end of the eighteenth century, a sense of Italian nationality existed, especially in middle-class citizens of the Italian states, and among Italian intellectuals who had traveled abroad much. There existed ". . . the profound conviction that Italy was a category of history and thought, an ideal necessity, a 'sleeping beauty' who had to be awakened from her

centuries-long sleep."¹ However, the Risorgimento had its most obvious roots in the Napoleonic conquest of Italy, an invasion that had profound consequences for Italian society and the mentality of the Italian people.

The Legacy of Napoleon

In the wake of Napoleon's victories in the Italian peninsula in the final years of the eighteenth century, republican sentiment welled up, and by late 1798 the feudal states of Italy had been converted into a collection of republics.² Although these republics were short-lived, their establishment had sown an important seed among Italian intellectuals and men of politics. Another such seed was sown by the general disillusionment that followed Napoleon's first expulsion; the French, who had come as liberators, had proved themselves no less rapacious than other foreign conquerors. As a result of this experience, nationalistic secret societies³ sprang up in Italy to oppose any form of foreign rule. Napoleon again fanned the coals of Italian nationalism by setting up a puppet "Kingdom of Italy" in the early years of the nineteenth century; this kingdom not only opened Italian eyes to the possibility of national unity, but it even gave the Italians an important symbol--the tricolor flag that is theirs today.

¹Sergio Romano, Storia d'Italia dal risorgimento ai nostri giorni (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1978), p. 14.

²H. Hearder and D. P. Waley, A Short History of Italy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 113.

³Hearder and Waley, A Short History of Italy, p. 115.

The Napoleonic period had material as well as attitudinal consequences for Italy. During their stay, the French constructed roads and bridges, public buildings, gardens, and schools; moreover, the French system of laws had benefited citizens of all social classes.⁴ Thus, while Napoleon and his armies were despised as foreign conquerors, they were also admired in Italy for their practical achievements.

A particular consequence of the Napoleonic conquest was the association of public education with unity and nationalism. The schools begun in the Napoleonic era were, of course, modeled after French schools. Those schools, in turn, had their origins in Enlightenment philosophy and their practical models in the German "normal" schools with the addition of instruction in "elements of republican morals." Their establishment was set forth in the law of 3 Brumaire IV (1796).⁵ That law had its Italian echo in a report on public education prepared by a commission of the northern Italian Cisalpine Republic (a Napoleonic puppet state) in 1797. Although the Napoleonic wars, political turmoil, and a chronic shortage of funds prevented most of the reforms from being carried out, the ideals of the French school became well-known to Italian intellectuals. In 1805, Napoleonic officials in northern Italy enacted a reorganization of public instruction that involved the creation of state secondary and boarding schools in population centers, and the development of major academic centers in Turin and Alessandria

⁴Header and Waley, A Short History of Italy, p. 119.

⁵Enzo Robaud, Disegno storico della scuola italiana (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1961), p. 9.

(later moved to Casale).

An important feature of the French-inspired schools was their civic rather than religious orientation. The intention of the French laws was to exclude the clergy from any interference with the state program of education, but the religious tenacity of the Italians had to be taken into account by the new rulers, especially in the traditionalist South. There, in the Kingdom of Naples, ruled first by Joseph Bonaparte and later by Murat, various legislation was aimed at creating state primary and secondary schools that nevertheless allowed instruction in Christian doctrine and accepted clergy and members of religious orders as teachers.⁶ Naples also instituted a commission on public education, of which one member was the philosopher, Vincenzo Cuoco. The commission concluded that public education should be tuition-free (supported by the communes) and conducted effectively in all centers of population. In the South as well as in the North, limited resources and years of warfare prohibited a general realization of public education as idealized by laws and commissions.

Napoleon, then, had given Italy an intimation of hope for a national re-awakening, a possibility of escape from foreign and feudal domination. The Congress of Vienna attempted to return all of Europe to roughly the same social and political conditions that had prevailed in the mid-eighteenth century; but as the events of the 1830's and 1840's later proved, something had changed in the European mind that even

⁶Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 10.

Metternich and his collaborators could not eradicate. Although in the aftermath of Vienna, most of Italy was left to the mercies of the Austrians and Spaniards, the spirit of nationalism was kept alive by the secret societies, and the 1820's and 1830's were in fact decades of plot and conspiracy generally aimed at liberation of the country.⁷

Mazzini, Prophet of Unity

One of the key nationalist figures who emerged in the 1830's and who was later quite influential in Italian national affairs and national education was Giuseppe Mazzini. He was born in Genoa in 1805 and died in Pisa in 1872. Mazzini was ". . . the prophet and apostle of the unity of the Italian people, a unity that he understood in a framework of cooperation and harmony among all the world's peoples."⁸ When he founded the Giovine Italia (Young Italy) movement while in exile in France in 1831, he chose a motto of "Thought and Action," which he understood to mean "Education and Rebellion."⁹ Mazzini's movement was aimed at persons under forty and exhorted them to high standards of individual conduct and national consciousness. His goal was an Italy that would be independent and united, enjoying a republican form of government.

⁷Robaud, Disegno storico, pp. 122-124.

⁸Nicola Abbagnano and Aldo Visalberghi, Linee di storia della pedagogia, 3 vols. (Turin: G. B. Paravia & C., 1959), 3:117.

⁹Hearder and Waley, A Short History of Italy, p. 129.

To achieve the status envisioned by Mazzini, the Italians would require education into awareness of their social duties, as well as practical education for life within the state. While Mazzini believed that freedom and equality were essential, he taught that the individual must not lose sight of the needs of the entire nation; the individual must overcome parochialism and individual egoism to accept the state as the incarnation of a religious principle: the transcendence of finite individuality.¹⁰

The ideals of humanity and progress, often expressed by nineteenth-century writers, were evident in Mazzini's work. Yet it was important to Mazzini to unite those ideal, theoretical concerns with practice. For him, education had to be not only patriotic (and therefore, by implication, ethical and spiritual), but also productive.¹¹ To the latter end he advocated a strong scientific emphasis in public education, aimed at the creation of engineers and artisans; this was to be accompanied by a shift away from the study of literature and dead languages. The practical bias in Mazzini was later seized upon by the "positivist" element that exerted much influence on post-unification schools.

Nationalism in the early years of the Italian re-awakening was present not only in the writing and orations of statesmen and in the efforts of the secret societies, but also in the developing cultural

¹⁰Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Mazzini, Giuseppe."

¹¹Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:118.

milieu. For example, Alessandro Manzoni's classic novel I promessi sposi (The Betrothed) once again gave the Italian people a national literary language, while some early operas of Verdi contained subtle anti-foreign propaganda.¹²

The European Tradition

Although philosophical and educational issues connected with national liberation and unification received considerable attention in early nineteenth-century Italy, nationality was certainly not the only concern of Italian thinkers in that period. Among philosophers and educators, the broad European intellectual movements had their representatives in Italy.

Historicism, following the pioneering work of Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), and with a strong emphasis on the continuation of classical Greco-Roman culture, had a noteworthy advocate in the person of Vincenzo Cuoco (1770-1823), who came from the Molise, east of Naples. Cuoco published a pedagogical novel in 1806 called Platone in Italia (Plato in Italy), on the development of Greek philosophy in utopian academic communities. He saw a universal need for elementary education as a means of establishing communication among the various levels of society, and a need for secondary education accessible to all on a competitive basis for instruction in the arts and sciences but with a major emphasis on Latin and Greek. Only through the classics, he thought, could the studious Italian come to appreciate his language and the history of the

¹²Hearder and Waley, A Short History of Italy, pp. 130-131.

stones around him.¹³

Illuminism also had its followers, and in its Italian form it is closely associated with historicism. Thus, Vico is considered both an illuminist and a historicist, and the same is said of his disciples. But illuminism in its purest form was an early eighteenth-century movement, and gradually the eighteenth-century empiricism of Locke and Hume and the rationalism of Kant came to alter and supplant the basic illuminist doctrines of the infinite extension of human knowledge and the resulting perfectibility of man.

One of the great Italian representatives of the empiricist/rationalist tradition was Giandomenico Romagnosi (1761-1835), of Milan. Romagnosi believed that a "logical sense" acts upon sensation, really a kind of sixth sense that informs the raw material of experience, and links sensations to one another by means of concepts of a rational character. Such concepts are objective rather than transcendent, and are formed through experience. In fact, he thought, the human mind and character are shaped by "dative" forces--the givens--that exist in experience, especially in the form of cultural, social, and political institutions.¹⁴ Given this social emphasis, it is not surprising that Romagnosi's life and teaching showed a great concern for the social and political aspects of experience. From 1802 to 1821 he was active in teaching politics and law as a university professor and later in schools

¹³Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:102-103.

¹⁴Mario Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3 vols. (Seregno, Milan: Editrice Ciranna e Ferrara, 1979), 3:70.

of his own creation; eventually, the Austrian authorities forbade him to teach because of his support for the nationalist cause.

Although Romagnosi admired Rousseau and accepted the desirability of self-instruction and autonomy of the mind, his own approach to education was more directive. He saw education as ". . . the active direction of the powers of a living being, in order to cause him to acquire certain habits."¹⁵ He proposed a disciplinary phase best conducted in an elementary school, free and open to all. After such basic formation, those with the means and inclinations for further study could attend secondary schools in a less authoritarian atmosphere where they would learn to think and appreciate, or rather, to develop their tastes.¹⁶

Rationalism of the Kantian variety was combined with a firm religious sense in the Neapolitan philosopher Pasquale Galluppi (1770-1846). His central interest in the history of philosophy had led him to study the great European philosophers, and especially those of the eighteenth century; however, the ultimate religious conclusion of his speculations brought him to a higher place among Catholic educators than among those favoring state-supervised, laic education.

There are traces of romanticism in Galluppi's and Romagnosi's doctrines, but romanticism had stronger advocates in nineteenth-century Italy. Among them, one most notable is Gino Capponi of Florence (1792-1876), who was a political, social, and religious thinker with

¹⁵Enciclopedia Biografica e Bibliografica "Italiana", Series 38, "Pedagogisti ed educatori", 1939 ed., s.v. "Romagnosi, Giandomenico."

¹⁶Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:105.

interests that extended to education. As a young man, he traveled widely in Europe, at various times visiting the great educational innovators, and he took an interest in educational experiments begun in Italy by Raffaele Lambruschini and Ferrante Aporti. He became blind in 1840 but continued to write prolifically. Capponi's highly-regarded book of aphorisms on education, Pensieri sull'educazione (Thoughts on Education), appeared in 1845.

For Capponi, the truest and most efficacious education exalts the creativity of the spirit and causes the child to internalize external stimuli (i.e., teaching) by force of sentiment (feelings or emotions), avoiding arid "systems" of education. While accepting the "primordiality" of the Christian Gospel, Capponi opposes the rigid educational doctrines of the Jesuits as well as the suffocating sterility of the rationalists and illuminists.¹⁷ He sees the child's creative capacity as expressive of a comprehensive illumination that reveals the child's divine part--It is the creative intellect that is spiritual, because God also creates. Capponi's mystical romanticism is tempered by social and cultural concerns, and he opposes Rousseau's artificial isolation of the child. In fact, he criticizes Rousseau for having created an impossible child in an impossible situation: Émile is not a person but a "well-fed calf." The creative intuition may express itself in poetry, but poetry is language, and language is a product of and an influence upon human society. Therefore, Capponi argues, education must be historical and

¹⁷Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:84.

social as well as individual. The best education is one in which God reveals himself to the child first through a mother's love, and then through the love and affection of others.¹⁸ In sum, education is part of the mystery of human affection.

For Capponi, then, education is a social process, and it must be public and open to social influences. The government that provides it cannot hope to succeed in educating by despotic means, but must express the Christian principles of charity, equality, and universal association. This was Capponi's hope for Italian education in the Risorgimento, and was one of his concerns when he served as a senator in the Italian parliament from 1860 until his death in 1876.

The Formation of Schooling in the Italian State

The hope for a national system of schooling as expressed by philosophers and political reformers of the early Risorgimento period eventually expressed itself in the political process and led to the establishment of state schools. It may be useful to examine the outlines of that development.

In the eighteenth century, Piedmont was the most educationally advanced of the Italian states, for while state education did not exist there in the form in which it is known today, there had been decades of royal concern for literacy, the establishment of primary schools, and school attendance in general. At the end of the eighteenth century, Austrian-controlled Lombardy became a center of educational reform; the

¹⁸Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:86.

Austrians, having suppressed the Jesuits, set up their own system of state schools on the Prussian model, under a law of 1774; a decade later, this system was imported into Lombardy by collaborators with the Austrian regime.¹⁹ By 1810, Lombardy was moving toward universal, compulsory primary education. In the other states, and especially in the Kingdom of Naples, the general quality of education was pitifully low.

When Napoleon's armies arrived, the existing schools were put to the service of the state. Church control was eliminated, public instruction was put under central direction and given a civic ideology, and money was provided for school expenditures.²⁰ This development meant the imposition of an essentially French system of education in Italy. It was not the only instance of French influence on Italian educational matters.

In 1815, most of the schools were returned to the control of the church, and there was a tendency of the once-exiled religious educators to support local rulers and to be suspicious of popular movements. With the reforms of Napoleon erased, students were subjected to old-fashioned methods and curricula, political orthodoxy, traditionalism, preferential treatment for the scions of "old families," and an emphasis on courtly behavior.²¹

¹⁹Rosalba Graglia and Giuseppe Ricuperati, "Analfabetismo e scolarizzazione," Storia d'Italia (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1972), 6:756.

²⁰Robaud, Disegno storico della scuola italiana, p. 10.

Notwithstanding the changes wrought by the Congress of Vienna, educational reform continued in the North. When the Veneto became Austrian territory, the Hapsburg system was introduced there. Lombardy continued to make progress, and in the 1830's clearly led the way in education south of the Alps; it was in fact a showcase where the hated Austrians could point out their achievements. In that territory, elementary education was free and compulsory, and technical schools were ahead of their counterparts anywhere else in Italy. In 1830 Lombardy had one child in thirteen attending school,²² compared to much less favorable ratios in the other Italian states, and even in England. Nor was Piedmont entirely backward, for in 1822 a royal law created provincial "reformers" of education, obligated the communes (townships) to open primary schools, made public elementary education free at the communes' expense, regulated curricula for all schools, and created qualifying examinations for teachers. That reform was only partly successful, however, because enforcement of the laws was difficult and no provision had been made to train the large numbers of teachers necessary for such an enterprise.²³

²¹Giuseppe Galasso, "Le forme del potere, classi e gerarchie sociali," Storia d'Italia (Einaudi), 1:526.

²²Denis Mack Smith, Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 7.

²³Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 15.

From the 1820's to the 1840's popular education movements appeared in Italy and had varying success according to local policy. In Tuscany and the Austrian lands, Lancastrian schools and "infant asylums" came into being under such reformers as Ferrante Aporti and Raffaele Lambruschini; these were generally private or religious institutions,²⁴ but they inspired later efforts of varying kinds. In Piedmont, King Carlo Alberto announced that he would allow infant asylums to open in his kingdom, but subject to royal approval; that very restriction kept any such schools from opening before 1838.²⁵

The existence of popular education movements attests to more than government interest in the extension of schooling. By and large, educational reformers and propagandists of the 1830's and 1840's were political moderates who believed in the importance of popular education and an enlightened socioeconomic system. Their efforts were varied; some went forth to educate the rural poor, while others sought to popularize the cause of peasant education through their publications and appeals to the people. Private funds were sometimes raised for the creation of schools and "infant asylums" for the children of the working-class poor.²⁶

²⁴"Infant asylums" were actually pre-schools for children whose parents were employed or otherwise unable to care for them in the daytime. The term is strange to Anglo-Americans.

²⁵Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 15.

²⁶Stuart J. Woolf, "La storia politica e sociale," Storia d'Italia (Einaudi), 3:329.

The impetus for educational extension and reform in Italy at the time of the Risorgimento was usually linked to the liberal-nationalist movement. The ideological ferment centered in the rich and industrializing North. Farther south, the Papal states were ruled by a conservative, tradition-bound church. Although in the early nineteenth century the Papal administration had set up free church schools²⁷ that provided elementary education in many communes, their quality was inferior to that of the private "regional" schools that were attended only by the tuition-paying rich. In 1846, the Papal government took a step forward by creating a Ministry of Public Instruction,²⁸ but its work was cut short by the uprisings of 1848.

In the Mezzogiorno, the deep South, the situation was far worse. The King of Naples persistently disregarded public demands for any state-supported education beyond the elementary level. In 1843, he signed a decree putting all education into the hands of the bishops.²⁹ In Naples, education was tied to a feudal economy and class structure; as long as that order persisted, the general level of education remained abysmally low. In the census of 1871, ten years after Sicily and Naples had become parts of united Italy, the literacy³⁰ of ten-year-olds in those regions was still below fifty per cent, whereas in the North it

²⁷Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 23.

²⁸Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 24. Further discussion of developments in the Papal states appears in a subsequent section of this chapter.

²⁹Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 24.

³⁰Graglia and Ricuperati, "Analfabetismo e scolarizzazione," p. 756.

had climbed to eighty and ninety per cent.

Out of the early beginnings outlined above, the Italian national system of schooling developed, and in particular through a series of laws and decrees emanating from Piedmont. In 1847, on the eve of the constitutional monarchy and the struggles of 1848, King Carlo Alberto altered national school policy by creating a Secretarial Ministry of State for Public Instruction. The decree provided a Superior Council for Public Instruction and special councils for the royal universities. It foreshadowed much legislation.

The "Boncompagni Law" of 1848 was one of the earliest laws³¹ of any kind to be enacted by the parliament of Piedmont, otherwise called the Subalpine Parliament. In accordance with Carlo Alberto's earlier decree, it established a Secretarial Ministry of State for Public Instruction and a Superior Council to act as an advisory body to the minister. The Ministry of Public Instruction was given authority to conduct "habilitation" examinations of teachers, both public and private, and the Council was given charge of disciplinary matters related to teachers.³² In addition to the Superior Council, other councils were created for the three levels of education (elementary, secondary, and university); provincial administrative councils were instituted; and the post of Provveditore agli Studi, a local executive position, was created giving this official the authority to supervise

³¹Niccolo Rodolico, ed. Storia del parlamento italiano (Palermo: S. F. Flaccovio Editore, 1963), 1:294.

³²Robaud, Disegno storico, pp. 25-26.

all schools, public and private. Communes were required by the law to provide the first two years of elementary instruction without charge, open to both sexes. Provisions were included for the creation of special technical courses at the secondary level. This law diminished the privileges of the clergy by providing supervisory control of non-state schools, and virtually eliminated the clergy's interference in state schools.³³ The scope of the Boncompagni Law was broad, and it served as the model for the Casati Law that was to come a decade later.

That decade between the Boncompagni Law and the Casati Law was one of considerable parliamentary activity regarding education. A law of 1851 rearranged the Ministry of Public Instruction, and the Lanza Law of 1857 attempted to improve the administrative machinery³⁴ by altering various councils and creating provincial inspectors and other local authorities. A law of 1853 created certain regulations for state schools and re-established the principle of free, compulsory education for the first two years. This was to be paid for by the commune, which was specifically instructed to pay teachers' salaries. In order to cope with a serious shortage of teachers, parliament passed a law in 1858 creating twelve new normal schools. During the parliamentary debate on this issue, Deputy Boggio claimed there were, in Piedmont, 145 communes without boys' elementary schools, 1151 without girls' schools, and that

³³Anthony A. Scarangelo, Progress and Trends in Italian Education (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1964), p.3.

³⁴Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 28.

the kingdom had a shortage of 1523 teachers.³⁵

With the annexation of Lombardy and a spirit of success attending the nationalist movement, it became desirable to create a new "national" school law that could be systematically extended to whatever provinces became united with Piedmont. The law that eventuated, passed under the guidance of Prime Minister Gabrio Casati, became the Magna Carta of Italian education--the Casati Law³⁶ of November 13, 1859.

The Casati Law was a complex and comprehensive law, with 374 articles regulating all levels of education, primary through university. It set up administrative bodies at national and local levels, and gave the communes the task of educating all children between the ages of six and twelve. It made provisions for elementary education of two types; for secondary education, both classical and technical; and for higher education at the university level. The law allowed private educational institutions to exist as long as they complied with state regulations, and it retained religion as a subject in the elementary grades. Despite the intense centralization created by the plan, certain guarantees of academic freedom,³⁷ particularly at the university level, were incorporated into the law.

³⁵ Rodolico, Storia del parlamento, 2:258.

³⁶ Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 28.

³⁷ Robaud, Disegno storico, p. 33.

The efforts of parliament to extend and improve education did not end with the Casati Law. Some of the Ministry of Public Instruction's influence was altered by a law of 1861 that placed technical secondary schools under the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce. The change was intended to create certain economies, but in any case, most of the technical schools were returned to Public Instruction in 1877.³⁸

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of school laws, the parliament conducted an investigation in 1864 under Deputy Matteucci, Vice President of the Superior Council of Public Instruction. The commission uncovered unsettling facts about the absence of elementary schools in many communes, especially in rural areas. It also disclosed that secondary education was not widely available; in fact, only 9 out of 1000 persons between the ages of eleven and eighteen years attended secondary schools in 1863-64, and less than a third of that number went on to a university.³⁹

The Italian parliament soon made efforts to standardize the school system throughout the kingdom. Although the Casati Law was nominally in effect, regional variations persisted in the mid-1860's and thereafter, especially in Sicily and lands formerly belonging to the Kingdom of Naples. Having united the Superior Councils into one national body in 1865, the parliament acted in 1866 to eradicate remaining local and provincial differences, many of which were perpetuated by local offi-

³⁸Robaud, Disegno storico, pp. 39-42.

³⁹Giorgio Candeloro, Storia dell'Italia moderna (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 1976), 5:55.

cials. The result was the Berti Law of 1866, which prescribed the composition of provincial councils for education and removed the provincial provveditori (superintendents) and inspectors; it passed these officers' authority to the provincial councils, which were composed largely of professional educators.⁴⁰ The composition and authority of the provincial councils for education were intended to be the same in all provinces, and the hope was that education in the hands of a council of competent educators would be more stable than that subjected to the whims of unreliable local politicians.

The Minister of Public Instruction who succeeded Berti was Michele Coppino, who favored the centralizing tendencies of the original Casati Law. He found the provincial councils impossible to control under the Berti Law, and considered the experiment a failure. The law of 1867 that Coppino authored strengthened the central offices of the Ministry of Public Instruction and created a central provveditore's office.⁴¹ On the local level, the provveditori were returned to their offices, but the provincial councils were retained, with the local prefect and the provveditore added to them in official capacities. In keeping with the spirit of the times, Coppino sponsored other laws that put the management of antiquities and fine arts into the hands of the Italian state.

⁴⁰ Robaud, Disegno storico, pp. 51-53.

⁴¹ Robaud, Disegno storico, pp. 54-55.

The end of the Risorgimento period and its transformation into the era of National Unity in no way lessened the Italian parliament's efforts in the field of education. Reorganization of the Ministry and councils was frequent. The later, major Coppino Law of 1877 once again attempted to make elementary education compulsory, and had more success than previous efforts. The school legislation of the Risorgimento and early national periods also provided a backdrop for further activity in theoretical fields related to education.

From Ideology to Public Policy

The achievement of national unity in the 1849-1870 period made it necessary for Italians to face practical issues that were not fully anticipated by the visionary nationalists of the preceding period. The passage of school laws as outlined above was one consequence of that necessity. On another level, it was necessary to formulate policy for the new national schools, and the most fruitful early source of such policy was in Risorgimento ideology.

The contributions of Mazzini to Italian educational thought have been discussed earlier. Mazzini, however, did not hold high political office in the Italian constitutional monarchy. Of the three great leaders of the Risorgimento --Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour--the most politically influential was obviously Count Camillo Benso di Cavour (1810-1861). An interesting character sketch of Cavour is provided by the liberal historian, Guido De Ruggiero:

And we must not forget. . . the personality of Cavour, that is, of the only truly "European" man of the Italian Risorgimento. In

him there is found no trace of that inherent stinginess of the landholding class that retards the intellectual development of the moderates. While coming from the petty nobility, he succeeded completely in divesting himself of the mental habits of his class, and in conceiving the economic functions of society in a totally modern way. His scientific education was shaped by the Manchesterian liberal school. The studies that he published before 1848 on the league against grain laws and on the Irish question are among the best afforded by the literature of the time, and . . . they reveal a sense of realism and a love of things rather than doctrinal formulas. Through Manchesterianism Cavour acquired not only a general view of the laws that regulate commerce, but also something more profound and intimate, that cannot be formulated in the abstract terms of science: that is, a perception of the expansive capacity of modern industrial society; faith in initiative, in individual courage to break antiquated customs in order to go forth on a new road full of risk and hope. There lies the true value of the liberal ferment that the English middle class of the nineteenth century communicated to a lazy agrarian society. In Italy, however, the genius of industrialism appeared later and less lively; but its absence in the period culminating in the Risorgimento increases our admiration for men like Cavour, who had the spiritual energy to anticipate its advent by himself, and insofar as it was possible, to communicate its efficacy to the lethargic moderate element of that time.⁴²

Other historians have painted a less glowing picture of Cavour. There is general agreement, however, that his outlook was northern European rather than typically Italian, and that he brought particularly English and French ideas into Italian politics. In Cavour's period of power, from 1852 until his death in 1861, during most of which time he was Prime Minister, he was able to leave his mark on Italian laws and institutions.

On the subject of national education, Cavour wrote and said rather little. His social-economic policy was technocratic, technocratic, favorably disposed toward capitalistic industrial development and wide-

⁴² Guido De Ruggiero, Storia del liberalismo europeo (Milan: Feltrinelli Economica S.p.A., 1962; fourth ed., 1977), pp. 299-300.

spread employment in specialties afforded by technology. For that reason, he was favorably disposed toward the creation of technical and vocational schools, training schools of various kinds, and university science laboratories.⁴³ This direction in Cavour's attention is certainly in accord with his Manchesterian-liberal economics, and his opinions on a variety of public issues led De Ruggiero and other historians to point out the similarity of his thought to that of the Italian positivists.

The Era of Positivism in Italy

Nineteenth-century positivism was a philosophy that originated in France, developed by Auguste Comte upon earlier foundations of rationalism, illuminism, and materialism. Comte hoped to create a new social order founded upon scientific thought, reflecting a "positive" stage in human development surpassing the earlier "theological" and "metaphysical" stages. The attainment of this higher stage, characterized by an adhesion to "positive facts" and a negation of religion and metaphysics, would naturally herald an era of peace, prosperity, and progress--a technological utopia. Under this scheme, education would be a preparation of man for earthly life in order to benefit both the individual and society. Inasmuch as science was to be the guarantee of value and perfection, scientific and technical instruction was to have prime importance in the curriculum, eclipsing artistic and literary study and

⁴³Benedetto Croce, A History of Italy, 1871-1915 (New York: Russell and Russell, Incorporated, 1963), p. 57.

substantially turning education into a process of scientific-technical instruction. Religious instruction would have no place in such a program,⁴⁴ but the new education would favor sociological research and experimental psychology.

The earliest recognized positivist manifesto published in Italy was Invito agli amatori della filosofia (Invitation to the Lovers of Philosophy) (1857), by a Milanese, Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869). Originally schooled in the illuministic thought of Romagnosi, Cattaneo developed a particularly historicist approach to scientific thought. Consciousness, for him, was not the "cogito" of Descartes, but the result of historical development as expounded by Vico. Cattaneo urged his contemporaries to understand their own era by studying the sciences and history. Philosophy, he said, in order to be meaningful must abandon old preoccupations and study man in his general relations with all other beings.⁴⁵

Thus, in Cattaneo, there is a strong social emphasis, and importance is given to a combination of historical and scientific study.

One of the most colorful figures in the intellectual transition from romantic nationalism to scientific positivism is Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883). Best known as Italy's greatest literary critic of the nineteenth century, De Sanctis was also an educator, politician, novelist, and lawyer. His interest in education began in the 1830's, when he

⁴⁴Ernesto Bignami, L'esame di storia della pedagogia, 3 vols. (Milan: Edizioni Bignami, 1977), III:132-135.

⁴⁵Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Cattaneo, Carlo."

taught in a private school in Naples and subsequently established a school of his own. He also embraced the nationalist cause in those years, and urged his boys to keep their characters clean for the day when the nation would call them. De Sanctis taught that school is life and not some secluded grove. That seditious sentiment cost him three years of imprisonment under the Bourbons. Expelled from Naples in 1853, he fled north and became a supporter of the Savoys. In 1861 and 1862, De Sanctis served as Minister of Public Instruction in Cavour's cabinet. He was in favor of school reform⁴⁶ and caused the dismissal of numerous incompetent university professors. De Sanctis returned to the scholarly life in the 1860's and 1870's, then served again as Minister of Public Instruction from 1878 to 1882.

As a romantic nationalist, De Sanctis believed in transforming the masses into a "free people" by means of education. He favored warmth and spontaneity in education, and abhorred the coldness and aloofness of some scholars. Nevertheless, he understood the necessity of moving Italy from its heroic and romantic phase (the Risorgimento) into a phase of material and moral reconstruction.⁴⁷ He became increasingly involved in practical concerns, and adopted the slogan of "things and not words." De Sanctis came to call his general philosophical position "realism" rather than "positivism," chiefly because he disliked some positivists' questionable interpretations of Darwin. Nevertheless, he agreed on the

⁴⁶Enciclopedia Biografica e Bibliografica "Italiana", Series 38, s.v. "De Sanctis, Francesco."

⁴⁷Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:173.

necessity of "positivism in the intellectual order," and his "realism" as applied to the classroom⁴⁸ required particular attention to practical and scientific studies and a generally scientific way of thinking.

Although some elements of French positivism appear in De Sanctis' work, examples of positivist orthodoxy among the Italians are more clearly presented by three individuals: Andrea Angiulli, Aristide Gabelli, and Robert Ardigo.

Andrea Angiulli was born in Bari province in 1833 and died in Rome in 1890. As a philosopher, he was first influenced by Hegel and later moved into positivism. He was a professor of pedagogy at the University of Bologna from 1872 to 1876, and then at the University of Naples from 1876 to 1890. Angiulli was a champion of state education and an opponent of the religious orders. He believed that humanistic education of the Renaissance variety had become a tool of the "enemies of liberty of thought," and had little to offer generations born in the scientific age. Rather, he wished to exalt science in order to transform man's cerebral structure; changed inwardly, mankind would begin a new course of social progress. Angiulli wanted educators to eliminate the infantile period of story-telling and fantasy, replacing it with observation of empirical facts, tested and coordinated in scientific order. He would have teachers use the physical sciences to demonstrate a connection between human progress and the laws of nature.⁴⁹ Angiulli's most

⁴⁸ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:174.

⁴⁹ Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:102-103.

influential publications appeared between 1868 and 1888.

More direct influence on Italian schools was exercised by Aristide Gabelli (1830-1891). A northern Italian, he studied law in Padua and Vienna and worked as a journalist in Milan before becoming principal of a technical school in 1860. The appointment was evidently political, and his political career continued as superintendent of schools in Florence and Rome, and ultimately as chief inspector of schools for the Ministry of Public Instruction. In 1888, he proposed a restructuring⁵⁰ of elementary school programs that was approved by the Italian parliament and is generally accepted as one of the better school reforms of the period.

Gabelli was a man of action who opposed dogmaticism and church authoritarianism. He admired northern European reformers and revolutionaries, and he believed that Italy owed her few social advances to those foreign influences. He saw the common folk in Italy being held back by lifeless traditions, and he believed that the solution was a well-regulated and coordinated school system that would provide basic literacy, thus bringing the masses into the social and political life of the country and giving them a sense of liberty and patriotism. Once made literate, the child must continually exercise his mind in observing, examining, speaking, writing, computing, measuring, drawing, and so forth; his mental activity must be tireless and critical in nature. Gabelli writes of the school's duty to form the "head-instrument"⁵¹ of

⁵⁰ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:178.

the Italian. That is, the school must be orderly and scientific, and moreover, it must stimulate thought.

More contemplative and less in the public eye was Roberto Ardigò (1828-1920). Educated by religious orders and ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood, he left his position as Canon of the Cathedral of Mantova (Mantua) and renounced his priestly duties in 1871, the year after the publication of his first "positivist" work, Psicologia come scienza positiva (Psychology as Positive Science). Ardigò's positivism is grounded in his metaphysics: for him, the All is an Indistinct that distinguishes itself ever better but never completely; there is no Unknowable, as Spencer contends, but merely an Unknown. The process of intellectual understanding parallels the physical process of evolution. As the individual learns, he makes distinctions in an endless series out of the aboriginal psycho-physical substance. It is science, of course, that catalogues these distinctions. In the learning process, habits are formed, and formal education must help the student to develop habits that render his behavior automatic. Teaching can provide rules, schemes, and illustrations that help the child to understand what cannot be immediately experienced; and it must avoid instilling unscientific doubts and uncertainties. Ardigò's philosophy and pedagogy were pervaded by a kind of Spencerian⁵² progression.

⁵¹Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:101.

⁵²Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:103-104.

Despite the obvious mechanistic quality of his world-view, Ardigò accepted the humanizing values of classical education and a place for spontaneous play and activity in the curriculum; but these were tempering factors only. His publications remained close to the positivist position. Ardigò taught philosophy at the University of Padua from 1881 until his retirement in 1909. He outlived his positivist colleagues by decades, and quite improbably committed suicide at the age of ninety-two.

The Idealist Reaction

The sway of positivism over the Italian intellect was short-lived and never complete. It was, to say the least, a very "un-Italian" philosophy, not merely because it was derived from northern Europeans such as Comte and Spencer, but because in its insistence on order, materialism, and cold objectivity, there was something in positivism that was profoundly disturbing to the Italian mind. The Catholic church, of course, never endorsed positivism; but even among the laics, there were critics who saw positivism as something drab, narrow, and soul-less. The scientific presuppositions of positivism, as two contemporary Italian philosophers of education write,

. . . seem to deny that man and his psycho-spiritual world (art, religion, morality) may have any originality and autonomy whatsoever compared to the rest of nature; even these must be reduced to a collection of facts, ruled by laws that exclude freedom. It seems that one of the characteristics of positivism is the impossibility of any justification whatsoever for human values (esthetic, moral, and religious) and the true freedom of the mind that creates them. The philosophies that constitute the anti-positivist reaction, and in which contemporary philosophy has its beginning, draw their points of departure from this impossibility.

But to negate the theses of positivism means to negate the claim that natural facts are the only reality and thus that science is the only possible form of knowledge. This implies that philosophy has to do with another reality and that it has a way of knowing this reality that is not reducible to science. Thus the fundamental problem of anti-positivist philosophies is that of defining philosophy itself: that is, to define the reality with which it must deal and the means of access that it must use to approach this reality.⁵³

In a practical sense, the search for a new philosophy was complicated by events. The intellectual of the late nineteenth century could not simply march backward into the fiery romanticism of the Risorgimento. National unity was an accomplished fact, and new social, economic, political, and intellectual situations were developing. Nor could the laic philosopher easily leap into the embrace of religion, since the events of 1849 had created an ever-widening gulf between the Catholic church and the Italian state. What many Italian thinkers desired at the turn of the century was a philosophy that was not only metaphysically respectable, but also more spiritual and exalted than positivism, more rational and systematic than romanticism, and free from the ancient dogmatic constraints of Thomism, the dominant philosophy of the Catholics. The new faith that would satisfy those requirements, while dissolving any apparent inconsistencies, was already present in the late nineteenth-century Italian intellectual milieu and needed only to be developed and disseminated. Ironically, its roots were not in Italy but in Germany, and yet it adapted well to the Italian environment.

⁵³ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:195

Italian idealism can be traced back as far as Ottavio Colecchi (1773-1847), a Dominican priest who taught mathematics in Naples and was also active in his order in Rome. Around 1815, he was sent on a teaching mission to Russia, and returned to Italy via Koenigsberg, where he encountered the works of Kant. His studies of Kant led to further exploration of German philosophers including Hegel. In 1819, he was appointed professor of physics and mathematics in Aquilea, but he was soon removed from this position because of the political and philosophical ideas he had developed during his travels. In 1831, he was assigned to another teaching position, in Orticello; but he was removed from this position by the Bishop of Castellammare on charges of "atheism." Colecchi's life was difficult after that incident, and he remained under police surveillance for years. Nevertheless, he won the admiration of many young people, and at his death in 1847 his disciples staged a demonstration⁵⁴ in favor of the liberalism that was then sweeping the church under Pius IX.

It was not Kantianism, however, but Colecchi's studies of Hegel that influenced the young Bertrando Spaventa (1817-1883). Spaventa came from a well-to-do Neapolitan family. In his youth, he took holy orders, although more to please his family than out of heartfelt religious conviction. While studying in Naples in 1840 he encountered Colecchi, who was then teaching there, and who taught him to read Kant and Hegel in the original German. From 1846 to 1848, Spaventa ran a private

⁵⁴ Enciclopedia Biografica e Bibliografica "Italiana," Series 38, s.v. "Colecchi, Ottavio."

philosophy school but closed it after an unpleasant encounter with the authorities. He went to Florence in 1849. In 1850, he abandoned his priestly duties and fled to Turin, where he became involved in polemics against both the Jesuits and the liberal Catholics. His Hegelian ideas matured in the 1850-1860 period, and he developed his theory of the "circulation of European ideas." Having noted a similarity in the historicism of Vico and the historical theories of Hegel, he concluded that Hegelianism coincides with and is a legitimate addition to Italian thought. This "addition," understood primarily by Spaventa and provided through his commentaries, was an interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of Mind that Spaventa derived from Hegel's writings,⁵⁵ chiefly Phenomenology of Mind.

In 1859 and 1860, Spaventa taught at universities in northern Italy. Then, in 1861, after the unification of southern Italy with the Kingdom of Piedmont, he was called by De Sanctis to teach history of philosophy at the University of Naples. There, Spaventa assembled a circle of disciples that included Antonio Labriola, who eventually embraced Marxism; Andrea Angiulli, who became a positivist; and Donato Jaja, who remained faithful to the Hegelian-idealist view. In the 1860's, Spaventa was also a member of the Superior Council for Public Instruction in Naples, and served as Superintendent of Studies for the Province of Naples from 1866 to 1870. Politically conservative, he was elected to the parliament several times, but was far less active politi-

⁵⁵ Enciclopedia Biografica e Bibliografica "Italiana," Series 38, s.v. "Spaventa, Bertrando"

cally than his brother, Silvio Spaventa.⁵⁶ In his comfortable home, Silvio Spaventa entertained some of the political and intellectual leaders of his time; and dwelling with him for a time was his cousin's son who had been orphaned in his late teens by an earthquake. That young man's name was Benedetto Croce.⁵⁷

From Bertrando Spaventa, Donato Jaja (1830-1914) derived an appreciation for Hegel, and especially for the Phenomenology of Mind, although his understanding was colored by vaguely Kantian tendencies. For Jaja, the chief defect in Kant's thought was his inability to overcome the noumenon-phenomenon duality, and this was a philosophical problem that Jaja worked on throughout his life, deriving considerable inspiration from Hegel. In 1887, Jaja went to the University of Pisa to teach philosophy, and among his students were Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice and Giovanni Gentile.

Eventually, Benedetto Croce came to know his late relative's students, and through them, some of their students. Thus a close friendship developed between Gentile and Croce that was to have profound consequences for Italian philosophy and pedagogy in the twentieth century. Gentile, born in 1875, was nine years younger than Croce, but he was of a more dynamic temperament. Croce had for a time dallied with the idealistic Marxism that he had learned from Labriola, another of

⁵⁶Enciclopedia Italiana, 1936 ed., s.v. "Spaventa, Bertrando," by Guido Calogero.

⁵⁷For a fuller account, see Benedetto Croce, An Autobiography, trans. R. G. Collingwood (Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 37-38.

Spaventa's students; then he had studied the writings of Vico and De Sanctis; but it was Gentile who brought him to a more orthodox interpretation of Hegel. In 1902, Gentile and Croce began work on a philosophical review called La critica. Around this activity they assembled others who were like-minded, including Lombardo-Radice.

The idealist movement gathered strength in the early years of the twentieth century preceding the First World War. Differences appeared among the young idealists, however, almost from the beginning of their association. Croce, probably influenced by Bertrando Spaventa's historicism and his own studies of Vico, developed a strongly historicist approach to Hegelian idealism; moreover, he eventually added his own peculiar doctrine of "distincts" to overcome the Hegelians' problem of dealing with totality that was identical with and engulfed by the universal mind. Croce's distincts, of course, ran counter to orthodox dialectical thought.⁵⁸ Gentile, like his teacher Jaja, sought to overcome individual particularity and to resolve all matter, thought, and experience in a grand concept--that of "thought in the act of thinking," active thought as the only reality. This philosophy⁵⁹ came to be called "actual idealism," or in some texts, simply "actualism." Lombardo-Radice, the most humane and practical of the three, avoided metaphysical speculation and embraced idealism as a theory of individual and collec-

⁵⁸ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:227.

⁵⁹ H. S. Harris, "Introduction," in Giovanni Gentile, Genesis and Structure of Society, tr. H. S. Harris (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 2 ff.

tive improvement possible only through education. He had socialistic tendencies and was very much concerned with the welfare of human beings and the education of small children, more so than were his colleagues. He did not shun extraneous philosophies and techniques that could be adapted to Italian education in theory or practice; in fact, he was among the earliest Italian translators of John Dewey.⁶⁰

At a time of intellectual crisis (the widespread dissatisfaction with positivism) and social/political crisis (e.g., the weak and chaotic Giolitti governments), Hegelian idealism appealed to Italian intellectuals because of its systematic comprehensiveness, its exalted view of the human mind, and its suggestion of the grandiose unfoldings of universal mind through human culture and history. After the First World War, Mussolini and his Fascists developed warm relations with leading idealists, a situation made possible by the similarity of their thought where the glory of Italian culture was concerned.

Benedetto Croce was named Minister of Public Instruction in the last liberal-socialist government before the triumph of Fascism, and he served in that post from June 1920 to July 1921. It was a weak and divided government, and although Croce had proposed some promising reforms for the Italian state school system, he was unable to get them passed by the parliament. Mussolini came to power in 1922 and asked Croce for advice on naming a Minister of Public Instruction; Croce, skeptical of Mussolini's intentions, declined to name himself, but

⁶⁰ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:231-232.

suggested his young friend and colleague Gentile, who took office in October 1922. Gentile joined the Fascist party in 1923, and evidently remained loyal to Mussolini to the end of his days.⁶¹ As Minister of Public Instruction, Gentile received broad powers to implement the school reforms already partly foreshadowed by Croce and by Gentile's own work with Croce. Lombardo-Radice was given the charge of Director-General of Elementary Instruction, working directly with Gentile.

The murder of the socialist parliamentarian Giacomo Matteotti by Fascist thugs in June 1924 created a shock wave in Italy that ended in resignations and replacements in Mussolini's cabinet. Both Gentile and Lombardo-Radice were dismissed, but Gentile received political sinecures in recompense.⁶² Croce, in the next few years, became an increasingly vocal opponent of the Fascists. Although Gentile's successors did not possess the idealistic vision or depth of mind of Gentile, the regime continued to profess "actual idealism" as the official philosophy of the Italian state schools until the end of that regime in the Second World War.

⁶¹Aldo Lo Schiavo, Introduzione a Gentile (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1974), p. 165.

⁶²Enzo Santarelli, Storia del movimento e del regime fascista, 2 vols. (Rome, Editori Riuniti, 1967), 1:365-366.

Italian Education and the Church

Long before the Kingdom of Italy and its schools existed, the teaching orders of the Catholic church had operated schools in Italy. These schools were not easily accessible to large segments of the population; those particularly deprived were the rural poor, for whom any form of schooling, even the tuition-free schools of the Jesuits, would have been a luxury. Under adverse economic conditions, and in the absence of state schools and school laws, much of the pre-unification Italian population went unschooled. In 1861, when northern and southern Italy were united, a census showed that approximately seventy-five per cent of the population was illiterate, and that illiteracy figure reached ninety per cent in the South. Although a few state elementary schools had been initiated in the pre-unification decades, secondary education had been almost entirely in the hands of the clergy, and that group had maintained a certain exclusivity by its devotion to classical studies.⁶³

Church schools in Italy were by and large conservative in curriculum and general orientation; for example, the Jesuits' Ratio Studiorum had undergone only minor adaptive changes from its inception in 1599 until its revision in 1832. Even during the suppression of the Jesuit Order (1773-1814), those schools that remained open and fell into other hands did not change substantially either in programs or texts.⁶⁴

⁶³Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:166.

⁶⁴Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 2:131.

Furthermore, there were elements in the Catholic church that opposed the idea of popular education. Writing in the conservative journal Civiltà Cattolica in 1855, a Father Curci warned against educating children of the poor to any degree beyond their status; that might cause them to remain there only with discontent or to want to leave their class with "inestimable damage" to themselves and the society to which they belonged.⁶⁵

The education provided by the traditional schools of the church was essentially a product of Renaissance humanism, classical in orientation, and well-suited to the ruling class of the pre-industrial, pre-liberal era. But the new age had its echoes even in the church, and by the middle of the nineteenth century there were voices calling for a renewal of Catholic social action, which included education.

The Pedagogy of Liberal Catholicism

One of the early liberal activists among Catholic educators was Ferrante Aporti (1791-1858), a priest from Mantova (Mantua). In the 1820's he served as superintendent of elementary schools in that city. In 1829, he opened the first asilo infantile (literally "infant asylum," meaning pre-school) for young children whose families could not give them constant care. This institution required the children's families or guardians to pay tuition, but Aporti soon realized that the need for such institutions was far greater among the poor. For that reason, he opened a free asilo in Cremona in 1831, enrolling the children of

⁶⁵Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:167.

the poor and relying on support from faithful benefactors. Another such asilo opened in San Martino all'Argine in 1834. Asili, as Father Aporti conceived them, were not simply day-care institutions, but genuine schools where instruction took up at least four hours of the day and included moral and religious training.⁶⁶

Aporti published a book in 1833 entitled Manuale di educazione e di addestramento per le scuole infantili (Manual of Education and Training for the Infant Schools). This book, besides providing a basis for the dissemination of asili infantili in Italy, stressed the educational and charitable traditions of the Catholic church.⁶⁷ Soon the movement spread to other parts of Italy, but not without opposition. In 1839 the Papal states banned the asili infantili that had opened in that territory, and a book appeared by Count Monaldo Leopardi who accused the asili of offending against national traditions and good taste. Aporti found support and a greater measure of freedom in Piedmont, where he was invited to teach at the University of Turin in 1844. He subsequently became a senator in the Sub-Alpine Parliament and the superintendent of Piedmont's infant schools. In 1847 Aporti published another important book, Elementi della pedagogia (Elements of Pedagogy). He died in 1858, shortly before the unification of northern and southern Italy.

⁶⁶ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:121.

⁶⁷ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:120.

An educator of a more meditative nature was Raffaele Lambruschini (1788-1873). From a wealthy and religious Genoese family, Lambruschini first aspired to the priesthood; but after a season in Rome, he gave up his priestly calling and went to his family's lands in San Cerbone in Tuscany. There he conducted agricultural experiments and opened a successful experimental boarding school in 1816. He tried to maintain a "family" atmosphere in his school, and he allowed the children a measure of self-government. From his nature studies he derived a profound religious sense⁶⁸ that he attempted to communicate to his students. Based on his experiences at San Cerbone, Lambruschini founded a journal called the Guida dell'educatore (Educator's Guide), which he published from 1836 to 1846.

Lambruschini closed his school in San Cerbone in 1847 and went to Florence to join the publishers of the moderate-liberal paper La Patria (The Fatherland). After unification, he was named a Senator of the Kingdom, and in 1867 he became Professor of Pedagogy and Superintendent of the Institute of Higher Studies at the University of Florence.

In his writings and teaching, Lambruschini insisted that man's many problems cannot be solved without participation in supernatural reality; to political and economic problems man must add moral and religious perspectives. For Lambruschini, only Christianity, practiced with purity of heart and spontaneity of feeling, could save mankind from decline and ruination. He hoped, moreover, for reform and renewal

⁶⁸ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:123.

within the Catholic church, for he believed that doctrinaire Catholicism had developed a sterile objectivity in its rites that restricted the scope of faith and the spontaneity of the religious mind.⁶⁹ To overcome this sterility, he called for a return to the "simplicity of the Gospel" and a striving to internalize religious values.

Lambruschini, the teacher, observed that there are really two forms of education: indirect education, that the child receives from his family and his environment; and direct education that is the result of the work of a teacher. The value of direct education is mitigated by the difficulty of finding individuals who have the necessary moral qualities and personal gifts to teach well and constructively, so that indirect education is the preferable mode when it is possible. Direct education, he thought, is often unsuccessful and destroys rather than edifies the child. If direct teaching must take place, then the teacher must avoid using punishments and rewards: punishments, because of the harm they do to the child, and rewards, because of the vanity that they can instigate. In all teaching, the teacher is advised by Lambruschini to respect the freedom and spontaneity of the child.⁷⁰

Other liberals and reformers appeared in the mid-nineteenth century in the context of the Catholic church. It should be noted at this point that there has never been a total separation of church and state in Italy, even when relations between the two bodies were very

⁶⁹Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Lambruschini, Raffaele."

⁷⁰Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:83.

poor. The work of Aporti and Lambruschini inspired schools later created by the Italian state; and such thinkers as Pasquale Galluppi and Gino Capponi retained a strong allegiance to Catholicism while taking a great interest in the formation of the Kingdom of Italy and its educational machinery. Where such persons are concerned, the categories of "religious" and "secular" are rather arbitrary.

Nationalism and Liberal Catholicism

In the early Risorgimento, before the withdrawal of Pope Pius IX from the liberal cause and the ensuing rift between the church and the Italian state, there was a group of thinkers hoping for a simultaneous renewal of religion and the Italian nation. Two outstanding clerics were in the forefront of this movement, Antonio Rosmini and Vincenzo Gioberti. Although both were interested in education, their influence reached far beyond that field in the cultural and political history of Italy, where they represent the apex of the mid-nineteenth century "liberal Catholic" movement.

Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (1797-1855) was a native of Rovereto, in the Veneto. He studied in Padua, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1821. In 1828 he founded the Istituto della Carità at Domodossola in the Italian Alps. By the 1840's he had become associated with the "neo-Guelphite" movement that envisioned an Italian federation headed by the Pope. He retained liberal political views, however, and was eventually drawn to Piedmont. During the crises of 1848, he undertook a royal mission to Rome to enlist the Pope's aid in the struggle against the

Austrians; but by the time Rosmini arrived, nationalist uprisings had already occurred in Rome, and Pius IX had abandoned his early liberalism. The prospect of increasing his temporal powers within the context of an Italian state was not sufficient to sway the Pope, and Rosmini, having failed to realize his greatest goal, returned to Piedmont and remained there until his death.⁷¹

In the study of philosophy, Rosmini had read and written on Kant, Condillac, Locke, and Victor Cousin; he was also well-acquainted with the thought of Pasquale Galluppi and Giandomenico Romagnosi. Rosmini held a belief that philosophy, building on a theory of knowledge, could renew humanity from its roots. His own work on the problem of knowledge brought him to reduce the plurality of forms to an idea of being that is implicit in all thought and is the very basis of intelligent thought. This idea of being, he contended, is innate or intuitive and is thus a "given" in thought. There is also a sensation-reality associated with bodily feelings, he argued, but man's ability to apply the idea of being to sundry sensations makes him primarily rational and demonstrates the union of body with intellect--which, for Rosmini, was equivalent to the soul. Although the human subject is empirical, Rosmini saw the subject as capable of an objective and universal knowledge derived from the idea of being; from it man intuits the Absolute Subject that is the source of the idea; and the Absolute Subject is equivalent to God.⁷²

⁷¹Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Rosmini-Serbati, Antonio."

⁷²Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Rosmini-Serbati."

From the idea of being, Rosmini developed a rather curious pedagogy that proceeds from the most general concepts toward the most specific. The child, instead of being encouraged to generalize from concrete experiences, must be taught the most abstract ideas from the beginning, from which he is then to derive particular classifications and characteristics. A botany lesson, for example, might begin with a discussion of plants in general, leading to flowering plants, and on to roses and finally to the naming of a particular rose.⁷³ In practice, this method never found wide application.

Despite his unusual approach to teaching, Rosmini believed in education as an integral part of the total life of man. He wanted the schools to develop and coordinate all of the student's faculties and possibilities, including the spiritual possibilities beyond the limits of positive science. Like other liberal Catholics, Rosmini called for a revival of spontaneous faith in the Gospel, and accused the Catholic church of having altered Christian principles by abandoning internal matters of faith for external uniformity.⁷⁴

There is much that could be discussed in a consideration of Rosmini, for his writings were voluminous and touched on many subjects. For example, he is widely studied in Italy as a moral philosopher, having published important works on morals in 1831 and 1837. His significant works in the field of education include Dell'educazione

⁷³Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:81.

⁷⁴Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:80.

cristiana (On Christian Education), 1823; Saggio sull'unità dell'educazione (Essay on the Unity of Education), 1826; and Del principio supremo della metodica (On the Supreme Principle of Method), published posthumously in 1857.

Vincenzo Gioberti was both an ally and a critic of Rosmini. Gioberti was born in Turin in 1801 and died in Paris in 1852. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1825 and served as court chaplain to the Savoys from 1826 to 1833. His political activities brought an end to his chaplaincy. He had joined a secret revolutionary society, and in 1833 he was discovered and exiled to Paris. He taught in Brussels from 1834 to 1845 and did not return to Italy until 1848. During the years of exile, Gioberti's views turned to more orthodox Catholicism and royalism. Soon after his return to Piedmont, Gioberti was offered a cabinet post in Gabrio Casati's government. In December of 1848, Gioberti was named Prime Minister in a short-lived government that was dissolved in February 1849. In the following month, the King sent Gioberti to Paris as Minister Plenipotentiary, a post from which he resigned two months later. Gioberti went into retirement in Paris and remained there until his death in 1852.⁷⁵

During his unusual and somewhat frenetic career, Gioberti continued to publish works of a philosophical nature. His published titles include Teorica della sovranaturale (Theory of the Supernatural), 1838 Introduzione allo studio della filosofia (Introduction to the Study of

⁷⁵Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Gioberti, Vincenzo."

Philosophy), 1840; Degli errori filosofici di Antonio Rosmini (On the Philosophical Errors of Antonio Rosmini), 1841; and Il gesuita moderno (The Modern Jesuit), 1846 and 1847. The most historically significant of his publications, however, was Del primato morale e civile degli italiani (On the Moral and Civil Primacy of the Italians), which appeared in 1843, a brief five years before the uprisings of 1848. The book gave considerable encouragement to the nationalist cause because it extolled the cultural accomplishments of Italians throughout history and asserted the superiority of Italian culture.

Gioberti's nationalism by and large agrees with that of Mazzini, with one important difference: Gioberti claims that Italian culture and the Roman Catholic Church are actually inseparable, and that the true genius of modern Italian culture lies in the church.⁷⁶ He calls for something more than a mere accommodation of church and state, as even an implicit separation would threaten serious damage to Italian culture; and in union, the church would necessarily have the stronger hand.

Politically, Gioberti was close to Rosmini, but the two differed on certain philosophical issues, principally on the importance of sensations and ideas. Gioberti saw ideas as subjective, not objective, and believed that only the intuition of God has objectivity. He affirmed an indissoluble bond between theology and philosophy. The presence of an infinite God, he believed, is intuited dimly in ordinary life but is affirmed in theology and reflected upon by philosophy. The end of both

⁷⁶ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:114.

disciplines is a moral attitude that is a return to the Divine Being; but such a return must occur through the medium of the human community. Morals are more than individual; they are social and political, and they are aimed at remaking society. Nations are part of the moral hierarchy and have historical roles to play in the moral reconstruction of society. Gioberti contended that Italy is first among nations in this supra-national process of moral reconstruction.⁷⁷

From social philosophy it is a short distance to education. Inasmuch as private education is not an option for the poor, Gioberti demands state-subsidized education accessible to all. The state, however, must not direct education as a monopoly, for the dangers of a secular dogmatism and state tyranny lie therein. Education must recognize and include religion (the "genius" of society) among its studies, but Gioberti argues that schools must not be ruled by clerics. Rather, students must be taught by experts in various fields.⁷⁸

It is evident that Gioberti desired an educational system that was neither entirely laic nor clerical, but a fusion of the two; that fusion reflects his social and political opinions, for Gioberti was both a cleric and a political activist. With the death of Rosmini and Gioberti, and deteriorating relations between the Vatican and the Italian state that culminated in the 1871 papal non expedit forbidding Catholics to participate in Italian politics, the dream of a unified, theoc-

⁷⁷Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Gioberti, Vincenzo."

⁷⁸Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:115.

ratic state faded.

Don Bosco and the Salesians

Outside the sphere of political activity and well within that of practical endeavor were the efforts of Don Giovanni Bosco (1815-1888; later canonized as San Giovanni Bosco, or St. John Bosco). Don Bosco was the son of peasants in Castelnuovo d'Asti. As a boy, he was exceptionally dedicated to his schoolwork; he once had a dream or vision in which he was divinely commanded to teach and care for the unfortunate young. Soon, he began giving informal lessons to neighborhood children who could not afford to attend school.

In a suburb of Turin in 1847, Don Bosco founded the Oratory of Saint Francis de Sales; there he assembled three hundred poor or orphaned children with the intention of educating them to do honest work. He was an outstanding teacher and his activities soon drew the attention of like-minded persons. As a result, Don Bosco formed the Holy Society of Saint Francis de Sales, recognized by the Vatican in 1860; the society developed rapidly thereafter.⁷⁹

Much has been written about San Giovanni Bosco, but he wrote little himself. His only noteworthy publication was Il sistema preventivo nell'educazione della gioventù (The Preventive System in the Education of Youth), 1877. The "preventive" system therein described is intended as a means of preventing failure and unacceptable behavior in students. This method, not a formalized system, is a combination of

⁷⁹Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:114.

faith, a deeply personal power of persuasion, and an intrinsic understanding of child psychology. Whatever the child's temperament, Don Bosco asserted that there is a "point accessible to good" in the personality, and it is the teacher's task to discover and work with it through intelligent and active love, without punishments and repressions, while anticipating possible occasions for misbehavior.⁸⁰

The aim of preventive education, moreover, is always to help the child to realize his possibilities and thereby to feel useful and appreciated, able to do things for himself and for others. For this reason, and because many of Don Bosco's students came from the poorer classes and were not academically talented, the Salesian schools were organized to provide occupational and vocational training. Such training included manual skills, a unique feature in mid nineteenth-century Italian education when the state "technical schools" were actually aimed at general education for clerical workers and preparation for further training in genteel occupations.⁸¹

Gradually, state schools developed that assumed similar functions to those of the original Salesian schools, and by the middle of the twentieth century the educational mission of the Salesians had altered considerably; but the vision of Don Bosco had served an important purpose in making Italian educators aware of the educational needs of the poor.

⁸⁰Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3:79-80.

⁸¹Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:170.

Opposition and Rapprochement

When Pope Pius IX abandoned his early liberalism and turned conservative, refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Kingdom of Italy despite the Law of Guarantees, and declaring himself the "prisoner of the Vatican," it was obvious that liberal and progressive forces even within the church would face official opposition. The Pope assembled conservative advisers and catalogued the errors of modernism in his well-known encyclical of 1864, the Syllabus of Errors. Under such circumstances, educational reform was difficult for the Catholic schools in Italy, which for the most part continued to teach traditional subjects in a traditional manner.

Gradually, the political atmosphere changed. The strength of the Italian socialists (and the evident irresponsibility of many left-wing legislators) brought the Vatican to reconsider its role in the Italian context. With a vast majority of Italian citizens claiming to be Roman Catholic, a Catholic political force had the potential of significantly opposing the socialists. In 1905, Pope Pius X abolished the non expedit; but no Catholic party of great importance emerged until after World War I. What developed in that era was the Partito Popolare organized by a Sicilian priest, Don Luigi Sturzo. The Popolari were the forerunners of the present-day Christian Democrats, and their ideology was intended to reconcile the Catholic faith with modern social and democratic ideas.⁸² In their first parliamentary election in 1919, the Popo-

⁸²Hearder and Waley, A Short History of Italy, p. 201.

lari won 101 seats. Their support was largely rural.

The Popolari were suppressed by Mussolini, and the Christian Democrat party first appeared as an underground group during World War II. In the meantime, however, an important agreement regularized relations between the Italian state and the Vatican. The Concordat of 1929, engineered by Mussolini, which gave the church liberty in spiritual matters, sovereign rights, and diplomatic privileges, declared Catholicism to be the religion of the Italian state.⁸³ After 1929, church and state relations fluctuated according to the political climate, but at least the "Roman question" was resolved.

The provisions of the Concordat allowed priests in state schools as teachers of religion. Thus, the church gained official and legally sanctioned influence on the curriculum of government schools. In exchange, the Vatican accepted the principle of state supervision of education where such control was a matter of setting school standards, giving examinations, and approving the preparation of teachers. The principle of "parification" of non-state schools had actually come down from the late nineteenth century, but under the new regime it became a fact. Thereby, the Italian state was able to influence curriculum in Catholic schools, and changes in outlook became political necessities as well as responses to contemporary pressures. Despite such exigencies, Catholic schools retained their identity in twentieth-century Italy.

⁸³Hearder and Waley, A Short History of Italy, p. 213.

The Scholastic Revival

One particular movement swept the Catholic church in the early twentieth century that had a considerable effect on Catholic education, especially at the university level. It was the movement headed by Padre Agostino Gemelli, and is variously referred to as "Neothomism" or "neoscholasticism." Father Gemelli, born Edoardo Gemelli in Milan on January 18, 1878, began his professional life by earning a doctorate in medicine at the University of Pavia. While studying endocrinology, Gemelli became concerned about the elevation of the human race and turned to socialism. Unsatisfied by materialism, however, he abandoned socialist activities and took religious orders, becoming a Franciscan. Gemelli developed the viewpoint that interest in the Christian message had to be revived, even by means of combining Christianity with certain aspects of the scientific world-view. He was a good organizer and was instrumental in founding two Catholic journals, Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica (Review of Neo-Scholastic Philosophy) in 1909 and Vita e pensiero (Life and Thought) in 1914. In 1919, Father Gemelli became the principal founder of Milan's Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, an institution recognized by the Italian state in 1924. He was its first rector, and from 1936 until his death in 1959 he was also president of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. His entire life was marked by his energy and versatility.⁸⁴

⁸⁴Enciclopedia filosofica, 1979 ed., s.v. "Gemelli, Agostino," by D. Morando and R. Zavalloni.

Although not well-prepared in philosophy, Padre Gemelli believed that philosophy is the backbone of culture, especially of Christian culture. His grand aim was to restore Catholic thought, redirected to its (Thomistic) medieval sources and vitalized through its conflict with non-Catholic ideologies such as idealism and positivism. Thus strengthened, Christian philosophy should be at the center of the Catholic university. Despite his appreciation for philosophy, Father Gemelli saw himself as a psychologist and experimental scientist; he left the teaching of philosophy to others, and concentrated on strengthening the psychology laboratory of his university. It was from his psychological research that his pedagogical viewpoint developed. Essentially, he taught the importance of social psychology for pedagogical activities and all human relations. He saw the human personality as a synthetic unity in which all the particular activities of the self--working and learning, for example--converge. For Gemelli, the supreme expression of the person occurs through the will; thus, he placed the highest value on "education of the will."⁸⁵

The Sacred Heart University and its related institutions attracted Catholic scholars from the 1920's on. It became a principal center for the Italian dissemination of French-inspired theories of "personalism" or "Christian spiritualism," which were seen to be coherent with the basically Neothomistic orientation of the university. These theories attracted some attention during the Fascist period, but were pronounced

⁸⁵Enciclopedia filosofica, s.v. "Gemelli, Agostino."

more openly and became the basis for the major Christian school of pedagogical thought after 1945.

Private Education in Italy

The great majority of schools in Italy, at all levels, are either government schools or those of the Catholic church. Italian law allows other types of schooling to exist: in fact, the 1948 Italian constitution guarantees the rights of citizens to run private schools.⁸⁶ However, there is not much social pressure for the creation of non-state, non-church private schools. Those few that exist at the elementary level tend to be specialized, such as schools for non-Italian speaking communities residing in Italy (e.g., the Junior English School in Rome).

At the secondary level, an interesting phenomenon exists in the form of private secondary schools that provide professional training not offered or not well-covered by state and church schools (for example, the linguistic high schools); in addition, a large number of private secondary schools offer special coaching and tutoring to students who have been unable to pass state examinations for entry into various professions or public university courses. In this latter function, they are commonly derided as "drop-out academies" and do not enjoy high public status. A leading educator writes of them:

⁸⁶Luigi Volpicelli, L'educazione contemporanea (Rome: Armando Armando Editore, 1964), p. 12.

. . . the private school, thus, as it was historically constructed and disseminated among us after the Casati Law, in the popular mind and before the authorities seems to be a "money-making institution," dedicated to providing "make-up" work for failures, if not exactly hiding them from view.⁸⁷

Universities are almost entirely in the hands of the Italian state. Those few that are not are either institutions of the Catholic church (e.g., the Sacred Heart University of Milan or the Pontifical Salesian University of Rome), or they are highly-specialized institutions for professional studies or the education of foreigners.

Philosophers of education in Italy tend to be either laic or Catholic, and by implication they are concerned with education in a state or church context, although the political power of the Christian Democrats after World War II gave the Catholics some influence over affairs in state schools. There appear to be no uniting ideologies or philosophies that are specifically aimed at private education in Italy; trends in educational theory, when they imply formal schooling of one sort or another, necessarily ignore the private nonconfessional schools.

Educational Theory Before World War II

In the first four decades of the twentieth century, educational theory in Italy, or pedagogia as it is properly called, became increasingly the province of university professors, an academic discipline rather than a cause for activists and dilettantes. The Italian state continued to build a network of essentially non-confessional schools, whose teachers were for the most part trained in state institutions

⁸⁷Volpicelli, L'educazione contemporanea, p. 17.

under the tutelage of laic professors. Among the laics there were several "currents," the strongest of which was allied to Gentile's actual idealism. Other currents, including Crocian idealism and problematicism, had a few representatives; during the Fascist era, the most politically radical were obliged to keep their opinions quiet or be forced out of academic circles. Thus the Marxists were not strongly represented, despite the intellectual influence of Labriola at the turn of the century.

At the urging of the idealists, the Fascist regime of the 1920's and 1930's succeeded in purging most of the "scientific" influence out of teacher-training courses. Education was to be a matter for philosophers, not scientists. The result was that education, at least at the most theoretical level, was maintained as a natural appurtenance of philosophy departments. From that time on, it was usual for laic philosophers of education to be teachers of philosophy who might, through choice or circumstance, perform the duties of training teachers or of preparing students in philosophy to compete for positions in teacher-training institutions.

The Catholic educational enterprise was sustained by teachers and theoreticians who were trained in state institutions or possibly at the Sacred Heart University of Milan. Some Catholics managed to teach in state universities and normal schools, but the Catholics' principal forums were the Sacred Heart University and the Catholic press. By the advent of World War II, it was a rare Catholic educator who did not have

some academic connection or credential. It is not surprising that the Catholic educators were more respected in the church-affiliated schools than in the state schools, especially in view of the absence of a strong Catholic political party in that era. The few non-affiliated private schools existed for specialized purposes, but except for a few interesting experiments (particularly in early childhood education), they attracted little attention among credentialed scholars in education.

As the Second World War changed the political situation in Italy, so it altered (but did not totally revolutionize) the educational enterprise in theory and in practice.

CHAPTER III
ITALIAN IDEALISM: BENEDETTO CROCE
AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Any study of Italian educational thought in the twentieth century that neglects idealism as a pervading force is simply incomplete. From the time of Mussolini's rise to power to the end of World War II, idealism was the official philosophy of the Italian state, and as such it was supposed to have guided Italian education. Before that time, and back to the era of Bertrando Spaventa, there were prominent idealists in the Italian intellectual milieu; and after the war, those idealists who had not collaborated too closely with the Fascists were able to maintain positions of respect in the academic community. The movement lost direction and momentum in the postwar years, but idealist educators were identifiable in university positions well into the 1960's.

Hegelian Idealism in Italy

The origins and early development of Italian idealism are summarized nicely by two contemporary scholars, Nicola Abbagnano and Aldo Visalberghi:

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Hegelian doctrine had its Italian center of study and diffusion at the University of Naples, where it was professed with theistic and Catholic tendencies by Augusto Vera (1813-1885), and by Bertrando Spaventa (1817-1885), who tried to develop it in an immanentistic sense, positing awareness as a fundamental presupposition at the beginning of the dialectical process.

Among those who belonged to the Hegelian movement in Italy in the second half of the nineteenth century were numerous writers, historians, members of the legal and medical professions, and philosophers as well, for all of whom Hegelianism served as a polemic instrument against positivism. Not one of them, however, was able to add anything to the thought of the German philosopher.

Idealism acquired originality and strength only in contemporary Italy through the work of Gentile and Croce. These two thinkers are radically distinguishable from the English idealists and also distinguishable from each other.

The two doctrines are distinguishable from each other inasmuch as one is absolute subjectivism (actualism), and the other is absolute historicism. The characteristic that they share is the radical negation of all transcendence and the resolution of all reality in pure mental activity.¹

For all of its cultural and historical importance, it is clear that Italian idealism was not a unified movement. Of the two important factions, historical idealism and actualism, the former was both earlier and longer-lived, although it probably had fewer adherents. Of the two major philosophers, Croce and Gentile, the one who came to be read and respected widely outside of Italy was Benedetto Croce, and thus historical idealism had wider dissemination than did actualism.

Benedetto Croce and Historical Idealism

"For the Italians Croce was the intellectual leader during his lifetime," an enthusiastic American scholar has written. "Every Italian began to call him 'maestro,' universal man, the great Croce, the honor of Italian letters, the new Erasmus, the great benefactor."² One may

¹Nicola Abbagnano and Aldo Visalberghi, Linee di storia della pedagogia, 3 vols., (Turin: G. B. Paravia & C., 1959), 3:221.

²Angelo A. De Gennaro, The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce (New York: The Citadel Press, 1961), p.1.

suspect hyperbole in these observations, but the fact remains that Croce was admired by many, and was widely translated and internationally known. "Never since Galilei had an Italian aroused such world interest."³

Croce's Life and Work

Benedetto Croce was born in Pescasseroli, in the province of L'Aquila, on February 25, 1866. His father was a wealthy landowner and a cousin of the philosopher Bertrando Spaventa and the parliamentarian Silvio Spaventa. Raised in Naples, Croce attended a Barnabite school which enrolled boys from the best Neapolitan families. He later pronounced his education there "satisfactory." Although temporarily inclined to religious life, religion soon lost its importance as his interests in literature and history grew. A good student and an avid reader, Croce found school easy and enjoyed reading such Italian thinkers as De Sanctis and Carducci. Some of Croce's school compositions appeared in a Rome literary magazine in 1882.

In 1883, Croce was suddenly orphaned by an earthquake that killed his father, mother, and sister, and slightly injured him. He and his brother went to Rome to live with their relative, Silvio Spaventa. There Croce encountered a new environment among the men of politics, but he suffered from a lingering depression related to the death of his parents, and he took little interest in the law courses toward which his

³De Gennaro, The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce, p. 2.

cousin directed him.⁴ In 1886 Croce returned to Naples to study history. He had arranged his legacy from his parents in such a way that his economic security was guaranteed for life, allowing him a life of study, travel, and independent action and thought.⁵

In the 1890's, Croce's interests in philosophy were awakened, spurred on chiefly by his reading of the Scienza nuova (New Science) of Giambattista Vico. That stirred in his mind the problem of the relations of art and history, and from the experience came a book, La storia ridotta sotto il concetto generale dell'arte (History Reduced Under the General Concept of Art), published in 1893. Croce's association with Spaventa's student, Antonio Labriola, acquainted him with the works of Marx, and between 1895 and 1900 he wrote a series of essays of Marxism published as Materialismo storico ed economia marxista (Historical Materialism and Marxist Economics), 1900. It was his association with Giovanni Gentile, however, that eventually led Croce to an appreciation of Hegelian idealism which he then reinterpreted in a characteristically personal way. Most significant was his collaboration with Gentile on La Critica (Criticism), a philosophical journal of idealistic tendencies, which both men edited from 1903 to 1923.⁶ That period, as history shows, was extremely formative for the course of twentieth century Italian philosophy, and ultimately for the history of Italy itself.

⁴Benedetto Croce, An Autobiography, tr. R. G. Collingwood (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 40.

⁵Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Croce, Benedetto."

⁶Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Croce."

Before the cataclysmic events of 1923 and 1924, relations between Croce and Gentile had already begun to cool. Croce had worked on elaborating a set of distinctions among the manifestations of Mind; these are modifications of Hegel's original doctrines, and Gentile criticized them as "empirical" (an idealist epithet). The work on La Critica continued, however, until political events made further collaboration impossible.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Croce established his reputation as a philosopher by publishing substantial philosophical material independently of his work with Gentile. Eventually, he was drawn into political life. In 1910, Croce was named a senator of the Kingdom of Italy. (Under the Italian constitution, senators were appointed for life, in contrast to members of the Chamber of Deputies, who were elected periodically; to be named a senator was a high honor.) Croce's political activity, however, did not reach a peak until 1920, when he was given the post of Minister of Public Instruction under Giolitti, the liberal prime minister. At that time, Croce strove to initiate a reform of the state schools that would have reduced the bewildering variety of schools and would have turned curricula in the direction of "culture" (history, classics, fine arts), de-emphasizing mere professional or vocational training. The government in which Croce served was weak and chaotic, and fell in July 1921. The school reforms proposed by Croce had not been passed. When Mussolini came to power in 1922, he asked Croce to suggest a suitable Minister of Public Instruction, and

Croce named Gentile, knowing the younger man to be more of a Fascist sympathizer than himself. Croce's hope was that Gentile, with Fascist help, would be able to implement the reform which both men had envisioned.⁷

The murder of the socialist parliamentarian Matteotti in 1924 was a shock to some of the idealists who had been swayed by Fascist rhetoric. Up to that time, Croce, while not actually favoring Fascism, had tried to justify it as a dialectical movement of renewal in Italian political life. After the bloodshed of 1924, his acceptance changed to opposition. He avoided attending senate meetings, and condemned government policies. Even on the theoretical level, Croce revised his opinions. He came to see Italian Fascism as an aberration rather than a genuine manifestation of the Hegelians' "Universal Mind." That signified a considerable revision of his judgment of the historical value of Fascism. Croce's status was such that he did not suffer serious attacks during the Fascist period, unlike other opponents of the regime. It is recorded that on one occasion his home was invaded by Fascist sympathizers, but they were routed by Croce's wife, Adele.⁸

After the fall of Fascism, Croce returned to the political life. In the second Badoglio government (22 April 1944 to 18 June 1944) he and Palmiro Togliatti, the Communist leader, served as government consultants (referred to as "Ministers Without Portfolio"), and they remained

⁷Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Croce."

⁸Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Croce."

in that position under the succeeding government of Bonomi, until December 1944.⁹ Croce remained active in reconstruction politics until his retirement from public life in 1948. In 1947, he established a research library in Naples for the purpose of assisting young scholars in historical studies. Benedetto Croce died in 1952.

Outlines of Croce's Philosophy

Croce's philosophy is derived from both Vico and Hegel, but the synthesis is uniquely his. For Croce, the fundamental idea is that of a Universal Mind that is becoming and progressing in an ongoing process. That Mind comprises all reality and there is nothing outside of it. It develops in a circular manner, its "moments" or forms recurring constantly, but without exact repetition, as in each recurrence Mind is enriched. The moments (a term borrowed from Hegel) are manifested in history, and there are four of them: art or esthetics (equivalent to knowledge of individual particulars); logic or philosophy (knowledge of universal concepts); economics (the will toward individual utility); and morals (the will toward the good of all). In the case of each moment, Croce explains its meaning in conceptual terms. He also subdivides the four into two pairs: art and philosophy comprise the theoretical forms of Mind, while economics and morals are the practical forms.

⁹Domenico Agasso, Storia d'Italia, 8 vols. (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori S.p.A., 1978), 8:532-533.

Although the idea of a Universal Mind that encompasses all reality in its progressive becoming is a derivation from Hegel, the four moments enumerated by Croce are his own. Croce believed that Hegel's dialectic of opposites was an over-simplification of the historical process of Mind. Hegel's theory, as Croce saw it, had led to a general confounding of the distinct forms of Mind, as Hegel did not make them apparent in his dialectic. Dialectical opposition is necessary for the development of all forms, and can and does take place within them; but the opposites (light/dark, good/evil, etc.), are not themselves forms of Mind, according to Croce; they only represent typical poles of the dialectic. Thus, Croce affirms an important difference between distincts, the four moments (or the forms of Mind), and opposites, the necessary features of dialectical thought. The development of Mind in its circular and recurrent patterns is equivalent to the unfolding of history. Only in history, affirms Croce, can reality be in movement and progress. This doctrine has been called "absolute historicism," and it is a central feature of Croce's philosophy. In fact, Croce equates philosophy with a "methodology of historiography," that is, with the study of the modes and forms in which Mind concretizes itself as historical knowledge--the only knowledge possible because there is nothing that can be known outside of history.¹⁰

¹⁰Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:227.

Croce was heavily involved in the study of esthetics, that first form of Mind, which he saw as the basic expression of feeling and intuition. He concluded that esthetic activity transforms crude emotions through the work of imagination, and esthetic activity is the beginning-point in the expression of Mind--insofar as there can be a beginning-point in an essentially circular system.¹¹

In the few scattered fragments in which Croce deals with education, chiefly in Pagine sparse (Scattered Pages), a series of essays and memoirs that appeared in 1929, he tends to stress the importance of historical and esthetic studies. This leaning is concomitant with his effort to reform Italian schooling during his brief period as Minister of Public Instruction. The reform that Croce envisioned in 1920-1921 was largely a reaction against the positivist influence in Italian schooling and schools' resulting emphasis on science. Antipositivism was part of the idealist creed, and Croce duly mistrusted science and relegated it to the status of an "economic" study.¹²

Unfortunately, there is no single book or essay by Croce that details a systematic educational theory derived from his philosophy. Yet Croce was an intellectual of enormous importance to Italians in the first half of the twentieth century. It was up to his followers, therefore, to devise Crocian pedagogies. It is necessary, then, to turn

¹¹ Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:229.

¹² Abbagnano and Visalberghi, Linee di storia, 3:230-231.

to them to see how coherent educational thought was developed from the ideas of Italy's greatest contemporary philosopher.

Adelchi Attisani and the Historical Individual

In postwar Italy, historical idealism or absolute historicism did not have a large following among educational thinkers. Among the few, the best-known and most articulate was Adelchi Attisani. He was born in Lecce Province on September 12, 1898. He spent most of his career teaching moral philosophy and pedagogy at the University of Messina. Attisani's first publications in 1924 dealt with problems in esthetics and education, and showed his affinities for Croce's theories. In general, Attisani respects the Crocian union of philosophy with the study of culture--that is, he regards literature, history, and art as the subject matter of philosophical contemplation. In a modification of Croce's doctrine of the distincts, Attisani identifies four groups of problems deserving of separate philosophical attention: they occur in the disciplines of history, ethics, education, and esthetics.¹³

Attisani's ethical theories are strongly influenced by Croce; his writings also contain numerous references to Kant and Rosmini, moralists of different but not totally incompatible natures. Although Attisani is concerned about the discovery of objective values, his ultimate project is to develop an autonomous ethic in the Kantian sense that can satisfy the individual need for moral concreteness. The "historical individual" that Attisani describes is not a mere instrument of Idea or Universal

¹³ Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Attisani, Adelchi."

Mind; that person is above all an ethical individual, participating in a living process of ethical thought.¹⁴ Attisani's ethics are actually the point of departure for his educational theories, which are best developed in his book Libertà ed educazione (Freedom and Education), published in 1951.

The Growth of the Moral Will

Clearly, Attisani's Libertà ed educazione is written from a particular ethical viewpoint. In the preface, its author states his intentions as follows:

This book, with the nexus of concepts announced by the title, attempts to provide a solution for an important problem in the ethical theory of historicism. . . .

In facing it, I have not neglected the occasion provided to me to re-examine and clarify ethical problems of today, bound to the fundamental problem of freedom, which is evaluated here with particular regard to education.¹⁵

The "important problem" to which Attisani refers is the problem of freedom in a moral (human) world; specifically, he wants to develop a concept of freedom that is not destructive of morality. Obviously, if freedom is taken to mean something like "absolute freedom of choice," then one may choose to be grossly immoral. Attisani intends to demonstrate that human beings are free, but that they cannot choose evil.

¹⁴Dizionari dei filosofi, s.v. "Attisani."

¹⁵Adelchi Attisani, Libertà ed educazione (Messina: A. Sessa, 1951; 2d ed., Naples: Morano, 1967), preface.

He begins by assuming that the only freedom worth discussing is freedom in the moral context, that indeed, freedom is a moral problem. He asks whether freedom should be conceived as an equivocal choice between good and evil, or whether we must necessarily select good and avoid evil. (These are really two opposing theories of moral action.) At this point, Attisani begins a rather curious argument in favor of moral necessity rather than moral choice. Human beings, he contends, generally recognize the difference between good and evil; they are able to label certain objects and states as "good" and others as "evil." This ability to discriminate suggests that the choice of good over evil is implicitly made; in other words, the discrimination between good and evil is really the choice itself.

What becomes, then, of the moral conscience? If making a moral discrimination is tantamount to choosing the ensuing action, no further deliberation of a good-versus-evil sort is required, and as a result, human beings do not have to refer to a "moral conscience" as a tertium quid that directs human action. Such an entity would be an unreliable guide in any case, because it would have to stand beyond good and evil in order to allow us to deliberate freely; and if it is beyond good and evil, it must be indifferent to values, and that entity is therefore irrational.¹⁶ If we cannot allow the conscience to be indifferent to values, then it must be oriented one way or the other (toward good or evil), and hence it is not free. If we insist that conscience is not

¹⁶Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, pp. 11-12.

oriented one way or the other, then it must refer to independent criteria to make a choice, but these criteria, whatever they are, must have a compelling power to influence the choice. Attisani concludes that what has been discussed here

. . . is not free choice, the faculty of choice between good and evil, but it is always the selection of good against evil; and, as liberation from this evil, and only in this sense, is there moral freedom.¹⁷

There are two important judgments in this conclusion. The first is that there is no free choice in moral matters; and the second is that the necessary enactment of good brings about the moral agent's liberation from evil.¹⁸

Attisani next attacks theories that propose moral freedom as the individual's power to refer the self, or not refer the self, to Being, which is understood as the Good. Here again, Attisani thinks that the choice is not a real one, for this formulation requires a person to be able to recognize Being as the Good; but if Being can be so recognized, then it must be chosen over nonbeing, for it is impossible for a human being, a manifestation of Being, to choose not to be.

¹⁷Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 13.

¹⁸Although Attisani uses the term "selection" in this passage, he means to deny that one can actually choose between good and evil as if they were two equal options; the "selection" is properly a discrimination between good and evil, and when the discrimination is made correctly, the subject is required to follow the superior course. Later, Attisani will argue that evil deeds are the results of inadequate knowledge. It is inconceivable to him that a person could consciously judge a contemplated action to be evil and still choose freely to perform it. Some will see this as a flaw in Attisani's moral philosophy.

Attisani is really concerned about the recognition of moral law as a necessary condition of human life; and freedom must be freedom from any tendency to disavow that law. Yet if, as Attisani contends, persons are free only to recognize good and shun evil, how can evil exist at all? That is the next problem on the agenda. Here Attisani goes into a consideration of Plato and the theory of the involuntariness of evil. According to this theory, evil is a failure to recognize the good; and that failure occurs because the individual's consciousness of the moral law has not yet been awakened. Nevertheless, as evil is still evil, the evildoer cannot be held morally exempt, and he or she is to be punished with an eye toward future corrigibility.¹⁹ In that way, Attisani attempts to overcome the dilemma created by positing involuntariness on one hand and moral responsibility on the other.

Attisani contends that Plato's view of evil prefigures a dialectical theory in which evil is seen not as what is willed, but as what is no longer willed and has since been negated and overcome by a superior good. Good and morality may then be identified with the very act of willing, and evil becomes merely a precedent good that has deteriorated. Moral unawareness, or ignorance of good, is ignorance of what is still, for the individual, in the future.

Thus, then, the bad is not voluntarily or conscientiously bad, but through ignorance of the true good, that is, through actual deficiency--we might say--of the moral conscience.²⁰

¹⁹Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 20.

²⁰Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 23

Obviously, this "deficiency" theory of evil preserves the notion of corrigibility, for if a wrongdoer is morally deficient, he or she may yet be instructed in proper moral knowledge.

In order to solve the problem of the moral significance of certain actions, Attisani eventually introduces the idea of a double order: there is moral will and amoral will. He is careful, however, to specify that practical affairs do not belong to an order of nature outside of the moral will. As Croce teaches, Mind is never passive and irrational, and there is nothing outside of it. Even a practical fact is the result of will; but some choices, as for example between two equally good actions, may be merely facultative and dependent on "free initiative" or ". . . the will in general in contrast to moral will or ethicized will."²¹ Similarly, Attisani uses the term "practical initiative" to refer to the power of self-determination in matters of fact.

Attisani attempts to integrate the individual will into a great universal moral consciousness. The will, he contends, must be conformed to the moral law by a posteriori judgments of reality, and it is thereby drawn into the orbit of moral consciousness. There the will becomes part of the process of rationality, (also called "spirituality" by the idealists), and the individual's will is then involved in the ideal eternal history of will, ". . . in which will is perpetually unfolding, and according to a necessary order of certain eternal values and attitudes. . ." and in such a way that will is forced to pursue new

²¹Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 37.

ends in order to satisfy a superior order.²²

How, then, does the individual will fit into the grand scheme of the unfolding of the ideal eternal will in history?

In brief: man is always free in the choice of his goods and his aims within limits, and proportionately to the degree of practical conscience that he has attained; but man is not free in the choice of the degree of practical conscience which he attains: sometimes he wills in a utilitarian way--as a mere individual--or morally--as the man who transcends the merely individual--but he does not will sometimes to will in a utilitarian way or to will morally; he does not choose and he is not free to choose between one and the other will, between being only an individual and being both individual and man.²³

Thus we are always free and never free. We are free to will particulars, but not to choose the forms of awareness or will, or the degree of freedom in which we find ourselves. If we are evil, we are so because we or others have so judged our actions a posteriori. If we are good, it is only because we have attained a higher grade of knowledge, and that knowledge is ultimately moral awareness.

There is much further discussion and borrowing from both Kant and Croce. Eventually, Attisani turns to a consideration of civilization and the realm of human society. Like Croce, he accepts that Mind unfolds in history, and that its highest moral manifestations occur in civilization. He finds a dialectic that develops in the interaction of individuals. In the course of human history, the interaction of persons takes place and spurs the individual's ascent to moral awareness, teach-

²²Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 30.

²³Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 40.

ing him or her the moral law.²⁴ Society, then, exerts a moral influence that unfolds the powers of the mind and paves the way for moral conscience. That same society permits the development of arts and sciences; they do not by themselves make a person moral, but they do provide conditions for moral development. Society's laws, too, permit moral development by promoting the freedom (and therefore morality) of all, and by punishing infractions of that freedom.²⁵

Education as a Moral Enterprise

The end of moral development in society is an attitude of individual moral responsibility, which implies a dialectic of moral realization on one hand, and a process of moral education on the other. The prime duty of education, then, is to promote the moral sense of the populace; education is most significantly a moral enterprise. Education must also foster the growth of the individual's creative will (but always along moral lines), and it must promote one's sense of vitality, growth, and history.

The Basis of Education

A major consideration for Attisani is that education, whatever it does, takes place in society; and the social context is necessarily a moral context. On that assumption, Attisani develops his notion of education:

²⁴Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 61.

²⁵Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, pp. 55-56.

Now, among the 'active forces in the world,' among the actions by which every individual interacts with other individuals, and works and can work upon their likeliness to develop themselves and evolve in specific modes and directions, there is that particular mode of action, that particular manner of doing things that is called education, and whose force in human development in general and in the direction of that development is attested to by more than history and by the experience of all times and all eras; in fact, this force (education) is profoundly justified by the very concept of the individual, who is rightly defined by his eternal self-individuation. That means he is defined by his self-distinction among all other individuals, which obviously cannot happen except by means of his self-definition in actions and reactions toward and in relation to other individuals (with their actions and reactions); except by means of a process, that is, in which individuation is also unification and unification is also always individuation.²⁶

Here Attisani concentrates on the essential social quality of education. He refers to education not as an activity, but as an "active force" or a "mode of action" that results in certain activities. That is education at an abstract level; and seen as a metaphysical entity, it is not far from what Croce (Attisani's mentor) calls the "forms of Mind," meaning those cultural forces that shape human activities.

Attisani observes that individuals interact with other individuals, and that this interaction affects their "likeliness to develop themselves and evolve in specific modes and directions." In other words, social interaction has a shaping effect on human development. The basis for that observation is partly naturalistic, but Attisani draws inspiration from several quarters. His next argument is historical: The "particular manner of doing things" called education is "attested to . . . by history," or more precisely, its efficacy in human development is so attested. We educate, then, because education can

²⁶Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 76.

develop human beings in certain ways; and we know this is the case through the evidence of the historical record.

So far, the assumption that this influence on human beings is desirable has been implied; but Attisani next attempts to justify it. He claims that the force of education is justified by the "very concept of the individual" (the idealist concept of the individual), and that is the crux of the argument. According to that concept, the individual is necessarily "self-individuated," or made distinct among all other individuals. As to how that individuation occurs, Attisani insists that the individual can be self-defined only ". . . through actions and reactions toward and in relation to other individuals. . . ." That is, the presence of the individual in a social context really defines the individual. Alone, he or she would not have as clear a sense of self as that obtained through interaction with others, nor would as much development be necessary in particular directions. Attisani does not stipulate that this development is always intentional; rather, it seems to be the inevitable result of social life. In the historicist scheme, history acts with or without the conscious cooperation of the ordinary individual, but it does have an effect of producing moral awareness in the individual.

The social process of human action and interaction is said to have a dual aspect, bespeaking reciprocal functions. It allows individuation, but that individuation "is also unification," for it is a process common to all, not restricted to one or to a few; in that commonality

there is unity, as common values are realized. At another level, social unification--the combining of individuals in societies and cultures--is a process that allows the individual additional means of self-identification (as a member of that society or cultural group), and thus contributes to individuation. Although that argument is not water-tight (because the concept of individuation modifies subtly), it has a reciprocity that appeals to the neo-Hegelian mind and provides yet another example of dialectical movement.

That morality is the basic condition for human society is a proposition never questioned by Attisani and those of a similar persuasion. Hegel himself requires morality in the civil society and beyond, and it is unthinkable to the idealists that an immoral or amoral society could exist. Such a society not only contradicts the idealist notion of a society, but if it could somehow come into existence, it would surely destroy itself. The very fact of the existence of others raises moral questions for the idealists, and so the entire matter of living in a social body becomes the subject of moral deliberation. Attisani does not use the word "morality" in the cited paragraph, but he is setting the stage for the concept through these preliminary considerations.

Obviously, then, education is taken to be part of the "course of things" (history) that forms individuals in an especially moral way. Furthermore, it seeks to bring out the individual's

. . . free creative action, seeing to it that all the powers of the soul have their appropriate development, and in that way, bring about that equilibrium and interior harmony that are the foundations

of human personality and the principles of moral liberty.²⁷

Here "free action" and "liberty" must be understood to mean freedom within the confines of morality, for Attisani has gone to some pains to demonstrate that immorality is not free. The "powers of the soul" to which he refers are not some mysterious powers, but rather the potentials of the individual.

The Task of Teaching

Attisani directs some attention toward the educator and that person's duties. Inasmuch as education deals with the development of moral and mental powers, the educator must have full knowledge of things in their eternal forms and of individuals in whatsoever way they appear (the educator is a philosopher). The work involves kindling native energies; it is not the filling of empty vessels. Education is in one sense self-education, while the activity of teaching is the stimulation of self-education. The educator must maintain a proper attitude: the students must not be considered malleable material at the educator's whim, nor should he or she ever abandon efforts to educate them. The right way to educate is through an intersubjective process that the educator must understand and master.²⁸ It is education, and not individual initiative, that lifts human beings out of their undifferentiated efforts. That elevation is the arduous task of education, and it requires the formation of good habits according to reason. Miseducation

²⁷Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 76.

²⁸Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 76.

can do great harm (a principle Attisani derives from Plato), while good education fosters a nobility of spirit that overcomes man's natural coarseness. Attisani agrees with Kant that man needs to be educated for the Good.²⁹

In chapter ten of Libertà ed educazione, Attisani arrives at a synthesis that explains his title. He refers his readers to a similar title from Ernesto Codignola, Educazione liberatrice (Education the Liberator), 1947. Education, says Attisani, is liberating inasmuch as it frees us from the forces that attach us to our particularity and deny our vision of that totality in which we might redeem and exalt ourselves. Any education that is not liberating in that sense does not deserve to be called education--it is training or coaching or even mis-education. Of course, attempts at education cannot guarantee one's liberation, but rather they promote liberation by establishing favorable conditions for that intellectual development that is really the unfolding of Mind among human beings. The learner must be the author of self-liberation through learning, but the individual does not have the power to be entirely self-educated and self-liberated from egoistic tendencies; what is really required is an external stimulus to self-development. (The preceding sentence summarizes Attisani's attack on the Deweyans.) In society there is a moral duty to educate and be educated. It is a corollary of Kant's moral imperative. The educator is a liberator who is self-transcendent and sympathetic with others whom he or she

²⁹ Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, p. 81.

cannot leave trapped in their narrow egoism. Liberation must be for all.³⁰

Attisani warns that parents, too, have a duty to promote moral growth, as do all others in their vocations and their dealings with fellow human beings. Whoever acts upon others may educate, but only moral action produces effects that are properly educational.

Moreover, education as liberation implies a right of each individual to be educated, inasmuch as one cannot be educated or liberated without the help of others. One's right is to learn to be free, which, for Attisani, means to be moral. It is a right not only to be unhampered in pursuing this goal, but to be helped along the way. Finally, Attisani affirms the right of the individual to be seen as central to education, the moral end of education.³¹

There are several essays appended to Libertà ed educazione that repeat and continue themes mentioned in the main section of the book. In the essay called "Liberazione dell'uomo" ("Man's Liberation"), Attisani restates the work of education in purifying the individual for participation in superior values without losing individuality, and he incidentally derides Giovanni Gentile's form of idealism (actualism) as "the indiscriminate doings of the super-personal I."³² He also criticizes the "active" (Deweyan) school as an institution unable to rise

³⁰Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, pp. 91-94.

³¹Attisani, Libertà ed educazione, pp. 95-98.

³²Attisani, "Liberazione dell'uomo," in Libertà ed educazione, p. 120.

above particular individuality to a universal and superior level of individuality.

Attisani's Critique of Dewey

In 1953, Adelchi Attisani published a book called Problemi di metodo attivo (Problems of the Active Method). The book discusses modern education and the spirit of humanism. Attisani affirms that the only truly humanizing education is based on historicism: "Since man is essentially a historical individual, all education that is not (historical) does not develop the individual."³³

While Attisani accepts the idea of learning-connected activities for helping the student think about subject matter, he warns that activity is not a goal in itself. Education must be active without ceasing to be educational. The teacher, especially, must take an active part in educating the students. Furthermore, educational activity should not be just any spontaneous activity, but a form of rational cooperation between teacher and students. Mere activity may lead to a deterioration of authority and thence to mere physical freedom, which encourages passivity and ignorance. Too much permissiveness, love, and forgiveness, he argues, may occlude the true spirituality which is the spirit of learning. Attisani repudiates education "made to the measure" of the child and advocates education "made to the measure" of supreme (moral and cultural) values. He makes a distinction between an "activity

³³ Adelchi Attisani, Problemi di metodo attivo (Messina: A. Sessa, 1953), p. 25.

school" and an "active method" of teaching, and he chooses the latter.³⁴

History, culture, and morality: These themes of Croce's philosophy, with an admixture of material from Kant, Plato, and others, are evident in Attisani's writings on education. It is not recorded what Croce might have known or thought of Attisani's pedagogy. Croce retired in 1948 and died in 1952. Attisani's last book on education appeared in 1953. By that time, Italian education had already begun to move in other directions.

Alfieri's Crocian Pedagogy

While Attisani's most active efforts to construct a Crocian pedagogy took place in the late 1940's and early 1950's, another attempt appeared in 1967, really too late for a thorough treatment in this discussion, but worth some attention. The book was Pedagogia crociana (Crocian Pedagogy) by Vittorio Enzo Alfieri. Although principally a historian of philosophy, Alfieri turned his hand to writing on education as a result of the student protests and general educational turmoil of 1966-67.

Born in Parma in 1906, Alfieri as a young man studied the works of Croce and became politically allied to him in 1925. Arrested twice by the Fascists, he was forbidden to teach because of his antifascism. After World War II, he returned to teaching, and in 1956 became professor of philosophy at the University of Pavia. Much of his research concerned ancient philosophy, particularly the Greeks and

³⁴Attisani, Problemi di metodo attivo, pp. 35-64, passim.

Lucretius and Epicurus. He also studied and wrote on political theories from the medieval to the illuminist period, esthetic theories from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, and the philosophies of Pascal and Fichte.³⁵

Pedagogia crociana, which first appeared in turbulent times, attempts to delineate a theory of pedagogy in line with the spirit, if not the letter, of Crocian philosophy. Alfieri introduces the book thus:

My book is the fruit of the experiences and meditations of a schoolman, tenaciously in love with the school, disappointed but not discouraged in the face of the present grave crisis situation: it is a crisis not only of the school, and not only of pedagogical theories, but of our society itself.³⁶

. . . Someone might object, with a knowing air, that a Crocian pedagogy does not exist. But precisely because Croce did not write anything about education in its theoretical aspects, what is being pursued here is the problem of the sense that a pedagogy might have within the framework of Croce's philosophical concepts.³⁷

The most vital of Croce's concepts which Alfieri uses as premises for this book are ". . . historicism and a non-ethnological concept of culture."³⁸ His stated goal is to exalt "Tradition and culture: an inextinguishable lamp, more truly inextinguishable than that which according to legend shone in the tomb of Pallas."³⁹

³⁵Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Alfieri, Vittorio Enzo."

³⁶Vittorio Enzo Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana (Naples: Morano Editore, 1967), p. 7.

³⁷Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 9.

³⁸Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 9.

³⁹Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 10.

In the text of Pedagogia crociana, Alfieri first recalls Croce's career as an educator and delineates his sympathies for education. He gives Croce credit for having introduced the idea of state-administered examinations to allow national recognition of credentials from non-state schools. By proposing that mode of achieving parity, Croce made himself unpopular with a large number of students who did not want to take such examinations. That was the situation in 1920 and 1921, during Croce's term as Minister of Public Instruction. In advocating the recognition of non-state schools Croce displayed his liberalism, but above all he still strove to defend the state school as ". . . the highest achievement of the modern state. . . ." ⁴⁰ Moreover, Croce strove to retain quality in the state schools, and to awaken the interest of parents and citizens in school affairs.

Alfieri reviews the era of Gentile and outlines Croce's political activities in opposition to the Fascist line. There is mention of the ensuing difficulties for Croce and also for those who held to his ideals. In the postwar era, Alfieri contends, Crocian idealism failed to make an impact on the Italian schools because of pressures from the Communists on one side and the Catholics (through the Christian Democrats) on the other. Both parties, of course, had strong ideological objections to Croce's philosophy, which was both non-Marxist and nontheological. Croce's main educational activity after the war was his membership in the Association for the Defense of the National School,

⁴⁰ Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 33.

but his age and health restricted his work.⁴¹

In succeeding chapters, Alfieri apologizes for Croce's lack of interest in pedagogical matters, and digresses to attack American pragmatists, Rousseauian romanticists, and the proponents of various democratic and "scientific" pedagogical creeds. He holds up historicism as an educational ideal, and derides mass media and popular culture for trying to overcome tradition and the written word. The danger that Alfieri warns of is a regression to "pictorial civilization."⁴² The school, he contends, has an ethical and historical mission; education designed to be useful is mere ignorance. Neither the utility-school nor the play-school is the answer to modern society's crisis. The counter to vapid and mechanistic education is humanism, and not the humanism of Latin and arid rules, but ". . . the living sense of culture in the continuity and variety of that development that projects from the present toward the future."⁴³ Alfieri lauds the humanism of Croce because it emphasizes language, which is ". . . the key to the understanding of perennial values, and not accidentally, of the humanistic and historicist ideal of education."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, pp. 38-53, passim.

⁴² Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 122.

⁴³ Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 127.

⁴⁴ Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 139.

In the final chapter of Pedagogia crociana, Alfieri attacks the Marxist, Catholic, and Deweyan views of education. Marxism, he says, is the religion of economics and production, wherein individuals are subordinated to an authoritarian state. Catholicism is also authoritarian and dogmatic, conceiving its purposes as the only admissible ones. The "new education," including Deweyan activism, pragmatism, and experimentalism, subordinates the teacher to the interests of the child and is indifferent to culture and tradition. Moreover, its emphasis on self-education and independence for ignorant schoolchildren is merely absurd. In place of those three, Alfieri advocates the "seated" school of a traditional and conservative type. He dislikes modern innovations such as the unified high school and group learning projects. Study, he contends, must involve individual effort and the use of the memory as well as the understanding. Teachers are allowed to question students.

. . . A useful counsel might be this one: that the teacher limits himself to a few important questions, perhaps only one, but such as to interest the class in the subject and to force the student being questioned to an intellectual effort that may reveal his attitudes. It should be understood that, in being able to judge the students by such a system, what is strongly required is the honesty and impartiality of the teacher.⁴⁵

Such questioning, for Alfieri, could well replace mechanistic "objective" testing.

Pedagogia crociana closes in praise of precision and mental effort (Croce, after all, "adored" work). The teacher, too, learns through teaching clearly and precisely, employing personal effort and

⁴⁵ Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, p. 160.

persuasiveness. In effect, the teacher persuades the student to learn and develop; and teaching so conceived is in the cultural tradition of ancient Greece, the "fatherland" of our minds.⁴⁶

The Twilight of Historicism

In the social and political upheavals of the late 1960's, there were few voices calling for a return to the classical and humanistic curriculum. Alfieri, although respected as a scholar, was not able to attract a significant following, nor did the historical idealists have any appreciable influence on the further course of Italian schooling. Another attempt to revive interest in Croce's ideas appeared in Vincenzo Ammendola's La concezione educativa in Benedetto Croce (The Educational Concept of Benedetto Croce), published in Naples by Loffredo Editore in 1973. In it, Ammendola applies Crocian principles to particular concerns such as the teaching of esthetics, philosophy, history, and other subjects. It is an interesting effort, but provides nothing startlingly new.

Alfieri was essentially correct when he suggested that the forces of Marxism on one side and Catholicism on the other reduced the near-prophetic status of Croce after World War II. A more negative judgment of Croce is offered by the radical historian of education, Tina Tomasi, when she refers to the "cultural pontificate" of Benedetto Croce that reached its high point during the Allied liberation in 1943 and 1944, and then declined under the criticism of the Marxists, who had come to

⁴⁶ Alfieri, Pedagogia crociana, pp. 161-163.

revile Croce's essential conservatism and elitism.⁴⁷ In addition to the ideological issues, there were probably other factors that contributed to the decline of Croce's influence. Among them might be the fact that he did not seek political office, and the one high office that he accepted was his only for a short time. Another factor might be Croce's tendency to be a lone scholar; although well-known among the Italians, he did not strive to build a "school" around himself and his work. When he died, only a handful of scholars carried on in his tradition. In contrast, Croce's antagonists in the "actual idealist" school of Gentile were both politicians and proselytizers.

⁴⁷Tina Tomasi, La scuola italiana dalla dittatura alla repubblica (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1976), pp. 27-33.

CHAPTER IV
ITALIAN IDEALISM: THE DISCIPLES
OF GIOVANNI GENTILE

The Era of Actual Idealism

In the Italian context, as has been noted, Hegelian idealism developed in two forms: historical idealism and actual idealism. Both schools grew out of the teachings of Bertrando Spaventa, but all of Spaventa's students had particular interpretations of what he (and Hegel) meant. From the founding of the idealist journal La critica in 1903, it was clear that Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile were to be prominent in the idealist movement; their leadership emerged in the next two decades, but the political events of 1922-1924 created a rift between them. Beyond that, their philosophies had developed divergences: Croce, impressed by his reading of Vico, formulated historical idealism; Gentile, more involved in metaphysical problems, developed actual idealism (or simply "actualism").

The mature thought of Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944) appears for the first time in an essay, L'atto del pensiero come atto puro (The Act of Thinking as Pure Act), published in 1912. Gentile's philosophical purpose, outlined in that study, is to reform and improve upon the Hege-

lian dialectic; early in his career, however, he saw neo-Hegelianism's possible consequences for education, and in 1913 he published Sommario di pedagogia come scienza filosofica (Summary of Pedagogy as a Philosophical Science).

Next to Gentile, the most important figure in the actual idealist movement was Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice (1879-1938). While Gentile played the role of theoretician, the conceptual clarifier of thought, Lombardo-Radice was the practitioner who tried to relate philosophy to daily life in the school.¹ Among Lombardo-Radice's influential writings are Lezioni di didattica (Readings in Teaching Practice), published in 1914-1915, and Lezioni di pedagogia generale (Readings in General Pedagogy), from 1916.

Actual idealism is a complex philosophical system that is not quickly summarized. It is essentially a peculiar interpretation of Hegel.

Gentile abhors inert thoughts and ideas, and from the Hegelian mind-object dichotomy he wants to synthesize a concept of thought in action, of thought taking place at the point of connection between subject and object; that synthesis of subject-object has to be an active process, overcoming the inert dualism of subject and object. There can be no meaning for merely potential thought, or for thought left unthought. Thought is a process of interiorization whereby man (the

¹Iclea Picco, "Il pensiero pedagogico dell'idealismo italiano," in Questioni di pedagogia, 3 vols., (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1973), 3:173.

subject) comes to know the object, to conquer it and make it his. Because one says "I know that. . .", the knowledge that is achieved is both self-knowledge and knowledge of the object.²

In thinking (the act of knowing or coming to know), Gentile sees man as the creator of his own life and world. Man's knowing is the process of (transcendental) Mind itself, whose nature is unity: it is a process that unifies feeling, perceiving, willing, and self-creation with the multiplicity of sensations, perceptions, volitions, and concepts. Mind is the center of a circle, whose points lie only in relation to that center. But the mind of the individual, for Gentile, does not create a solipsistic, egocentric world: the world that man conquers in his process of interiorization is not his world, but the world. He rediscovers science, culture, and all knowledge whatsoever, and reconstructs it in himself. The process of conquest and interiorization is also the process of education, which is necessarily self-education,³ self-initiated and self-directed. Any other possibility would violate Gentile's concept of man and mind (or properly, Mind).

If education is self-directed, then of what use are schools? The answer to that question is more clearly spelled out by Lombardo-Radice than by Gentile.

²Picco, "Il pensiero pedagogico," 3:785.

³Picco, "Il pensiero pedagogico," 3:787.

While Lombardo-Radice generally upholds the principle of self-education, he allows that the individual is capable of making mistakes and reaching his limitations. Still, the individual is capable of struggle against weakness and evils, and has the possibility of self-improvement. In the educational process, the student becomes aware of personal failings; thereby, an ideal is found that transcends the individual and forces realization of a fuller self. That ideal destroys the self-imposed limitations of narrow egoism and fosters conscientiousness and responsibility. The learner searches for teachers who represent or embody that ideal, and finds a truer self in these others.⁴ The truth attained, then, is not one's own particular truth, but a general level of awareness that has been reached by some already (those who teach) and is yet to be attained by others (those who learn). Inasmuch as all are in some regard between the highest and lowest levels of awareness, everyone is both teacher and student.

The differences between teacher and student can be resolved in the process of education, which is a process of synthesis not only of subjects and objects, but of individual minds: a diffusion of the self in others and an acceptance of others' knowledge in oneself. A full and voluntary spiritual unity must take place in the classroom; concretely, this means that the teacher reviews what he has learned and is a living example of it, while the student, eager to transcend himself, seizes that example and uses it in his conquest of knowledge. This "fusion of

⁴Picco, "Il pensiero pedagogico," 3:788.

souls" in Lombardo-Radice's thought should be understood as a full application of both persons to the same problem, together in the same research, in an act of consensus and mutual esteem. The fusion is emotional as well as intellectual, not unlike the bond of love between a mother and her infant. In this blending, the old antinomies are resolved: the self versus the other; freedom versus authority; private thought versus universal knowledge.⁵ Those are overcome; they have no relevance here.

At first reading, it seems curious that such a lofty vision came to be associated with state Fascism. Yet despite the idealists' professions of liberty and self-direction, idealism has an authoritarian undertone. The knowledge that man conquers is not individual ("egocentric"), but the knowledge of all. The process of education requires a fusion, a blending of wills. The transcendent, universal I that one must pursue is there in others as well, in their society and their culture (and this implies Italian culture, preferably.) That society and its culture are expressions of the universal I, and respect for it is imperative; it must be seen as the highest form of self-respect. Practically, then, if a schoolboy's revered teachers are marching to the tunes of Mussolini, and the schoolboy is not, he is then seriously out of step with his culture, his nation, his truest self-interest. Gentile asserts this clearly in his doctrine of the state; it is another derivation from Hegel. In his last book, Genesis and Struc-

⁵ Picco, "Il pensiero pedagogico," 3:793.

ture of Society, Gentile argues that the state (meaning particularly the Italian state) is a unity and that it is identical with the transcendental Will.⁶ It is the sum of all wills in continuous process. The state embodies liberty, but not in an individualistic way; rather, it embodies a collective and universal liberty, a freedom wherein the individual cooperates with the state to enact its will as his will. True freedom lies in perceiving one's duty and doing it, but always within the national and cultural context. It is the general will that matters; the individual acting alone is a nobody, a nothing.

Such state-centered theory was perfectly suited to the aims of the Fascists. Naturally, the Fascists carried favor with the idealist professors, especially in the early years; some even claimed to be idealists themselves. But the politicians who made up Mussolini's entourage were not noted for their level of culture or philosophical erudition; they were men of action, generally of a crude sort. The idealist educators were useful to the Fascist cause when they attempted to convince Italian schoolchildren that ". . . Mussolini is always right."⁷

From the murder of socialist deputy Matteotti in 1923 to the end of Fascist power in 1945, the "actual idealists" and the Fascists had their differences and their reconciliations. Even the docile Gentile

⁶Giovanni Gentile, Genesis and Structure of Society, tr. H. S. Harris (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 162-164.

⁷Denis Mack Smith, "The Theory and Practice of Fascism," in Nathanael Green, ed., Fascism: An Anthology (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), pp. 109-110.

was offended by the anti-Semitic legislation of 1938, although he subsequently returned to Mussolini's cause. In the words of a sympathetic biographer,

. . . the truth is that Gentile understood politics hardly at all. He did not see what fascism was because he did not want to see. Or rather, he twisted what he saw until it corresponded in some measure with what he wanted to see, and explained the result in terms of his speculative philosophy by means of a whole series of equivocations and ambiguities.⁸

Gentile was still in the service of the Mussolini regime (the Nazi-supported Salo Republic) when he was murdered in the doorway of a Florence hotel by unknown persons on April 15, 1944. His colleague Lombardo-Radice had gradually fallen away from Fascism after 1923; the excesses of the regime led him to conclude that Fascism's principles were actually inimical to his own.⁹ Lombardo-Radice was able to remain safely in university teaching until his death in 1938. As for the idealists, all denounced Fascism at one time or another, before or after the war; some also gave up idealism, some clung to it in an apolitical way, and some modified it to accommodate new ideas.

Ernesto Codignola and Idealism in Upheaval

Of all the educators who in their formative years came under the influence of Gentile and Lombardo-Radice, the most visible in the post-war era was Ernesto Codignola. This complex man stands out as a link

⁸H. S. Harris, The Social Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 217.

⁹Mario Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3 vols. (Seregno, Milan: Editrice Ciranna e Ferrara, 1979), 3:177-178.

between prewar idealism and the postwar "democratic" ideology.

Codignola was born in Genova (Genoa) on June 23, 1885. Although in his youth he had planned to study medicine, he developed an interest in philosophy and eventually enrolled in the Faculty of Letters at Pisa University. There he wrote a thesis on Thomism, and received his degree in 1909.

As a result of his university studies, Codignola came to identify himself as a neo-idealist (Hegelian) in philosophy and a Herbartian¹⁰ in education. His earliest teaching position was that of instructor in the Royal Normal Schools for Men, in Palermo. While there, he came under the influence of Giovanni Gentile, a development that was to direct the course of his career. In 1912, Codignola published his first book, a book of readings for use in teacher-training schools. His second book, in 1917, clearly shows an idealistic bias; La riforma della cultura magistrale (The Reform of Teacher-Training) advocates idealistic redirection in teacher-training practice.

Between 1917 and 1919, Codignola worked on a program for educational reform intended above all to transform the normal school from a place of encyclopedic professional instruction into a culturally unitarian institution of a humanistic character, a true "teachers' lyceum-gymnasium" having its center in the direct study of classics and, in particular, philosophy.¹¹ The transformed normal school was to be the

¹⁰Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979), p. 840.

¹¹Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Codignola, Ernesto."

basis of school reform, producing teachers who would go into their fields not as practitioners of stale techniques, but as philosophers inspired by "living thought" (i.e., thought akin to actual idealism).

With such a vision, Codignola returned to the prestigious University of Pisa in 1919, where he had obtained a teaching position in the Faculty of Pedagogy. There his reformist work became intense. In that year, he published La pedagogia rivoluzionaria (Revolutionary Pedagogy), delivered a paper on teacher-training reform at a Fascist conference, and joined with Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice and others in the founding of a national Fascist education group, an event documented in 1920 in Appello per il Fascio di Educazione Nazionale (Call for the National Education Group). All of this activity had obvious Fascist overtones in the years prior to 1922, the year in which Fascism became "official."

Political and Cultural Activities in the Fascist Era

From 1921 to 1923, Codignola took a great interest in the proposed "Gentile Reform" of education and assisted Gentile in working on the plan. Codignola's publishing activities continued unabated. His translation of Lucien Laberthonniere's Theory of Education appeared in 1921, and in the following year he published a translation of Paul Monroe's A Brief Course in the History of Education. In 1922, Codignola became a professor at the Royal University of Florence, and directed the Faculty of Teaching there until 1936. In 1923, largely because of Gentile's good offices, Codignola became president of the National Organization of Culture, a government body aimed at a broad diffusion of literacy in

rural areas. Codignola also edited two journals begun in the 1922-1923 period: Levana (a synthetic name suggesting "rising," from levata), a cultural and scientific journal, and La Nuova Scuola Italiana (The New Italian School), aimed at educators. He became editor of Civiltà Moderna in 1929; that was a bimonthly review of historical, literary, and philosophical criticism. In that year as well, he wrote an article for the Educational Yearbook of Teachers College, Columbia, entitled "The Philosophy Underlying the National System of Education in Italy."

With the 1929 Concordat between the state and the Vatican, and the growing oppressiveness of the Fascist regime, Codignola began to lose faith in institutional Fascism, even though he continued to teach in a national university and to contribute to Fascist publications.¹² For the next fifteen years, Codignola remained active in teaching and publishing, but rather removed from political affairs.¹³ He also pursued scholarly research, producing a number of publications that included a translation of Hegel's Readings in the History of Philosophy (1930), works on the history of education (1935 and 1938), a book on Pestalozzi (1938), and a collection of readings on the Ligurian Jansenists (1941), a particularly long-standing interest of his. Another journal, La nuova Italia (The New Italy), appeared in the 1930's as a monthly review of culture, both Italian and foreign; its establishment led to the founding

¹²For example, see Ernesto Codignola, Il rinnovamento spirituale dei giovani, in series, Panorami di vita fascista (Milan: A. M. Mondadori, 1938).

¹³Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 841.

of a publishing house of the same name which Codignola directed long after World War II. It has continued to exist as a major Italian publishing house of educational and scientific material.

It is difficult to assess the relationship between Codignola and the Fascist politicians. On the surface, he appears to have been heavily involved in Fascist activities, but especially after 1929 there is evidence that his opinions had evolved away from Fascist government policies. In self-defense against postwar accusations of Fascist collaboration, Codignola authored a lengthy statement in 1946 entitled "Memoriale autobiografico" ("Autobiographical Memorandum"). In it, he contends that: The National Education Group of 1919-20 had nothing to do with what Fascism later became, and was rather concerned with assisting the Gentile Reform of 1923; his early association with Fascism was a protest¹⁴ against labor-unionists and "admirers of Sorel"; the Matteotti crime and subsequent events led Codignola away from Fascism, until in 1933 he saw a need for civil war; Mussolini loathed Codignola's journal Civiltà Moderna; although under political pressure, Codignola refused to include Benito Mussolini in his 1939 "Pedagogisti ed educatori," a volume¹⁵ of the Enciclopedia Bibliografica e Biografica "Italiana"; he employed Jews under false names at La Nuova Italia and helped some to

¹⁴Ernesto Codignola, "Memoriale autobiografico," in Ernesto Codignola in 50 anni di battaglie educative (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1947), p. 182.

¹⁵In fact, Mussolini is not in that volume, but Mussolini's mother, Rosa Maltoni Mussolini, who was a rural teacher at one time, is included. See p. 277. Achille Starace, Fascist party secretary, is also listed as an "educator." See p. 403.

escape; and he was arrested in 1944 under suspicion of having been a collaborator in the murder of Gentile. He includes similar incidents. Despite such attempts by Codignola to defend himself from the worst criticisms of his prewar activities, he still had far to go to preserve his reputation as an educational leader.

Codignola's Postwar Activities

The intellectual climate in Italy changed rapidly after the Second World War. Gentile and Lombardo-Radice were dead, and the Fascists were no longer in power; those whom the Fascists had suppressed, Marxists and Jews and various dissidents, were free to speak again; and the Americans had sent a Deweyan progressive, Colonel Carleton W. Washburne, to help rebuild Italy's national school system.

In spite of those upheavals, Ernesto Codignola's career continued. The Allied liberation had occurred in time to save him from growing mistrust and harassment by the Fascist authorities. He no longer directed the Faculty of Teaching at the University of Florence, but his position as professor was secure. There, in the relative freedom of the postwar years, Codignola was able to assemble a coterie of avid students and admiring young faculty members who formed the nucleus of the "School of Florence." Not one of them professed actual idealism; in fact, all of them to one degree or another came under the influence of Deweyan ideas. Codignola himself showed enthusiasm for the educational practices of the Deweyans, and took issue only with the more philosophical

aspects of Dewey's work, those tied to the principles of pragmatism.¹⁶ The practical, applied aspects of Deweyanism were dubbed "activism" by the Florentine scholars,¹⁷ and that activism made impressions on many postwar Italian educators, not only in Florence, but in other university centers such as Rome, Padua, and Turin. It was disseminated by university teaching, and also by numerous publications, many of which emanated from the presses of La Nuova Italia Editrice in Florence.

In 1946 Codignola published his two most important postwar works on educational theory: Le "scuole nuove" e i loro problemi (The "New Schools" and Their Concerns) and Educazione liberatrice (Education the Liberator). In the following year, he published another volume of his material on Jansenism, a book called Illuministi, giansenisti e giacobini nell'Italia del '700 (Illuminists, Jansenists, and Jacobins in Eighteenth-Century Italy). Then began some rather interesting translation-work.

One of Codignola's outstanding colleagues in Florence was Lamberto Borghi (b. 1907), a young scholar who had spent the war years in America and had earned a Ph.D. under the guidance of Horace Meyer Kallen at New York's New School for Social Research. Borghi returned to Florence in 1947 and taught history and philosophy in the high schools before becoming a professor at the city's university in 1949. Together, Codignola

¹⁶ Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 842.

¹⁷ The activist movement was actually more extensive than the School of Florence and its offshoots. For further discussion, see Chapter VI of this study.

and Borghi translated Dewey's School and Society, which was published by La Nuova Italia in 1949. In that same year, Codignola's translation of Experience and Education also appeared. Borghi again worked with Codignola in the translation of Washburne's Winnetka's Schools, published in 1952.¹⁸

Another of Codignola's notable publishing efforts was the founding of the educational journal Scuola e città (School and City) in the postwar years. Produced on the presses of La Nuova Italia, it achieved wide circulation among Italian educators in the 1950's and continues to be a major voice for democratic and scientific approaches to education.

In keeping with the spirit of the postwar era, Codignola was active in international organizations that advocated progressive or scientific educational practice. Chief among these was the New Education Fellowship (N.E.F.), which originated in 1921 and had been looked on with interest by Codignola and Lombardo-Radice from its inception; during the Mussolini years, however, Italian participation in the N.E.F. was limited.¹⁹ By 1945, Codignola had established contacts with Carleton Washburne and with the Swiss educator Adolphe Ferrière (1879-1960), one of the founders of the N.E.F. Desiring to know still more of the progressive educators, Codignola re-joined the N.E.F. and through it established contacts with J. A. Lauwerys, Clare Soper, A. S. Neill,

¹⁸For further discussion of Borghi and his accomplishments, see Chapter VI of this study.

¹⁹Raffaele Laporta, "L'educazione nuova nel secondo dopoguerra," Ernesto Codignola in 50 anni di battaglie educative (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1967), p. 160.

Decroly's followers in Belgium, Kilpatrick and his heirs in the U.S.A., and other eminent educators of that period.²⁰ Soper provided Codignola with N.E.F. documents that he translated and later published through La Nuova Italia. In 1946, Washburne was in Italy as head of the U.S.I.S. office in Milan. At that time, he and Codignola discussed the formation of a N.E.F. branch in Italy; the result was the Florentine section of the N.E.F., which was inaugurated on May 2, 1947, with Professor and Mrs. Codignola in charge. Subsequently, an all-Italian section was formed in 1949, and Codignola naturally became its first president. The stated goals of the Italian section of the N.E.F. were

. . . to promote democracy, human dignity, peace and international cooperation; to promote freedom from myths and ideologies; and to oppose authoritarianism and the privilege that prevents human development.²¹

The membership included such younger men as Borghi, Aldo Visalberghi, and Francesco De Bartolomeis, who was Codignola's last protege. Codignola presided over the Italian N.E.F. even through a period of financial and organizational difficulties²² in the late 1950's, but in 1962, old and ailing, he passed the presidency to Riccardo Bauer.

Two other educational organizations in which Codignola was active in the postwar years were the F.I.C.E. (Fédération Internationale des Communautés d'Enfants) and the S.E.P.E.G. (Semaines Internationales des

²⁰Laporta, "L'educazione nuova," p. 161.

²¹Laporta, "L'educazione nuova," p. 165.

²²Laporta, "L'educazione nuova," pp. 173-175. Laporta recounts the important N.E.F. meeting held in Rome in 1956, notable for the presence of Harold O. Rugg.

Études pour l'Enfance Victime de la Guerre). F.I.C.E. shared a number of directors with the N.E.F., and its meeting in Florence in 1950 was attended by many N.E.F. members.²³ The S.E.P.E.G. was limited in scope to discussing social, medical, and educational problems in war-ravaged countries; it enjoyed support from UNESCO. Several of its meetings were held in Italy, but its activities there ceased in 1951.²⁴

By far the most significant and socially redemptive of Codignola's postwar activities was the establishment of a model school, the Scuola-Città Pestalozzi (Pestalozzi School-City) of Florence. Established partly at the urging of Mrs. Codignola (Anna Maria Codignola, herself an articulate and thoughtful woman), it opened in 1944, shortly after the Allied liberation of Florence. Its original purpose was to provide living quarters and education for some of the homeless and destitute children who roamed the city at the end of the war. Within a few years, it evolved into one of the few showplaces of innovative education in Italy.

Codignola found quarters for his school in central Florence, near the Arno River and the National Library in the Santa Croce district. He obtained financial support from the Giulio Gori Foundation and set up a governing board that also received financial contributions from its own members and other individuals as well as from national and communal

²³Laporta, "L'educazione nuova," p. 167.

²⁴Giorgio Pagliuzzi, "Il rinnovamento educativo dopo il 1945," in Ernesto Codignola in 50 anni di battaglie educative (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1967), p. 156.

organizations. The governing body included representatives of the American Friends Service Committee of Rome; the Boys' Club of Utica, New York; the American Youth for World Youth, New York; and distinguished educators such as Carleton Washburne and William Heard Kilpatrick.²⁵ From the earliest years of Scuola-Città Pestalozzi, Codignola saw it as more than a charitable institution for war orphans. It had the possibility of becoming a laboratory for innovative education, a weapon against what Codignola had come to see as ". . . the verbalism, the encyclopedism, the lack of real experiences . . ." in the Italian school.²⁶ In a letter to Laporta, his successor at Scuola-Città, Codignola wrote:

It is necessary to liberate the school from programs of mere conformity-to-the-letter, so levelling and depressing, and to take greatest care to keep that conformity from polluting and vitiating the autonomy that we have achieved with so much tenacity--an autonomy that alone can justify, in our view, the experimental and exemplary function assigned to our school from its beginning.²⁷

Codignola indicted the traditional school for not preparing its students to face and resolve the host of problems they would encounter--for being, that is, a mere transmitter of

abstract encyclopedic notions, uninteresting and without savor, that fail to engage the personality and leave the mind and will inert because they do not touch the sources of creativity, or intellectual appetite, or emotion.²⁸

²⁵Ernesto and Anna Maria Codignola, La Scuola-Città Pestalozzi (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1962), pp. 267-274.

²⁶Pagliuzzi, "Il rinnovamento educativo," p. 150.

²⁷E. and A. M. Codignola, La Scuola-Città Pestalozzi, p. xii.

²⁸Ernesto Codignola, Educazione liberatrice (Florence: La Nuova

In his writings of the period, Codignola contends that attempts to remedy the deficiencies of Italian education were halfhearted or absent. Education must come out of its academic cloister, he urges, and center itself on the "vital interests" of the student, helping the student to take possession of inner forces and to apply self-discipline in all activities. The student must be enabled to define and solve problems of immediate interest. The result of such a change could be the transformation of the school and ultimately of the entire country.²⁹

Codignola asserts that his experiment was born out of his concerns for the lives of the young. The children at Scuola-Città Pestalozzi were faced with life-like responsibilities and practical problems from the beginning. Boys and girls from six to fourteen years of age were called to take on all of the tasks of a living community, from cleaning, kitchen work, and repairs to civic administration and disciplinary justice. In the democratic spirit, the school annually elected a "mayor" and various officials. Teachers were enjoined not to speak from the podium, but to present problems for the students to solve; and if mistakes occurred, the children were to see and feel the natural consequences. Discipline, a requirement for an orderly community, was demanded by the children, who also helped to administer it.³⁰ According

Italia Editrice, 1947), pp. 261-262.

²⁹ Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 263. The rhetoric in these pages bears the stamp of John Dewey.

³⁰ In this regard, compare the experiences of A. S. Neill and A. S. Makarenko.

to Codignola, the most difficult newcomers learned to respect order in a few months.

Teaching at Scuola-Città was intended to grow out of practical situations. For example, the children were not "taught to write": they learned to express themselves orally and then in written form through their debates, correspondence, theater productions, and through being required to express themselves well in their civic roles. They did not need to be coerced to perform tasks; group morale was high and exclusion from work was a disappointment. It was in community life that Scuola-Città students attained both knowledge and morality; and Codignola saw that community neither as a charming microcosm nor as a training-ground for future life, but as authentic social life ". . . in all the fullness of its meaning."³¹

The social and educational experiment of Scuola-Città Pestalozzi did not go unnoticed outside of Italy. In 1952 and 1953, the school was studied by a group from Harvard University that left believing in the positive results of the experiment.³² More personal and revelatory is the text of a letter from Carletone Washburne to Codignola, dated June 25, 1947. It reads in part:

I have visited many schools in most parts of the world and, as you know, I was head of the public schools in Winnetka, Illinois, for a quarter of a century. Thus, I recognize a good school as soon as I see it. Therefore, I would say that Scuola-Città Pestalozzi is among the best worldwide. In my visits to the school I have observed the kind of spirit and atmosphere that represent the best

³¹ Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 266.

³² E. and A. M. Codignola, La Scuola-Città Pestalozzi, p. 20.

practice of modern education. I have observed the creative work of the students and the cooperative work of the children in the laboratory and in the garden and in taking the responsibility for the good functioning of the entire school. The children's writings and original compositions were truly excellent. It is the kind of school that prepares citizens for a better tomorrow.

You are one of the rare persons who not only thinks and writes about education as a scholar of school problems, but you also demonstrate the ability to put theory into practice.³³

Codignola retired from his general directorship of Scuola-Città Pestalozzi in 1958 and left the office to Professor Laporta. Eventually, the school was integrated into the Italian state system of schools, although it continued to be a focus of interest for the Florentine professors and retained its essential character. Ernesto Codignola died on September 28, 1965.

Codignola Between Idealism and Deweyanism

Ernesto Codignola's intellectual origins were in idealism, and his thought never evolved away from its beginnings. While his positions on certain issues changed in time, there is no evidence that his inner vision altered appreciably. Nevertheless, in the postwar decades he developed a considerable interest in the educational activities of the Deweyans, and this professional interest is well-documented.

³³ Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, pp. 304-305.

An Idealist's Viewpoint

Codignola's 1938 Avviamento allo studio della pedagogia, a book that was reprinted several times after the war, provides an example of his view of education:

To educate means to unite with one's disciples in the ideal life.

In this most profound area of self-awareness one must discover the point at which men unite with one another, understand one another, and function in solidarity.

Thus we explain the irresistible attraction that has always been exerted upon others by those who derive inspiration through their working toward this most profound consciousness of their brotherhood with all creatures. It is the attraction of Socrates, of Saint Francis, of Pestalozzi, of the martyrs of the faith, of the great and humble heroes of the moral life. Heroism, affirms Bergson in a book in which this most profound zone of humanity is analyzed with much refinement, ". . . does not preach; it is enough that it shows itself, and its presence alone will be able to move other men." The saints ask for nothing, and yet they receive spontaneously. Morally creative minds constitute, above the human city, ". . . a divine city, which they invite us to enter. We may not hear their voices clearly, but the call has gone out; something responds to it from the depths of our souls. From the real society to which we belong, they transport us in thought to the ideal city."

The teachers who are truly masters (the excellent ones have always been few), even the very humble ones, belong to this family of minds. Whoever does not know how, at least in the most felicitous moments of his teaching, to "transport" his students "by thought into the ideal society," does not educate. Insofar as he is an individual closed in his egoism and in the pettiness of his mundane interests, he cannot speak to others, and especially not to children, because he will not be listened to. The teacher is followed only when in his teaching, in whatever way, he personifies the universality of the spirit of knowledge and truth, and in that most truly ethical environment (he personifies) a superior law, the law of custom and of the state, and, at a still more profound level, the moral and divine law, that which has appeared concretely, revealing and defining itself in those of the highest mind (religious prophets, heroes, poets, and thinkers.)

To educate means to unite with one's own disciples in the ideal kingdom of truth, and to speak a universal language that all understand or in which they at least glimpse the liberating signifi-

cance.³⁴

While a passage such as the one just quoted is a good example of the Italian idealists' style of philosophy, its hyperbolic and poetic language make it less than immediately clear to those trained in Anglo-American philosophical thought. It is the grand style of continental European philosophy, against which the Vienna Circle and the British analysts revolted. A term such as "the ideal life," for example, has no experiential referent, and tends to fall into the analysts' category of "unintelligible" statements.³⁵ The passage, however obscure, is not exactly meaningless: it is full of figures of speech and allusions that signify something that the reader, unaccustomed to this style of philosophy, must try to decipher.

Codignola defines the verb "to educate" as meaning "to unite." While it may seem strange to think of "educating" as "uniting," it is not surprising that Codignola defines it in this way. As an idealist, he abhorred dichotomies and dualisms of all sorts. An idea, being suitably general and removed from what the idealists contemptfully called "particularity," has that power to unite. In fact, idealism's enemies contended that its tendency to include dissimilar things in a uniting whole led to losing all distinctions in a "night in which all cows are

³⁴Ernesto Codignola, Avviamento allo studio della pedagogia (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1938), pp.15-17; 41-43. The quotations in the third paragraph are from Bergson's The Two Sources of Morality and Religion.

³⁵For further discussion of this issue, see A. J. Ayer, Language, Truth, and Logic (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1946), p. 14 et passim.

black." The idealists answered that Mind (the ultimate reality) also differentiates itself in specific "determinations," and such determinations occur in the course of human history. Education then, is one of those determinations of Mind; and as Mind unites, education also unites. Others might observe that there is a circularity in this reasoning, but the idealists did not object to circles. In education, the teacher unites with the students in "the ideal life." The word that Codignola uses in place of "students" is "disciples"; it suggests loyal followers of a great teacher or master who provides a wisdom or a set of values to which the disciples also subscribe. The imagery is religious. While not many schoolteachers would call their students "disciples," it was a goal of idealist educators to make the young their disciples, at least in cultural matters. The "ideal life," as Codignola will elaborate it, is really the cultural life at its highest moments.

Codignola next calls education a "profound area of self-awareness." "Profound" is a word that appears often in idealist writings; this metaphor of "depth" suggests a going beneath the surface appearances of things to discover what they are at base: one seeks the grounds on which they stand or the sources from which they spring. The educator must be profound in "self-awareness," the self-knowledge that allows him to understand his role in the life of culture. Only then can the educator "discover the point" at which the students may be brought into that ideal life, the point at which unity is possible. The unity to be discovered is one in which "men . . . understand one another," and

work together. Here Codignola allows a suggestion that clarifies the nature of the unity that is proposed as desirable. Certainly, persons do not become homogenized in some mysterious way: Codignola's own life and teaching testify against that misunderstanding of "unity." Rather, when individuals understand one another and function in sympathetic solidarity, that ideal unity begins to be realized.

Codignola extols the "attraction" of great teachers, the "great and humble" (a deliberately ambiguous phrase) who are heroes of the "moral life." That last observation should remind the reader that for Codignola, education is a supremely moral activity; from the metaphysics of Mind, Codignola and the other idealists quickly derive a theory of morals in which the Good is necessarily attuned to the manifest unfolding of universal will in history and culture. Those souls whom Codignola admires are the "morally creative," meaning not "inventive of morals," but showing creative force in their participation in the moral enterprise; "creatively moral," although an inexact translation, carries this sense. Included with such persons are the heroes and saints whom Codignola values not for their theology but for their morality; they constitute a community of minds that is, for him, a superior realm. Drawing on St. Augustine via Bergson, Codignola refers to the civitas dei, the divine city; only here, it is not a realm of sanctified souls, but of exalted minds. The saints of this new religion have availed themselves of the knowledge of the ages, and they call others (their disciples) to join them "in thought," forming an ideal city of the mind

where all are united by a common appreciation of the significance of culture. Their correct understanding of culture, one presumes, may be aided by the writings of the idealist prophets.

Codignola writes about great teachers, which he admits have been few in number; Pestalozzi is evidently one of the elect, as indicated here and in other texts. Such teachers, Codignola suggests, belong in the company of saints and sages. Their effect is to "transport" their students into the ideal society by means of thought. Inasmuch as the ideal city really exists only among minds (and in Mind itself), it is appropriate that thought is the vehicle for reaching it. The teacher is a pilot/guide who directs this vehicle, because he or she has visited the ideal city and knows the way; but there is no guarantee that the vehicle will arrive, except in the "most felicitous moments" of teaching. Codignola lived in the age of the airship, and he might well have imagined a great zeppelin floating off toward the ideal city. Unfortunately, zeppelins were full of unstable gas and sometimes exploded, crashing to the ground with disastrous results. When the journey is not successfully accomplished, Codignola believes that true education has not taken place. He thinks it essential for the student to reach that golden realm where great problems are solved and great understandings pervade, and to glimpse it for himself or herself.

The obstacles to the teacher's achievement, Codignola suggests, are egoism and petty and mundane interests. He believes that the young can discern the shallow egoist from the teacher who comprehends truth

and universality. For the idealists, universality is the antithesis of individuality, and a persistent individuality is inimical to unity. Thus, the true teacher in this passage is the unifier who is devoted to the universal "spirit of knowledge and truth" and personifies it in his or her teaching through the pursuit of ethical and cultural ideals, which are unifying forces. Such a teacher is able to create an "ethical environment" that embodies a "superior law"--superior, that is, to ordinary and particular laws. That superior law manifests itself in custom (which is an ethical matter because it is the basis of culture); in the state (because it is the highest concretization of Mind in history, as Hegel teaches); and at a deeper level, in the "moral and divine" law that is revealed through the builders of culture--the religious prophets, heroes, poets, and thinkers. Codignola might have named other groups, but here he is trying to be evocative rather than precise.

The passage closes by restating Codignola's definition of education, as though it were now demonstrated, and to which he adds the requirement that education must "speak a universal language that all understand." (If a language is universal, all must understand it; this is another example of idealist circularity.) The "universal language" is said to have a "liberating significance," but "liberating" in what sense? To be "liberated" in the idealist lexicon means to be free from vexatious particularities, and to be able to deal with universals; thus the "universal language" is also a language of universals, and another fortunate ambiguity is introduced. Mixing his metaphor somewhat, Codig-

nola ends by saying that the hearers of the universal language must "glimpse" its liberating significance, which is in any case its universality.

The Approach to Activism

Between 1946 and 1948, Ernesto Codignola published a dozen scholarly books, most of which are translations and historical studies. Although all of them express particular interests of their author, only two contain substantial discussions of contemporary educational theory: Le "scuole nuove" e i loro problemi (The "New Schools" and Their Concerns), 1946; and Educazione Liberatrice (Education the Liberator), 1946-47. In these works, and in introductions and comments in other books, Italian scholars have noted a shift in Codignola's thought away from the canons of Gentile's actual idealism and toward a partial acceptance of Deweyan progressivism. Codignola is both interesting and crucial as a postwar educator because he never moved completely from one philosophy to the other; that fact, along with his visibility and personal charisma, establishes him as the most important transitional figure between prewar idealism and the "Americanized" ideology of the postwar era. In the words of Professor De Bartolomeis, Codignola in the last twenty years of his life was "between idealism and (Deweyan) activism."³⁶

³⁶Francesco De Bartolomeis, "Fra idealismo e attivismo," in Ernesto Codignola in 50 anni di battaglie educative (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1967), pp. 146-147.

De Bartolomeis, in his brief retrospective article, observes that for Codignola

. . . there was no passage from idealism to activism if by "passage" one means a radical turn as a means of escape from a troublesome crisis in the system in which he had believed up to that time. Rather, we should speak of an encounter.³⁷

Yet the term "encounter" does not clearly explain what happened to Codignola's philosophy and pedagogy to cause him to arrive at such a singular position, the position between idealism and activism. Franco Cambi, another scholar, points out that Codignola ended up "close to pragmatism"; but Cambi speaks ". . . of proximity rather than membership since Codignola's philosophical bias remained idealistic, even though he passed from an actualistic creed to critical historicism."³⁸ That sentence suggests the tortuous pathway that Codignola took.

As his postwar writings indicate, Codignola retained a basic viewpoint of Hegelian idealism. He had failed to succumb entirely to Gentile's rhetoric of the "pure act" as the expression of Mind in history because he saw the excesses and contradictions countenanced by that rhetoric in the defense of later (post-1929) Fascism. Perhaps as a result of his early studies of Kant and Rousseau, or because of his admiration for the Jansenists, Codignola valued the individual and his right to dissent.³⁹ In Hegelianism there is always a strong belief in

³⁷De Bartolomeis, "Fra idealismo e attivismo," p. 146.

³⁸Franco Cambi, La "scuola di Firenze" (Naples: Liguori Editore, 1982), p. 25.

³⁹Cambi, La "scuola di Firenze", pp. 18-21.

the role of history as the final judge; thus Codignola, disturbed by the misdeeds of the Fascists, could save his faith by "historicizing" the actualist movement. Without accepting the highly idiosyncratic historicist system of Croce, Codignola could nevertheless accept actualism and the Fascist movement as a "moment" in the historical process--in fact, as a reaction against positivism and the feeble democracy of the Giolitti period, yet destined to alter through its own weaknesses and to yield to a more democratic idealism introduced, if necessary, by civil or international war.

In the grander scheme, the democratization that Codignola foresaw did not necessitate a move away from Hegelianism or a move to accept a foreign philosophy (for example, pragmatism). The remedy for actualism's faults could also be seen as a "moment" in the historical process, and what the Americans brought may have been a means of furthering that process. Thus, the Deweyan approach to education could be accepted not as an end in itself, but as an instrumentality in the realization of a cultural ideal. Such a construction of historical events was not entirely original; it had been suggested in the 1930's by Lombardo-Radicice and Gino Ferretti.⁴⁰ By revising his philosophy to this historicocritical form, Codignola could retain idealism while allowing new political or pedagogical methods to play their roles in realizing the historical, cultural ideals. Theory was one issue and methodology another; they were not, as Gentile had insisted, identical.

⁴⁰Cambi, La "scuola di Firenze", p. 19.

There is another element in Codignola's halfway approach to pragmatism, and that is his attitude toward science. While pragmatists intended to place philosophy on a level equal to the sciences, idealists always claimed to be above science and assumed the right of validating, if not actually rejecting, science. That claim of the idealists seemed reasonable to Codignola because he had been conditioned into a pre-scientific mentality, in a society that ". . . was always reluctant to allow scientific elements in pedagogy."⁴¹ The culture with which he identified resisted beliefs in the advantages of science and industrialization. "In other words, certain basic conditions, certain points of reference were lacking."⁴²

While Codignola may have lacked a measure of appreciation for science, relegating its role to that of another instrumentality, he nevertheless contributed much to the "Italian road to activism" in terms of an ever-increasing respect for the individual. He came to believe in the worth of the individual as a value that eludes and surpasses the classifications and generalizations of science. For Codignola, the worth of the individual became the ultimate "religious" issue (religious in a modern and laic sense), and that emphasis may be seen to contrast strongly with the Gentilians' tendency to absorb the individual into the universal.⁴³ Codignola as a teacher was always interested in his

⁴¹De Bartolomeis, "Fra idealismo e attivismo," p. 146.

⁴²De Bartolomeis, "Fra idealismo e attivismo," p. 146.

⁴³De Bartolomeis, "Fra idealismo e attivismo," p. 147.

students' points of view, always willing to discuss and debate alternatives. That openness, more than any ideological conversion, allowed him to be the mentor of the "School of Florence," the center of new pedagogical ideas in Italy during the postwar years.

Codignola's Postwar Publications

Scholars who point out the post-World War II change in Ernesto Codignola's thought have cited his early postwar book, Educazione liberatrice (Education the Liberator), 1946-47, for evidence of that change. In fact, the change was not a sudden postwar development but a matter of evolution, and that very book proves the "sudden shift" proposal an oversimplification. Educazione liberatrice is not a monograph but a collection of essays, chapters, journal articles, and miscellaneous documents from a twenty-year period, 1927 to 1947. Of course, the contents were carefully selected by Codignola, and the book was issued by his own publishing company, La Nuova Italia; therefore a deliberate consistency is present.

Educazione liberatrice opens with an essay from a 1938 volume, La formazione spirituale dei giovani (The Spiritual Development of Youth). The essay's title proclaims "The First Duty: To Be Oneself." In it, Codignola asserts the historicist position:

Man is what he makes himself and he is nothing other than this self-making. By nature we are nothing: our personality coincides with our history.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Ernesto Codignola, Educazione liberatrice (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1947), p. 5.

Yet, the author argues, this self-making cannot be purely egocentric. It is puerile to dream of being free of all laws and restrictions. The milieu of history demands a recognition of the lives of others, for, as a good Hegelian understands, antitheses are complementary.

I and not-I, liberty and law, subject and object are complementary terms. Only by an abstraction can we sever them and contemplate them in isolation. Whoever destroys one of the two terms destroys or at least attempts to destroy life in its actuality.⁴⁵

The life of originality and freedom is arduously conquered by self-discipline and renunciation, but the process, Codignola argues, must be spontaneous. The duty of the teacher is not to submit the student to a dead law, for that leads to sterility; rather, one must promote the student's liberation and sense of intrinsic authority. Like Lombardo-Radice, Codignola insists that the teacher must personify a certain order of the mind and spirit; but he adds that when the teacher values only the order created by the students' subordination, ". . . teaching ceases to be an intrinsically liberating force and becomes the most oppressive and odious of tyrannies."⁴⁶ What is most essential is to inculcate students' self-affirmation and faith in their own life missions: "Only the iron intransigence of faith has left deep furrows in the history of man."⁴⁷ Moreover, that faith must be tolerant, so that young people, while having sound pride in themselves and their tasks,

⁴⁵Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p.6.

⁴⁶Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 9.

⁴⁷Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 10.

may also respect the projects of others:

The sane man is not only proud of himself, of his own actions, but he always participates in the more elevated and sublime pride of being an active and aware member of a higher community that transcends him while validating and enriching him, and in which he enjoys feeling almost fused in mystical unity.⁴⁸

In a few pages, that opening essay exposes the major themes of the book: liberty and authority, the individual and society, the role of the teacher.

The second chapter, an article from a 1927 journal, is an evaluation of methods of teaching the very young. Here Codignola highlights the problem of translating the personality of a great teacher (e.g., Pestalozzi) into a method that can be followed by others who are not great teachers. He criticizes the "mechanical" nature of Montessori's method and ends with praise for the kindergartens of the Agazzi sisters.

In the chapters that follow, there is another discussion of interior discipline (1940); an essay on the duty of the school to seek truth and rationality (1934); a statement on political conquest as an anachronism (1945); a surprisingly contemporary (and sympathetic) essay on women's emancipation (1945); and an appreciation of Benedetto Croce as a teacher and inspirer of resistance to inhumane ideals and attitudes (1945).

In a brief essay on the rights of youth ("Diritto di giovani," 1945), Codignola restates his idealistic position on education as self-conquest, a spiritual unity that youth

⁴⁸Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 11.

. . . must achieve with their powers as intelligent collaborators with their teachers, and not as passive slaves. Education, as an institution, is this intimate and unbreakable collaboration of teacher and student.⁴⁹

In that passage, the words that Codignola uses for "teacher and student" may be interpreted also as "master and disciple," giving the concept a suggested religious tone.

Codignola closes the first section of Educazione liberatrice with another article from 1945, "Faith in Ourselves." It is one more effort on the theme of freedom and discipline. He suggests that the best educated have learned a respect for order, precision, and seriousness; but discipline and order must remain at the service of freedom. As ends in themselves, they become execrable instruments of oppression. The teacher who expects obedience must come to deserve it by performing appropriate duties well and by being true to sound values. Even the youngest students, Codignola contends, notice and respond to the character strengths of their teachers. "In plain words, the student must not be forced to obey me because of the simple fact that I sit in the teacher's chair."⁵⁰

To strengthen his concept of discipline, Codignola defends a rather Deweyan idea of learning:

The process of learning does not really consist of passively bending one's knees before the idol of objectivity, of absorbing others' solutions of problems, even though they may be the ones with the most advanced minds. . . . It consists of the solution of one's own

⁴⁹Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 109.

⁵⁰Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 113.

concrete problems.⁵¹

The school that disallows spontaneous problem solving, Codignola insists, takes the joy out of learning and turns the students into machines; they then become ". . . mediocrities, chatterboxes, know-it-alls, swell-heads. . . ."52 Spontaneity, the expression of curiosity, and the natural appetite for knowledge are the conditions for liberty, and authority within that liberty, for

. . . the only liberty worthy of a reasonable being is spontaneous subordination to the order that one identifies as his own knowledge and reason. . . .⁵³

The second section of Educazione liberatrice consists of essays on specific problems of teaching and school policy. The third section contains descriptive material on educational innovations and closes with a chapter on Scuola-Citta Pestalozzi and the previously-quoted letter from Carleton Washburne.

Another important work, Le "scuole nuove" e i loro problemi (The "New Schools" and Their Concerns) appeared in 1946. The title is misleading to English-speaking readers: the term problemi does not translate as "problems" in the sense of "difficulties"; rather, it is used in a Kantian sense, referring to matters that educators define and approach through systematic thought; an easier way to express that idea may be through such words as "concerns" or "issues."

⁵¹Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 114.

⁵²Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 115.

⁵³Codignola, Educazione liberatrice, p. 115.

Codignola states his intention to testify about exceptional educators and to link each one ". . . intimately with the historical traditions of the country in which he was born and flourished."⁵⁴ That statement, of course, shows no diminution of Codignola's historico-cultural idealism. In that cultural framework, the work of foreign educators is suggestive and illuminating, but also essentially nontransferrable to other contexts. They are presented for inspiration, to encourage the teachers who feel the "profound discomfort" within the Italian elementary school.⁵⁵

Codignola begins an essay on educational pioneers by invoking Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel as the great pedagogical thinkers of the nineteenth century, whose ideas were later eclipsed by the more mechanistic theories of Herbart. Herbart, Codignola suggests, was an inspirer of both the positivists and the "sociological" educators, but positivism had the earlier prominence. Only at the end of the nineteenth century did humanistic subjectivism reappear and prepare the way for a new movement in the twentieth century. What follows this introduction is an essentially expository account of the educators whom Codignola regards as significant.

The author begins by mentioning the English "new schools" and the work of British educators Cecil Reddie and Haden Badley. From there⁵⁶

⁵⁴Ernesto Codignola, Le "scuole nuove" e i loro problemi (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1946; revised edition, 1962), p. 3.

⁵⁵Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", p. 4.

⁵⁶Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", pp. 8-11.

he turns to the continental Europeans and discusses the contributions of Edmond Desmolins (French, 1852-1907), Hermann Lietz (German, 1868-1919), Georg Kerschensteiner (German, 1854-1932), Roger Cousinet (French, 1881-1973), and Célestin Freinet (Swiss, b. 1897).⁵⁷ A large part of this essay, however, is devoted to John Dewey and an exposition of his pedagogical thought.⁵⁸

The judgment of Dewey in this chapter is peculiarly Codignola's. Dewey's followers and admirers, he asserts, have failed to notice

. . . the vigorous idealistic inspiration of his philosophy and pedagogy, which, to wandering eyes, appear only as some of the many variations of pragmatism and contemporary naturalism. Of all that has appeared in contemporary speculation, his, next to Italian idealism, is the most powerful defense of autonomy in education, and the most pressing criticism of the residues of didactic objectivism.⁵⁹

Despite this idealistic transformation of Dewey's intentions, Codignola provides his readers with a faithful gloss of Democracy and Education, a discussion of Dewey's definition of education as "reconstruction," some consideration of the human and democratic elements in Deweyan education, and finally, a sympathetic summary of Dewey's methodological developments.

Following this discussion, Codignola devotes a mere paragraph to William Heard Kilpatrick and three pages to Angelo Patri, a Deweyan of Italo-American origins. He also deals with his colleague Washburne and

⁵⁷ Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", pp. 11-30.

⁵⁸ Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", pp. 31-60.

⁵⁹ Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", p. 32.

describes Ellen Parkhurst's Dalton plan.⁶⁰

From this point Codignola moves back to the Europeans: Ovide Decroly (Belgian, 1871-1932), Maria Montessori, and the Agazzi sisters. Like most Italian educators, Codignola is critical of Montessori; he refers to her approach as a "scientific gospel" that appears "naive and archaic" to Italians.⁶¹ He is much more favorably inclined toward the infant schools of Rosa and Carolina Agazzi, as was Lombardo-Radice. The Agazzis receive praise because there is nothing "scientific" or artificial in their work.⁶² On the other hand, Codignola criticizes the Agazzis for lacking revolutionary novelty and global vision; those features, by implication, are not lacking in Scuola-Città Pestalozzi.

There follows another description of Scuola-Città Pestalozzi, stressing its reliance on cultural forces rather than on methods taken from the "cabinets" of psychologists and sociologists.⁶³ Codignola closes with some words on Adolphe Ferrière and the N.E.F., and on Baden-Powell and the scouting movement in Europe.

The main text of Le "scuole nuove" e i loro problemi is followed by appendices: a laudatory essay by Aldo Visalberghi; additional material on progressive educational developments in the United States and

⁶⁰Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", pp. 60-69.

⁶¹Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", p. 89.

⁶²Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", pp. 93-94. The term "scientific" has negative connotations to many Italian scholars; it suggests "sterile" and "contrived." For Codignola, Dewey was a pardonable case.

⁶³Codignola, Le "scuole nuove", p. 97.

Europe; a sketch of A. S. Makarenko's work in the U.S.S.R. and of Mohandas Gandhi's Wardha Plan; and similar material. No profound, sustained theoretical arguments emerge in this book. It is obvious that by the time of its publication Codignola had come to favor a certain kind of pedagogical approach, that of the "new schools" and their founders; and that he, too, wanted to be included among them. It is also obvious in his comments that Codignola developed a certain ideology that he used as a basis for assessing and criticizing other educators. A reading of Le "scuole nuove" e i loro problemi should make that agenda clear.

The other books published by Codignola after the Second World War are, as has been stated, translations and historical studies. There are scraps of commentary in them that strengthen the impression of Codignola as one struggling to bridge the gap "between idealism and Deweyanism." What is absent is a coherent, extended argument such as that provided in his concise 1938 work Avviamento allo studio della pedagogia (Preparation for the Study of Pedagogy), a book that provides definitions and an enumeration of essential points in Codignola's educational philosophy. That book, like many of his earlier writings, was reprinted by La Nuova Italia after the war. The reappearance of his older works suggests a continuity in Ernesto Codignola's thinking. Whatever he added after 1946 was not intended to negate the cultural idealism of his middle years.

Guido Calogero: from Actualism to Presentialism

Actual idealism was the great Italian pedagogical movement of the 1920's and 1930's; like all such movements, it had its wings and factions. Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice had socialist leanings that eventually alienated him from the Fascist political system. There were others on the "left" of actual idealism,⁶⁴ and one whose career attracted much attention after the war was Guido Calogero.

Highlights of Calogero's Career

Born in Rome on December 4, 1904, Calogero was reared in an academic environment: his father, Giorgio Calogero, was a professor, and his mother, Ernesta Michelangeli, was the sister of a classical scholar, Luigi A. Michelangeli. As a studious youth, Calogero had the encouragement of his father and his uncle. Calogero attended the University of Rome, where he studied letters and jurisprudence, and received his degree in 1925. A study of the thought of Croce and Gentile had kindled his interest in philosophical matters, and his doctoral thesis was on the foundations of Aristotelian logic.⁶⁵

In 1927, Calogero became an instructor in ancient philosophy at the University of Rome. He spent the following year studying in Heidelberg, Germany, under a scholarship from the Italian Ministry of National Education. Calogero returned to Italy in 1929 and taught philosophy and

⁶⁴Cambi, La "scuola di Firenze", p. 25.

⁶⁵Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Biografie e bibliografie degli accademici lincei (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1976), p. 809.

history at the "Torquato Tasso" state senior high school in Rome. He was also given the opportunity to edit philosophical entries in the Enciclopedia Italiana, a favorite project of the Fascist government (and one on which Gentile worked after his removal from public life). In 1931, Calogero was selected for a professorship in the history of philosophy at the teacher-training institute (Magistero) of the University of Florence; from there he transferred to Pisa in 1934, and taught at the Superior Normal School and the University of Pisa.

During the ominous 1930's, Calogero developed increasingly liberal socialist views and fell from favor with the regime. He was arrested for political reasons in 1942, and during his captivity completed a book called Lezioni di filosofia (Readings in Philosophy). With the fall of the Mussolini regime, Calogero returned to teaching and became politically active, serving as one of the founders of the Partito d'Azione (Action party), a key political party in the early postwar years. Shortly after the war ended, his career also took on an international dimension.

Calogero had already demonstrated his ability to deal with scholarly material in the English language⁶⁶ when he was invited to Canada to teach philosophy at McGill University in Montreal in 1948 and 1949. From 1950 to 1955, he was director of the Italian Institute of Culture in London, England. In 1956 and 1957, he was visiting professor of

⁶⁶See, for example, "On the So-Called Identity of History and Philosophy," published in English in Philosophy and History (Oxford, England: The Clarendon Press, 1936).

philosophy at the University of California in Berkeley, California. After that time, he returned to his teaching post at the Faculty of Teaching at the University of Rome, a post that had been officially his since 1951.⁶⁷

In the postwar years, Calogero was a member and served as president of the International Institute of Philosophy, Paris; he was president of the Italian Philosophical Society, and a member of the Italian National Academy of the Lincei. As a member of the Lincei, he received the 1960 "Feltrinelli Prize" for philosophical studies. In addition, he was on the editorial boards of several philosophical journals.

Calogero's publications are many and varied. Two books on education are important in that field: La scuola dell'uomo (The School of Man), 1938, revised and reissued in 1956; and La scuola sotto inchiesta (The School Under Scrutiny), 1957. Calogero published a translation of John Dewey's A Common Faith in 1959. Several of his articles on philosophy and education have appeared in Italian and English-language journals. Beyond his rather small output on education, Calogero published much material on logic, law, and classical studies; he touched on other subjects as well.

⁶⁷Who's Who in Italy, 1957-1958 ed., (Milan: Who's Who in Italy S.r.l., 1958), p. 185.

Philosophy and the Morality of Action

In 1948, a scholar named Giuseppe Maria Sciacca contacted a number of prominent Italian philosophers and asked them a rather standard series of questions about their work. The result was a book called Filosofi che si confessano (Philosophers Declare Themselves), and one of its subjects is Guido Calogero.⁶⁸

Asked to name the important contemporary orientations, Calogero turns his reply into a statement about philosophers. He affirms that any orientation can be interesting or foolish, depending on whether or not it is professed by "intelligent persons." As he wrote,

Philosophers deserve attention, then, always as individuals, and so do some of their individual books, but not "orientations" or "movements" or "tendencies" or "schools. . . ."⁶⁹

This emphasis on the individual is typical of Calogero's writings. For his favorite individual philosophers, he names Croce, Gentile, Bergson, Dewey, and Aristotle, and defends the last as more "contemporary" than some living philosophers.

On a more theoretical matter, Calogero states his belief in the increasing irrelevance of metaphysical and epistemological debates. If different schools read one another carefully, he suggests, there would be fewer such debates. As for his own orientations, Calogero steadfastly refuses to summarize them, but invites interested readers to visit him at home to discuss philosophy--he would "stay up all night" if

⁶⁸ Giuseppe Maria Sciacca, Filosofi che si confessano (Messina: Casa Editrice G. D'Anna, 1948), pp. 40-44.

⁶⁹ Sciacca, Filosofi che si confessano, p. 40.

necessary to carry on such discussions.⁷⁰

Guido Calogero's contemporaries did not have to stay up all night in his parlor to learn his opinions on ethics and education. That information was available in his publications, and was presented quite clearly. From Gentilian actualism Calogero retained two key notions: that of the "I" and that of the "act"; but in his work they underwent a transformation. Far from Gentile's "I" that resolves itself into the great thinking Mind of history, Calogero's "I" remains a distinct person, moving consciousness this way and that, seeing the self as one among many; that person is not God and does not coincide with the universe. I think, certainly, but whatever I think, I cannot get out of my thoughts. I cannot stop being myself.⁷¹ Reflecting on his own experience, the individual realizes that there may be experience other than his own; moreover, everything in his experience takes on an objective nature, surrounded by the "atmosphere" of his "I."⁷²

At the end of the journey lies the realization of the world as inter-subjective, a world of separate "I's" experiencing a common reality, however understood. What is important, according to Calogero, is the problem of action --what I may do in a world of hard realities and other people.⁷³ Calogero turned the Gentilian "act" into a concept of

⁷⁰Sciaccia, Filosofi che si confessano, p. 43.

⁷¹Guido Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo (Florence: Sansoni Editore, 1939; revised ed., 1956), p. 6.

⁷²Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, pp. 7-8.

⁷³Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, p. 11.

praxis, or how the "I" acts in the conscious presence of persons and things. The subjective aspect of praxis suggests the origin of the term "presentialism"--the necessary presence of one thinking and acting. More importantly, the "I" wills and is conscious, and it is on that "effective nature" that Calogero wishes to concentrate.⁷⁴ He denies that there is blind will or empty knowledge in the world, or abstract transcendental activity. Theory and practice, the abstraction and the action, must unite to yield human reality and concreteness.

The danger in Calogero's formulation up to this point is that of lapsing into egoistic solipsism, the attitude that others do not exist except in my subjectivity. But for Calogero, that solipsism is a prison that denies the individual any real freedom. Consider, rather, that

. . . the true liberty, serious liberty that is of interest to men, whose conduct is the moral tissue of the world, is neither the liberty of God nor Providence nor History (which, if it exists, needs no help) nor the liberty of the little personal I that pretends to expand itself. It is the liberty that is recognized in others with the sovereignty of the true moral gift. . . . the liberty that one must love is really the liberty of the other.⁷⁵

In the above quotation, Calogero's reference to history reflects his criticism of the "historicist" attitude that pervaded actual idealism: that attitude was ethically inadequate, he charges, because it denied the realities of individual history and suffering. Certainly, action takes place in history (and Father Braido⁷⁶ alludes to Calogero's

⁷⁴Enciclopedia filosofica, 1979 ed., s. v. "Calogero, Guido," by I. Piovesana and D. Scolari.

⁷⁵Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, p. 54.

⁷⁶Pietro Braido, Filosofia dell'educazione (Zürich: PAS-Verlag,

"primal historicism"), but action conceived as a function of the blind will of history fails to provide any sense of real human life. In Calogero's thought, action is primarily a moral issue. When the "I" is no longer alone and is not equivalent to the Universe, it is no longer incorrigible; it must look about itself and determine how to behave, especially in regard to those other thinking, willing beings who populate the world and allow the "I" to move in moral liberty.

If I propose the problem of others before me, I see that the only way to resolve it is to recognize their existence as the product of my moral will. . . . Morality is the positing of the existence of others.⁷⁷

The moral attitude, that respect for the existence of others and the love for their liberty, has inevitable consequences in praxis that may be generally described as a condition of altruism. In Calogero's ethical system, one of the important forms of altruism is education.

Education as Altruism

Guido Calogero's approach to education is first of all a reaction against the Gentile/Lombardo-Radice concept of education as essentially self-education, with the teacher being somehow subsumed into the personality of the learner. Calogero took a "common-sense" position and opposed the actualists' formulation:

Any man of good sense knows that he does not converse without being with someone else, and that to influence the soul of another person it is extremely necessary that this other person exist. One can therefore be certain that he should agree with whoever tells him

1967), p. 30.

⁷⁷Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, p. 30.

that in order for there to be education, it is necessary that there be, on the one hand, someone who educates, and on the other, someone who is being educated.⁷⁸

Any other opinion, according to Calogero, is an abstract invention of philosophers for other philosophers. Simply, the educator must recognize the educand as another person. Such a recognition is ethical by its very nature, and so is the question of action that follows immediately from it.

For Calogero, the individual ego, that erstwhile solipsistic creature, emerges from its prison by recognizing other beings and entering into dialogue with them. Its respect for their existence demands an altruistic attitude, one of attempting to assist others in their own interests, and of helping them to expand their worlds. "Morality is this unlimited expansion of worlds that the I posits in its own world."⁷⁹ Thus, morality demands an educative attitude, and education is a supremely moral undertaking.

Lest it be thought that all activities of teachers are acts of great moral virtue, Calogero is careful to distinguish between education and mere instruction. Education, he contended, is as different from instruction as "rearing the heart differs from rearing the brain."⁸⁰ In other words, education is not the imparting of rote knowledge; it is a matter that involves the feelings as well. Altruism cannot be demon-

⁷⁸ Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, p. 1.

⁷⁹ Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, p. 41.

⁸⁰ Calogero, La scuola dell'uomo, p. 125.

strated in merely mechanical activity. This distinction is important to Calogero as a basis for his critiques of schooling. By means of it, he could insist that the worst schools (in fact, most schools) do not properly educate, but only instruct.

Up to this point, references have been made to the 1956 (revised) edition of La scuola dell'uomo. About half of that book is devoted to theoretical issues, while the remainder is an examination and critique of school practice.

A later book on education, Scuola sotto inchiesta (The School Under Scrutiny), first published in 1957, is centered on school matters and questions of national policy. Here Calogero's practical criticisms come to the fore. The first essay, "La scuola dell'onniscienza" ("The School of Omniscience") laments the absurdly encyclopedic program of the Italian middle school that pretends to teach everything and at the end requires a "maturity" examination that few professors could pass. The result of that program is a generation of anxious adolescents who need psychotherapy⁸¹ more than they need additional instruction. Calogero follows these provocative statements with suggestions for humanizing the middle school: use of the project method, allowing students to select examination subjects, and similar changes.

Another chapter (originally a newspaper article) is a defense of the laic state school that embodies Calogero's concept of dialogue:

⁸¹Guido Calogero, Scuola sotto inchiesta (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1957), p. 28.

Laicism consists of the fact of never accepting, in any case, the organization and use of instruments of religious or political or social or moral or economic or financial pressures for the purpose of the diffusion of certain ideas and the repression of certain other ideas; and of always allowing, rather, an opportunity for the possibility of ideas in individual dialogue.⁸²

In commenting on an article of his son, Francesco, in Il Mondo (August 25, 1953), Calogero passes a gloomy judgment on the Italian school:

The Italian school is so antiquated in so many of its aspects that it cannot pretend to correct them all rapidly. . . . The Italian school, in general, must be made much less laborious, less authoritarian, less alien and distressing, and thus less productive of neuroses than it is now.⁸³

The only English-language article in the book ("Some Comparisons Between Education in the United States and in Italy") praises the freedom of choice that exists in the typical American school.⁸⁴

Numerous other topical items appear in Scuola sotto inchiesta, but their tenor is much the same. They speak of the need to modernize and humanize Italian schooling in the interest of social altruism.

What is Calogero's vision for education? Buried in an enumeration of philosophical positions that Calogero was prevailed upon to write in 1958, is a brief paragraph stating an aim for education that is consonant with its author's altruistic morality and his social-democratic politics:

⁸² Calogero, Scuola sotto inchiesta, p. 70.

⁸³ Calogero, Scuola sotto inchiesta, p. 215.

⁸⁴ Calogero, Scuola sotto inchiesta, pp. 199-205.

. . . what should have been eliminated by now is any pretense of assigning an aim to education other than that of facilitating the acquisition of the maximum possible capacity for enjoying the common life, that is to develop those tastes to the maximum that are maximally compatible with the analogous development of others' tastes. Instead, our educational traditions still continue broadly to direct men toward different ideals: for example, toward those ideals of victory through competition that create all the superiority and inferiority complexes that have made the world neurotic. Men who do not know how to live seek comfort in knowing how to win. But civilization is in knowing how to live, not in knowing how to win.⁸⁵

Briefly, then, Calogero retains his ideal of education as a practical form of morality and altruism that operates by helping others to expand their subjective worlds; and the aim of that expansion is a maximum degree of mutual social enjoyment.

An Idealist Diaspora

"Idealism," said Luigi Volpicelli,⁸⁶ "resisted until the 1960's." Certainly idealism did not remain quite intact in that difficult postwar period, but some of its proponents clung to basic tenets of the philosophy they had learned from Gentile and Lombardo-Radice.

Volpicelli is a case in point. Born in Siena on June 13, 1900, Luigi Volpicelli studied in Rome and completed a degree in jurisprudence in 1921. His interest in philosophy and literary studies then led him to work on an additional degree, which he obtained in 1927 under the direction of Giovanni Gentile. Over the next decade, Volpicelli concentrated on problems of teaching practice, and in 1938 he was named by

⁸⁵Guido Calogero, "Dodici tesi filosofiche," in La filosofia contemporanea in Italia (Asti: Arethusa, 1958), p. 142.

⁸⁶Interview with Luigi Volpicelli, Professor Emeritus, University of Rome. April 19, 1982.

Education Minister Bottai to head a center for pedagogical research and experimental teaching.⁸⁷ In 1939, he was called to teach at the University of Rome's Institute of Pedagogy, where he took the post left vacant by the death of Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice.

Volpicelli's main teaching and publishing activities occupied the three decades following the war. His bibliography includes over fifty postwar titles including works in comparative education, studies of childhood and family life, and reflections on contemporary developments. His sustaining strengths were in being able to welcome the challenges of modern times (and to this end he wrote on such subjects as films, television, comic strips, and driver education); and in taking a balanced approach to ideological struggles. Throughout his postwar career, he retained a quiet admiration for Gentile: "We must not think that Gentile was a crude Fascist. He was a great philosopher and personality."⁸⁸ As of 1982, Volpicelli was alive and active, although he had retired from teaching at the University of Rome.

Among others who deserve attention, an important member of the younger generation of Gentilians was Gino Ferretti. He was born in Acireale (Catania) on March 30, 1880, and died in Palermo in 1950. Having completed a doctorate in philosophy in 1906, Ferretti went to Würzburg, Germany, to study experimental psychology. From 1913 to 1922, he was principal of an elementary school in Rome. He taught pedagogy at

⁸⁷Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 1013.

⁸⁸Interview with Luigi Volpicelli, 1982.

the University of Catania from 1924 to 1928, and then taught at the University of Palermo until his death. Ferretti was not a member of the Fascist party, but was inactive politically during the Mussolini period; in fact, he helped the Allied liberators to modernize school curricula in 1943.⁸⁹ Although his philosophical basis was actual idealism, he quickly accepted the value of positive science; eventually he abandoned the metaphysical abstractions of idealism and developed a kind of pragmatic phenomenism, open to the discoveries of the psychologists.

Vito Fazio Allmeyer was born in Palermo in 1885. He accepted actualism insofar as it was a critique of positivism, but he moved beyond it to an autonomous position much more infused with a sense of morality. His postwar publications were few and do not reflect much of his educational thought; that work appeared earlier, between 1914 and 1921.⁹⁰ Allmeyer died in Pisa in 1958.

Giuseppe Saitta (1881-1965) was a Renaissance specialist who turned to actual idealism as an alternative to Christian theology; he saw the latter as a force opposed to human liberty. Later, he detached himself from idealism as another religion equally destructive of liberty, and he came to exalt the individual as a fully self-sufficient being and creator of his own destiny. Saitta's only works on education were two studies of Renaissance humanism⁹¹ (1923 and 1928).

⁸⁹Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 846.

⁹⁰Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 847.

⁹¹Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 845.

Armando Carlini (1878-1959) was Gentile's successor as professor of theoretical philosophy at the University of Pisa. Although originally attracted to idealism, he found certain disparities in the works of Croce and Gentile that he sought to overcome. By 1933, his growing desire to find spiritual value in the world had led him close to Christianity, and although he retained reservations that kept him from Neo-Scholasticism, his interest in religion did not wane.⁹²

Mario Casotti (1896-1975) made a dramatic break with actualism early in his career. A student of Gentile, he nevertheless underwent a religious conversion in the 1920's and was called by Father Gemelli to teach pedagogy at the Sacred Heart University of Milan in 1924. There he worked with Neo-Thomist scholars and produced works on education with a distinct Christian orientation. He is particularly remembered as the founder and director⁹³ of the Catholic educational review Pedagogia e vita (Pedagogy and Life), a journal that took on new importance in the postwar years.

There is insufficient space to devote to the many other students of Gentile and Lombardo-Radice. Whatever their directions, actual idealism was the frame of reference which they carried with them or against which they revolted. As the second generation of idealists died or retired, their philosophy no longer supplied a major framework for Italian educational thought.

⁹² Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 877.

⁹³ Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 877.

CHAPTER V

PROBLEMATIC CONCEPTS OF EDUCATION

Asked to name the important forces in Italian educational thought after World War II, the typical Italian scholar names three: Christian spiritualism, Marxism, and something vaguely denoted as laicism. These turn out to be ideological orientations, however, and are broadly related to commitment to the Catholic church and Christian Democrat party, or the Italian Communist party or its splinter groups, or the democratic-socialist center-left. Philosophy, as something other than ideology, demands closer scrutiny.

A small but significant group of laic educator/philosophers in the 1945-1965 period was known as the "problematicist" school. Problematicism, while not a movement that attracted large numbers of adherents, is worth examining because it centered on a definite philosophical approach rather than a generally ideological orientation.

Problematicism is described in the following way in the Enciclopedia filosofica (1979 edition):

In part this term (problematicism) applies to a number of philosophical positions opposed either to the general concept of absolute knowledge, or to specific concepts of the absoluteness of knowledge that have had particular historical importance, or to notions of the absoluteness of specific concepts of knowledge (metaphysics, physical science and mathematics, logic, ethics, law, etc.). Such a position is transformed into the affirmation that the content of knowledge under consideration is not a principle, but rather a prob-

lem.¹

If knowledge is not absolute and if its content is problematic, then the thinking mind must face a reality whose meanings must be deciphered and evaluated continually. In an important book on problematicism, these words are used: ". . . mentality appears in this way not as a being or a duty, but as a problem or a system of problems that are posed to the existing being, and of which his life, as a mental life, consists."²

The problematicists of the post-World War II period were philosophers interested in the major questions of philosophy. In Italy, education is ordinarily considered a philosophical matter, hence these thinkers did not neglect it.

The Unorthodoxies of Antonio Banfi

The earliest contemporary Italian problematicist was Antonio Banfi. He was born in Vimercate (Milan province) on September 30, 1886, and he died in Milan on July 20, 1957.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Banfi was not drawn to the idealism of Croce and Gentile. In 1908 he completed a doctoral thesis in literature at the Scientific-Literary Academy of Milan, and in the following year he took a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Milan, where his director was Professor Martinetti, a positivist. Despite his interest in philosophy, the young Banfi thought that the

¹Enciclopedia filosofica, 1979 ed., s.v. "Problematicismo," by E. Severino.

²Gustavo Bontadini, Dall'attualismo al problematicismo (Brescia: La Scuola Editrice, 1950), p. x.

predominant Italian philosophers of the time lacked breadth and concreteness.³ For that reason, the philosophy he developed had little to do with the Italian intellectual climate of the time.

In 1910, Banfi went to Berlin, Germany, to extend his knowledge of Hegel, and there he imbibed other northern European philosophies as well: the vitalism of Bergson, the phenomenology of Husserl, the neo-Kantianism of the Marburg school (Natorp, Cohen, and Cassirer), and the historical structuralism of Dilthey and Spranger, to name a few.

After Banfi's return to Italy, he took up high school teaching and spent many years in that work before accepting his first university post in 1932. Certainly, his period of high school teaching was not one of intellectual stagnation. During World War I, he was a Tolstoyan and a pacifist who deplored the churches' compromises and blamed religious philosophers for blessing patriotism and war.⁴ Although in his youth Banfi had been rather religious, after the First World War he drew away from religious orthodoxy until he included himself among the "atheists"; and yet he admired certain "intransigent" theologians, including Kierkegaard and Karl Barth. For Banfi, what replaced religion was a "theoretical and ethical agnosticism" that was critical, antidogmatic, and anti-sectarian.⁵ In politics, he came to favor socialism, but of an "open,"

³Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei, (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979), p. 903.

⁴Giovanni Maria Bertin, "L'esperienza religiosa nel pensiero di Antonio Banfi," in Antonio Banfi e il pensiero contemporaneo, (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1969), p. 122.

⁵Angelo Peroni, "L'impegno politico e culturale nella personalita di

antimetaphysical and antidogmatic type that was mostly of his own invention; he preferred his idiosyncrasy to the international orthodoxy of Soviet Marxism.

In 1932, Banfi became a professor of philosophy at the University of Milan, specializing in the history of philosophy. With few interruptions, he remained there to the end of his career.

World War II pushed Banfi ever closer to the Marxist camp. In 1941, he became a member of the clandestine Communist network, a decision that reflected his ethical convictions. His home in Milan became a meeting-place for anti-government intellectuals, and there he offered refuge to members of persecuted minorities.⁶ From 1943 to 1945, Banfi was officially enrolled in a partisan organization. He did not give up his Tolstoyan distaste for violence, but he accepted violence as a possible force for the reconstruction of the world. At the end of World War II, he became active in leftist cultural activities, helping to found a Communist youth group, boarding schools, and workers' theaters. He was made a member of the central committee of the Italian Communist Party (P.C.I.), and in 1949 he was appointed to the Italian Senate.

Political activities did not preclude philosophical activities, and in 1952 Banfi hosted a conference in Milan to assemble Italian philosophers and put them in touch with one another and with the world; the result was the formation of the Società Filosofica Italiana (Ital-

Antonio Banfi," in Antonio Banfi e il pensiero contemporaneo, (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1969), p. 158.

⁶Peroni, "L'impegno politico," p. 166.

ian Philosophical Society), of which he was made vice president. As a professional philosopher, Banfi wrote and published on various themes during his long career. Some of his theoretical works are on rationality, morality, philosophy of mind, and esthetics. He was also an avid historian of philosophy; he wrote on the problems of historiography of philosophy, and produced critical works on key developments and figures in the history of thought. Two of his books deal with Galileo; another is on the Copernican revolution; and there are individual portraits of Socrates, Pestalozzi, and Nietzsche.

It is not quite correct to say, as Banfi's disciple G. M. Bertin states, that Banfi never wrote a book on education.⁷ The study of Pestalozzi (1929) might be considered a book on education, and in 1931 Banfi published a historical summary called Sommario di storia della pedagogia (Summary of the History of Pedagogy). In addition, he wrote numerous journal articles, chapters, and papers that deal with education and related matters. Some of these were collected, edited, and published after Banfi's death in 1957. The first such posthumous work to appear was Scuola e società (School and Society), 1958; another collection, La problematicità dell'educazione e il pensiero pedagogico (The Problematicity of Education and Pedagogical Thought) was edited by Bertin and published in 1961. As the result of such efforts, Banfi's educational thought was probably better known after his death than

⁷Cited in Ileana Ragusa, "Il rapporto tra pedagogia banfiana e la pedagogia italiana contemporanea," in Antonio Banfi e il pensiero contemporaneo (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1969), p. 289.

during his lifetime.

Individual, World, and Culture

The "problem" that pervades Banfi's work is the antithesis between the individual and the world: it is a form of the old problem of the one and the many, debated first by the ancient Greeks and then by successive schools of philosophy.

In laying the groundwork for a resolution of that problem, Banfi proposed a "critical rationalism" based on a concept of transcendental reason. In Banfi's thought, reason is neither a faculty of the human mind nor an external cause or end of experience; rather, in any plane of experience, it is an ideal necessity for liberation from particularity or partiality resulting from pragmatic instances of any kind whatsoever.⁸ Reason thus defined affects the mental life by producing two kinds of knowledge: scientific and philosophical. While scientific knowledge accentuates universality and the infinite connections among the data of experience, philosophical knowledge accentuates the independence of thought from dogmatic presuppositions. Philosophy, for Banfi, seeks radical systematicity; that is, a systematic approach that does not require the invocation of a preexisting system.

Faced with the material of experience that is the life of human culture, philosophy unfolds itself in three moments: the dialectical moment, in which existing conceptual syntheses are seen to be incomplete

⁸Enciclopedia filosofica, 1976 ed., s.v. "Banfi, Antonio," by G. M. Bertin.

and unable to account for the infinity of experience; the eidetic moment, in which the underlying principle of any field of thought is understood; and the phenomenological moment, in which the two previous moments are combined and organized without deformation or mutilation created by aprioristic judgments or presuppositions or dogmas of any sort.⁹

Retaining this concept of philosophy, Banfi built a philosophy of culture. He outlined four "planes" in which culture resolves the antithesis between the individual and the world: the economic, juridical, moral, and educational planes. All of the relationships that Banfi defines are similar, in that the basis of each plane is some aspect of human culture--the historical, collective life of humanity.

If culture is offered as Banfi's solution to the human dilemma, it must not be assumed that a particular culture, or culture in any preexisting phase, offers the ideal solution. Unlike the actual idealists, who proposed Italian culture as the paragon of human history, Banfi thought that empirical cultures suffer from too many shortcomings and limitations to be so enshrined. It is rather the transcendental ideal of culture, the principle of culture itself,¹⁰ to which education must refer in order to approach its own ideal. Those ideals must be arrived

⁹Enciclopedia filosofica, 1976 ed., s.v. "Banfi, Antonio." The language of "moments" used here is obviously borrowed from Hegel, while the synthesis itself is almost pure Husserl.

¹⁰Giovanni Maria Bertin, "La filosofia dell'educazione di Antonio Banfi," in Antonio Banfi, La problematicità dell'educazione e il pensiero pedagogico, ed. G. M. Bertin (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1961), pp. xx-xxi.

at dialectically, as Banfi outlined; they exist in thought rather than in actuality. To tie education to a particular culture, rather than to the life of the mind itself, would require education to sustain ruling elites and various kinds of historical deformities and pedagogical absurdities. Nevertheless, Banfi had to value education as an actual institution tied to living cultures, because in the philosophical system that he derived from Husserl, the material of experience is a necessary starting point for the discovery of the eidetic. As a result of that orientation, Banfi's discussion of education often shifts levels from the actual to the ideal and back again, and his arguments are therefore difficult to follow, especially for those unacquainted with his work.

Education as Idea and Practice

In the preface to his 1931 Sommario di storia della pedagogia, Banfi offers a definition of education that is couched in abstract metaphysical terms:

Education, considered as a universal idea, can be defined as the process of formation and development of the spiritual (mental) personality; it (the process) is fulfilled in the relation between the individual soul and the world of experience and culture.¹¹

As the elaboration of the definition proceeds, it is evident that Banfi is borrowing concepts from Kant, Hegel, and Husserl. The reader who is unfamiliar with those philosophers is at a disadvantage in interpreting the passage. Expressions such as "universal idea," "spiritual personality," and "individual soul" bear testimony to the complexity of Banfi's

¹¹Antonio Banfi, Sommario di storia della pedagogia (Urbino: Argalia Editore, 1931; 1964), p. 9.

philosophical writings in that early period. When he paraphrases his own definition in a subsequent paragraph, however, the centrality of life in society is a theme that may be discerned:

Education, ideally expressed as the formation of the personality in the relation between its center of spontaneous individual unity and the world of experience, represents a direction of the spiritual life that is unlimited and infinite itself, but appears to us in the history of humanity as a concrete and determinate function that has its own sphere of reality, and its own limited and definite organization of activities, connections and institutions, to which typical social and psychological reflexes correspond.¹²

What Banfi is trying to provide in those passages is a definition of education as an ideal, rather than a description of its actuality. The person is a "personality," or indeed a "spiritual personality," where spiritual means "mental" in the most abstract, general sense. Through its growing awareness, Banfi suggests, the personality comes into contact with the "world of experience," which is ultimately the world of other minds in communion and therefore of culture. The changes that education works on the personality are consequences of the individual's relations with that world.

Schooling, as the general mode of education in advanced societies, is dealt with in a more descriptive and less metaphysical way in Banfi's 1955 essay "School and Society" that was the first chapter in a book of the same name published posthumously in 1958:

Every human society tends, by its own nature, to strive not only for its own immediate preservation, but for its survival and continuation through new generations to which it supplies the structures and tools. While in primitive, closed societies the initiation ceremony signals the solemn moment of the acceptance of the young

¹² Banfi, Sommario di storia della pedagogia, p. 10.

into the social body, in fact their education and formation is accomplished through their moral participation in the life of a given society, whose customs and traditional capabilities they take upon themselves. But where the horizon of the collective life becomes open, the internal forces are differentiated and developed, and under those influences customs are altered and traditions face new situations; the continuity of the social life can be assured only if the permanent quality of traditional values finds a place among the youth along with the acquisition or learning of the use of certain formal structures that provide elastic and adaptable capabilities in each new generation. Every technical, warlike, magical, divinatory, or inventive vocation that is distinguishable from the everyday conduct of life requires a true apprenticeship. And when the entire life of society is altered and articulated, the tribal groupings give rise to political organization, and the collective relations among men as well as the relations between men and nature become complex and differentiated; each activity requires an open, informed, foresighted body of skills whose formal means of implementation is what we consider to be intelligence, and the learning of which (skills) we call instruction. It is thus, with that aim, that the school arises, as an essential function of a human society in motion.

The history of schooling reflects the history of society. As that proceeds according to the dialectic of a moment of conservation and a moment of progress, so the structure and history of the school express the temper of one time or another, the supremacy of a moment of closed traditionality or of a moment of open intellectual development. The relations between school and society and individual social organizations; the structure of school society; the teacher-student relationship, the professional character of one and the private characters of the others, individually and collectively; the nature of programs; the functioning of methods; the school program itself: all of these in their internal tension and their evolution depend on that fundamental dialectic that is the determining law of the complex phenomenology of school life.¹³

In this late work, Banfi's comments on schooling reflect an approach that is different from (but not necessarily contradictory to) his eidetic definition of education that appeared in his 1931 work. While education remains an ideal reality for Banfi, he sees schooling as

¹³Antonio Banfi, Scuola e società (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1958), pp. 11-12.

a matter of praxis: it is the idea in practice. In this passage, he writes in a descriptive way, building his definition empirically and anthropologically, much in the style of Dewey in the opening chapter of Democracy and Education.

What Banfi assumes in this discussion is that schooling is a social function, and that in order to understand it as such, one must first look at the society which it serves. The school, Banfi tells us, responds to two basic needs of human society: immediate preservation and survival through new generations. To insure both, the young must be somehow "initiated" into their society. Even though a ritual may mark the official moment of acceptance, the true test of an individual's socialization is his or her moral participation in that society. By "moral participation," Banfi evidently means a life lived according to an internalization of the moral structures of society; that is, a willingness to accept the beliefs and obey the ethical tenets of one's peers. (To illustrate Banfi's distinction between ritual and moral participation, one might use the example of the Christian confirmation, a rite of passage that may or may not lead to a life of committed Christian practice.) Banfi adds that moral participation includes taking on the customs and traditions of one's society.

Up to this point, Banfi has discussed the initiation rites and rather simple tribal pressures of a primitive, "closed" society--one that is static and self-perpetuating, but not in any noticeable process of evolution or upheaval. He contrasts that society to an "open" soci-

ety, in which new social differentiations are taking place and, as a result, custom and tradition clash with change and are themselves modified. In such a situation, the society can hope to preserve itself only if its value structure can be made compatible with the learning of "formal structures" (concepts, ideas) that are themselves elastic and adaptable to new situations encountered in each generation. A key characteristic of the open society is its increasing complexity: there are more occupational specialties, and each requires its own kind of apprenticeship. A result of the more complex division of labor is a more complex structure of social relations, out of which grows a formalized political system. That political system, in turn, has a major stake in an ongoing system of formal instruction to provide the perpetuation and improvement of the skills and techniques that are the marks of an advanced division of labor. Reasoning in this way, Banfi emphasizes an essential relation of society and political organization on one hand, and of society and its schools on the other. Implicit in his emphasis on labor and production skills is the notion of the economic system as the underlying structure that is actually in change; thus it is not surprising to find Banfi in sympathy with the Marxists, who think similarly.

Banfi accounts for both the conserving and innovating functions of the school, seeing both as moments of a (Hegelian) dialectic. There is, he admits, a moment of "closed traditionality" and a moment of "open intellectual development." The positing of this dialectic solves the

riddle as to how the school can both preserve and perpetuate society and also introduce change: both effects are sustained reciprocally. Banfi ends this meditation by suggesting that all social relations in an open society are governed by the dialectic of conservation and change, and that one must see the "complex phenomenology of school life" in terms of that tension in order to understand what occurs in the school. (From that point in the text, Banfi goes on to discuss specific school issues and to relate them to the dialectical framework.)

Banfi's Social Concerns

Because of education's necessary limitations, Banfi focused most of his attention on broader social and cultural issues. In Scuola e società he argues vigorously for a "democratic" society on the Marxist model as the most ethically ideal form of society. The school that he then advocates conforms closely to that ideal of society: it is a state school, laic, free, and open to all, for the formation of all (including the "difficult, retarded or disabled"),¹⁴ but always serving the higher purposes of the state, and protected from serving "contrary and extraneous" ends. In contrast to the neo-idealists and the Christian personalists, he insists that:

The school is not a family or a city: it is the school, and its functions as such must be delineated and not confused or substituted by those belonging to other social organisms. . . . Its structure, its internal relations, its methods and its programs must correspond to the social end for which it is constituted.¹⁵

¹⁴Banfi, Scuola e società, p. 15.

¹⁵Banfi, Scuola e società, p. 21.

Even so, Banfi allowed that a "democratic" school, if it could be achieved, would contribute to the reform of Italian society. Not in the central way that Dewey saw the school as an instrument for social reform, Banfi saw it as an integral part of the broader effort for social change: "The struggle for the social function of the school, for the democratic school, is only an episode in the struggle for democracy in Italy."¹⁶

Banfi was a powerful figure in Italian philosophy, respected even by those who disagreed with him. He did not live to see many socialistic or democratic reform efforts alter the Italian schools. Had he survived into the late 1960's, he might have taken a place alongside Herbert Marcuse as an idol of the radical students.

A Second Problematicist: Ugo Spirito

The Dizionario di filosofia (Dictionary of Philosophy), edited by Nicola Abbagnano, attributes the diffusion of the term "problematicism" in Italian philosophy not to Antonio Banfi but, rather, to an ex-idealist turned problematicist, Ugo Spirito.¹⁷

Spirito was born in the east Tuscan city of Arezzo on September 9, 1896. He studied law at the University of Rome and completed his degree in 1918; subsequently, he studied philosophy and received a doctorate in that subject in 1920. From 1920 to 1927 he was an instructor in pedag-

¹⁶Banfi, Scuola e società, p. 21.

¹⁷Nicola Abbagnano, ed., Dizionario di filosofia, 1971 ed., s.v. "Problematicismo."

ogy at the University of Rome, and after 1924, he taught philosophy there as well. In those years, his philosophy was essentially that of Gentile.

Spirito moved into a different area of teaching, that of economics and politics, when he accepted a post at the University of Pisa in 1932. In the late 1920's and early 1930's, Spirito's nonteaching activities also had political and economic overtones. He was for a time one of the main theorists of the Fascist "corporative" economic movement attempting to transform private into corporate property, an effort that had little success. With Arnaldo Volpicelli, brother of Luigi Volpicelli, he founded and co-edited a journal of law, economics, and politics. Spirito was also given charge of editing entries in philosophy, economics, and law for the Enciclopedia Italiana, the Fascist government's prestige project in the field of culture. After brief university appointments in Messina and Genoa, Spirito was called to the University of Rome in 1937, where he taught philosophy until his retirement.

By the late 1930's, Spirito had begun to drift away from actual idealism and Fascist politics; he had seen contradictions in Gentile's philosophy, and particularly, a hidden dualism of thought and deed. In social thought, he had moved to the "left" of actualism along with Guido Calogero.¹⁸ Although he was still writing on Fascist economics as late as 1939, Spirito was coming to see social questions in an increasingly democratic and egalitarian light. When National Education Minister

¹⁸Franco Cambi, La "scuola di Firenze" (Naples: Liguori Editore, 1982), p. 25.

Bottai presented a plan for school reform in 1938, Spirito responded with a paper warning of probable dire consequences in view of the fact that the projected reform did not go far enough toward providing opportunities fairly and eradicating the inequalities of class. As it was never an honest intention of the Fascists to create a classless society, Spirito's paper was suppressed.¹⁹

In 1937, Spirito published a book called La vita come ricerca (Life as Research) in which he used the term "problematicism" for the first time in his work, and by his own account²⁰ gave the word a general circulation among Italian philosophers. The problematicism that he outlines in that book and later develops in other publications is intended to resolve the contradictions of actualism as well as the contradictions of all Western thought. He advocates a position in which one can recognize the existence of such contradictions and at the same time seek to overcome them through nonjudgment and profound comprehension. The title of La vita come ricerca signifies the first of three powerful metaphors that Spirito developed, and it focuses on the search of the thinker who hopes to find solutions to the problems of philosophy. The second, La vita come arte (Life as Art) of 1941 stresses immediacy and the absence of systematized philosophy; the third, La vita come amore (Life as Love), published in 1952, puts the thinker in a

¹⁹Ugo Spirito, La riforma della scuola (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1956), p. 1.

²⁰Ugo Spirito, Il problematicismo (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1948), p. 1.

position of realizing that he or she has not yet understood another's point of view, cannot make judgments, and out of nonjudging can only love.²¹

After World War II, Spirito continued to teach at the University of Rome and to publish on various themes. Some of his postwar books are: Il problematicismo (Problematicism), 1948; La vita come amore (Life as Love), 1952; Significato del nostro tempo (The Meaning of Our Time), 1955; La riforma della scuola (The Reform of Schooling), 1956; Nuovo umanesimo (New Humanism), 1964; Il fallimento della scuola italiana (The Failure of the Italian School), 1971; and L'avvenire dei giovani (The Future of Youth), 1972. Spirito also edited journals and anthologies and served as president of the Giovanni Gentile Foundation for philosophical studies. He died in Rome in 1979.

Life and the Critical Attitude

There are tensions evident in Spirito's work, and one of the most obvious is his alternation between criticism and attempts to define a position of nonjudgment. One who wishes to understand Spirito must keep in mind the progression of metaphors: life as research, then as art, and finally, as love. The nonjudgmental attitude advocated in La vita come amore is Spirito's attempt to solve the problem that he inherited from Gentile, that of dualism.²² In judgment there is dualism, for the one who is judging must stand apart from the object of judgment. By not

²¹Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Spirito, Ugo."

²²Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Spirito, Ugo."

judging, Spirito contends, we achieve a superior comprehension and a resulting unity:

We are dealing, then, with drawing close to our neighbor to understand, to begin a discussion without judgments and without prejudices, with the goal of making otherness vanish.²³

Even what was once seen as negative can be viewed positively in terms of its genesis and its function within a system. By using this approach, one can allow everything its own center; thus Spirito's thought went beyond nonjudgmental problematicism to what has been called omnicentrism. This omnicentrism was more than abstract speculation for Spirito; he saw traces of it in the intellectual remaking of postwar Europe, and he predicted that its consequences would include a breakdown of old philosophical doctrines and an erasure of the boundaries between disciplines, leading to a new unity of knowledge. Spirito was particularly interested in uniting philosophy with science and technology for the creation of a new society informed by scientific values.

Had Spirito followed his own teachings on omnicentrism and nonjudgmental love to an extreme, his philosophy might have ended up immobilized and laden with contradictions. Rather, he chose to ignore the contradiction in maintaining an attitude of total openness while carrying on unrelenting criticism. It was in criticism, a requirement of the "life as research" metaphor, that Ugo Spirito excelled in his later publications. His prose, unlike that of many of his contemporaries, is clear and forceful, to the point of being abrasive.

²³Ugo Spirito, La vita come amore (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1953), p. 34.

With regard to the critical attitude, there is a particularly characteristic passage that occurs at the beginning of La vita come ricerca and sets the tone for the entire book:

To think means to object. The naive person listens and believes; he passively receives the word from another, in much the same way as his eyes receive light. After the first doubt flourishes in his soul and he acquires understanding, little by little, he replaces dogma with "the problem," and thought springs forth. He not only listens, but he reacts and speaks. The first word that gives life to his speech, nurturing it with his entire personality--the first word, in fact, in which the personality discovers and affirms itself, is a terrible monosyllable: but.²⁴

The Future of Education

In the decades following World War II, Ugo Spirito said "but" many times. He played the role of social philosopher and critic, and in his books he turned his critical eye upon many areas of human endeavor. One particularly wide-ranging book is Significato del nostro tempo (The Meaning of Our Time), published in 1955. Its chapter on education ("The Situation and Future of Pedagogy") contains some of Spirito's more important and typical statements about that enterprise.

Spirito begins that chapter with a discourse on the history of Italian education that to an extent defends the legacy of positivism, and he traces the "crisis" in Italian education to Gentile's Summary of Education as a Philosophical Science, published in 1913-1914.²⁵ The idealists, Spirito contends, rejected the scientific approach to educa-

²⁴Ugo Spirito, La vita come ricerca (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1937; 1943), p. 7.

²⁵Ugo Spirito, Significato del nostro tempo (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1955), p. 304 ff.

tion and brought a virtual halt to psychological and sociological inquiry. The identification of pedagogy with philosophy led to confusion among teachers and a breakdown of sound teaching practice. Yet idealism had one positive effect in that it made Italian educators more critical of the "naive" presuppositions of foreign educators; thus, foreign pedagogy cannot be imported successfully into Italy. The proper approach, he insists, is that of the problematicist, the one who works on the metaphysical plane of radical investigation.

The Complexity of Education

An excerpt from Significato del nostro tempo reveals some of Spirito's reflections on the problem of education:

Problematicity in the field of properly pedagogical studies has taken on two essential aspects that have to do with the means and the ends of the educational undertaking. With reference to the means, we are ever more clearly aware of the character of extreme complexity and also of organic unity in every manifestation of life. The idealistic principle of the universal individual, whether one still wishes to conceive it historically and immanentistically, or if one wishes to translate it into the terms of transcendental realism, has become such a target of our critical sensibilities as to render it almost impossible to isolate any of its ramifications or any group of ramifications to remake it into a principle or a law. That, expressed in pedagogical terms, means that we have no serious basis on which to presume to know the practical consequences of any of our actions upon the psycho-spiritual development of the student. An educative act, in fact, acquires a meaning and efficacy that result from the systematic combination of all of the other educative acts of ourselves and others, in the family, the school, and society: within a system, that is, of infinite elements that cannot be known and controlled. Within the heart of the student, our every word has an individual echo of all reality. And into this reality enters not only what we usually call the spiritual element, but also what we hold to be natural, biological, and physiological. Above all, there exists a world of which we have only a hazy notion when we speak of unconscious or subconscious. The foregoing explains the enormous differences that can be demonstrated and are always appearing, in effect, in the educational results obtained under apparently

identical conditions by students who are relatively alike. The relative effects of these differences are in reality always greater than we generally recognize, a result of our conventional habit of judging the most apparent and extrinsic outcomes, allowing the escape of that which lives, in most intimate and hidden ways, in the human soul.

This specific awareness cannot fail to hinder the will of the educator and to leave him or her extremely perplexed. But while Rousseau could soothe himself with the idea of negative education, now the negative has become equivalent to the positive, and the act of teaching or the failure to act are both revealed as deeds. Educational theory fails, but man continues to educate in spite of his unwillingness and his lack of knowledge. Parents take part in the miracle of raising children in whom they do not recognize themselves; teachers perceive that their students have learned in a way that is different from or contrary to the way in which they have been taught. But fathers and teachers, perhaps without noticing it, have contributed directly to the results about which they complain.

How, then, shall we educate if we do not have an adequate possibility of evaluating the means that we have and their suitability to the ends? This question implies a preliminary issue that threatens to compromise the very existence of pedagogy, or, at least, to destroy all of its normative meaning. Between educator and student a dualism is created that does not allow rationality in the relationship, nor thus, a determination of its value.

To the problematicity of the means is added that of the end, and as burdensome as the former may be, its weightiness necessarily takes second place when confronted with the latter. The Catholics know why they educate; the Communists know why; the idealists know why; and in general anyone who lives within a metaphysical system and believes himself in possession of truth knows why. But this means that education is shattered into educational theories, that philosophy or science is multiplied into philosophies or sciences, and therefore, that the work of education is carried on in different and contrasting ways, with results destined to contradict one another and to fuel the discord in our public life. Pedagogy, far from being the guarantee of a process of spiritual unification, becomes an instrument of contention and exhausts itself in the pursuit of narrow ends. If, then, pedagogy frees itself from the bonds of a particular metaphysical system because it recognizes the system's dogmatic character in a critical way, the multiplicity of ends may be overcome and it may be redirected to a single task, but the single end also becomes problematic in that it reveals the lack of a settled metaphysical basis. The certainty of value fails, and thus the ideal for which to educate; and the aim is moved towards the infinite, transcending the more strictly pedagogical research.

The crisis of educational theory flows into the more engulfing metaphysical crisis and has value only in exemplifying one of its aspects.²⁶

In the preceding passage, the concern of the uprooted idealist is expressed: Spirito sees "problematicity" as regards both the means and end of education in the new era; but the real crisis is that of metaphysics. Without a metaphysical system on which to ground one's thinking, how is it possible to formulate a rationale for education (something that Catholics, Communists, and idealists have), and to derive from it appropriate methods of teaching? The idealist notion of the "universal individual" has been destroyed, and curiously, Spirito argues that without it, nothing can be generalized or predicted about education. (One may object that he generalizes about this ungeneralizability.)

With laudable clarity, Spirito delineates the phenomenological-epistemological-psychological problem of teaching: within each student's head, the world reverberates in a slightly different way, and therefore the outcome of any preplanned act of teaching²⁷ is in doubt. The factors that influence teaching are "natural, biological, and physiological" as well as what Spirito, still using the idealists' vocabulary, calls "spiritual" (meaning "mental" in the most abstract sense). Yet the educator (the teacher, parent, or whoever plays that role) must

²⁶Spirito, Significato del nostro tempo, pp. 309-312.

²⁷The term "act" of teaching is a translation of the Italian intervento, a word used to mean anything that one does formally and intentionally to influence another; the same word is used in medical circles to mean "a surgical operation." Some dictionaries translate it as "interference."

go on educating, and so that person contributes without foreknowledge to the results obtained.

What a system of metaphysics would provide for Spirito is a means of declaring a fixed end of education (whatever harmonizes with the metaphysical judgment of "what is") and a standard for measuring the means employed to that end. Only in such a system may the "normative meaning" of education be derived; here Spirito reveals how swiftly and necessarily the metaphysical leads to the axiological in the idealist system that he rejects. When he says that a "dualism" is created, he means the dualism outlined in his preceding paragraph: while the idealists believe that the teacher and student coincide in an ideal unity, the inability of teachers to foresee the effects of their teaching suggests otherwise. There is in fact a barrier between teacher and student that destroys the relationship's "rationality" (that would allow y to be predicted from x) and disallows the possibility of determining the ideal value of what has taken place (empirical evaluations notwithstanding).

Freeing education from a particular metaphysical system may remove it from essentially ideological conflicts, but the end it is to serve then becomes problematic without a rigid system of values springing from any metaphysical source. In this 1955 publication, Spirito suggests only that the "pedagogical journey" toward the solution of the problem is difficult and complex, and that it is an act of courage to bare the

"negative character" of its point of departure.²⁸

Pedagogy and Social Progress

Spirito's pedagogical (and ideological) journey did not stop at that point of departure. In 1956, he examined the problems of education in detail and published a book called La riforma della scuola (The Reform of Schooling). In that book, Spirito's criticisms of Italian education are strong and clear.

The book begins with a discourse on the history of Italian schools after the Fascist rise to power in 1922. With some bitterness, Spirito recalls the political struggles that disillusioned some of the younger men associated with the movement. The Fascists believed that they were producing revolutionary reforms in education, but the various factions within Fascism were not in complete agreement on what reforms were needed. When it became clear that Minister Gentile's reform was not succeeding as envisioned, the 1938 (Bottai) reform law was passed to create some fundamental changes in Italian education. There arose class-oriented controversies over the "labor" provisions of the new law, and the implementation of the law was halted by those controversies and by the Second World War. The war had a debilitating effect on schools and universities by diverting the ablest university students and school-teachers into armed service, while the less able remained. After the war, when new ideas were needed, the strongest influence was the American ideology promoted by "some American colonel" (obviously Washburne);

²⁸ Spirito, La riforma della scuola, p. 313.

the principal change was the inclusion of psychology in teacher training courses, but in any case the reforms were short-lived. The ruling middle class did not care for innovation, and the general incompetence of teachers and professors forestalled effective reform. Thus, in the postwar era, Italian schools remained essentially the schools of Gentile and Bottai. Reform attempts reached a crisis point when the Gonella reform commission of 1947-1949 tried to change the schools to please everyone; the resulting plan was a jumble that soon ended in the wastebasket. Spirito concludes this section by affirming that genuine school reform is necessary, but he takes the radical position that simple efforts to improve the existing school system are doomed to inadequacy:

Primarily, no one has noticed that the question (of school reform) has a political and social foundation that is the same as that of today's civilization; and it imposes requirements of a revolutionary type that are valid for the schools only insofar as they are valid for the entire structure of our society.²⁹

The failure of the modern democratic government, Spirito claims, is that it has not understood that the Fascist sun has set and that idealistic historicism and the 1923 Gentile reform no longer have a place in the world.

In the second chapter of Riforma della scuola, Spirito argues that the central problem of Italian education is the problem of social class: an elite school cannot serve the masses, but the bourgeoisie who control the government will not stop wanting their children to become (or remain) an elite. Thus, writes Spirito, "This is the crux of the prob-

²⁹Ugo Spirito, Riforma della scuola (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1956), p. 22.

lem. All other discussion and all attempts to conceive of it differently are fatally destined to fall into misunderstanding."³⁰ Spirito contends that the elite school is historically backward and morally corrupt. It binds the young with fetters of class prejudice; it serves the interests of the ruling class, promoting those who do not deserve to be promoted, and denying opportunities to others. It provides a program that is difficult and tiresome, but little meaningful learning takes place. While these criticisms apply to the secondary schools, the universities have suffered their own ills. They have become political creatures, ". . . shrouded in words and arguments."³¹ Spirito catalogues a host of plagues that afflict the universities--overcrowding, incompetence, and curricular absurdities of all sorts. A result of this miseducation is a great deal of anxiety over passing and failing, getting one's diploma or degree (or not getting it), and choosing among prestigious and less-prestigious fields. Political leaders, sympathetic to the aspirations of the middle class, condone and perpetuate the system.

In chapter three, Spirito reexamines the "crisis of bourgeois society."³² Talk of school reform accomplishes nothing, he contends, because the schools' underlying problems are deliberately ignored. Anachronisms persist because they serve the social and political

³⁰Spirito, Riforma della scuola, p. 25.

³¹Spirito, Riforma della scuola, p. 45.

³²Spirito, Riforma della scuola, p. 67.

purposes of those in power (the middle class). It would make sense, for example, to separate the scientific laureate degree from the professional doctorate, as preparation and coursework for each are quite different; but all bourgeois university graduates want to be called "doctor" no matter what they have studied. The result is a cheapened bestowal of academic titles. Spirito asks whether middle-class influence can be removed from the schools. He suggests that the answer lies not in the schools themselves, but in the social process. Spirito announces that bourgeois-capitalist regimes are under growing pressure: either they will "open their eyes" and be reformed from within, or they will be overthrown by violence.³³ A positive reform might begin with a general change of attitude toward the manual labor of the "inferior" classes. By this and other means, the schools could find their place in the context of a new national and international social and political life.

What follows these chapters is the text of Spirito's 1938 report to National Education Minister Bottai, a report that makes essentially the same assertions as those discussed above. There is then a series of essays on problems in particular instructional areas. Spirito ends Riforma della scuola with a report on his visit to schools in the U.S.S.R. in 1956. There, he believes, the underlying class problems have been resolved. He lauds the Soviet schools' open selectivity and special efforts to benefit disadvantaged students. He comments favora-

³³Spirito, Riforma della scuola, p. 77.

bly on the overall planning of Soviet society and the evident cooperation between the workplace and the school. In the U.S.S.R., Spirito (the problematicist) sees problems in the process of resolution.

The intellectual and ideological journey of Ugo Spirito continued. A move farther to the left was signalled in a 1962 journal article, "La scuola italiana ignora la Cina" ("China Is Unknown in Italian Schools"), in Riforma della scuola. In the article, Spirito takes Italian schools to task for teaching little about the Russian revolution and paying virtually no attention to China. Young people turned out by Italian middle schools, he contends, know nothing of China and its "heroic" 1949 revolution, although it is a land as big as Europe, "in full revolution and transformation," and bound to influence the future.³⁴ Thus Italian schools preserve an anachronistic world view, and such deliberate ignorance infects Italian culture in general.

Spirito launches another diatribe against the middle class and proposes a major reorientation of Italian schools in Nuovo umanesimo (New Humanism), published in 1964. The humanism that he advocates is not the "old" humanism of middle-class schools, derived from the ratio studiorum of the Jesuits and productive of class prejudice: "The bourgeois Italian feels himself diminished if his son does not study Latin for eight years and Greek for five."³⁵ In place of that ethos,

³⁴Ugo Spirito, "La scuola italiana ignora la Cina," Riforma della scuola 8 (August-September 1962):18.

³⁵Ugo Spirito, Nuovo umanesimo (Rome: Armando Armando Editore, 1964), p. 15.

Spirito proposes an ever closer social integration, opposing individual isolation. That is his intimation of the future, when man's life will be essentially social, ". . . even if not necessarily linked to socialist and communist ideologies."³⁶

Spirito's indictment of the "old" humanism rests not only on its inherent classism but also on its neglect and mistrust of science. The new world that he sees evolving is based on a common understanding of science. While theologians and philosophers debate, scientists are able to agree on basic facts and principles; with the help of science, ordinary human beings are transforming the world. The new scientific mentality leads to new forms of social life. As the values of science become supreme, even religion and philosophy must be forged into a new synthesis. The outcome that Spirito hopes for is that ". . . philosophy acquires the very methods of science and is established as a science among sciences."³⁷

The preceding statement can be related to Spirito's early search for a synthesis of science and philosophy when still under the influence of the idealists, a quest that is also evident in Life as Research. He envisions a scientific-humanistic culture that is unlike the culture of modern Italy. It must be, above all, a society of problem solvers, communal and collaborative by nature. For an example of its practicability, Spirito points to China, where, free of burdensome Western

³⁶Ugo Spirito, Nuovo umanesimo, p. 7.

³⁷Spirito, Nuovo umanesimo, p. 31.

traditions, the Chinese exhibit ". . . the premonitory signs of the society of tomorrow. . . ." ³⁸ To guard against such a society becoming mechanistic and conformistic, it must educate for individual competence and the expression of personality through creative work. Among its science, Spirito asserts, must be "the science or art of living," aimed at educating for "happiness." ³⁹

Spirito concludes this book with a lengthy retrospective discussion of the humanistic concepts of Gentile and Croce, which he criticizes as concepts that were insufficient to change Italian culture in any significant way. Their failure, nevertheless, gives Spirito hope for the creation of a rationalistic, scientific, and socialistic society; as long as neo-Hegelian idealism has been overcome, the way to the future is clear.

Ugo Spirito continued to teach and write in the 1960's and 1970's. His interests extended through a variety of topics related to philosophy and education; but neither the upheavals of the late 1960's nor the changes wrought in their aftermath did much to alter his post-Gentilian problematicism.

³⁸Spirito, Nuovo umanesimo, p. 33.

³⁹Spirito, Nuovo umanesimo, pp. 134-153.

Banfi's Disciple: Bertin

Both Ugo Spirito and Antonio Banfi followed the professorial tradition of training younger scholars in their methods and particular interests. In his later years, Ugo Spirito was a popular teacher of philosophy at the University of Rome. Antonio Banfi's appeal was more esoteric, yet in his role as professor of philosophy at the University of Milan, he was able to instruct a small but devoted band of students who followed careers in philosophy based on interests of their teacher. Banfi's heir in philosophy of education was Giovanni Maria Bertin.

Bertin was born in Ballo di Mirano (Venezia Province) on September 7, 1912. He attended the University of Palermo in the early 1930's, but transferred to the University of Milan, where he received a degree in philosophy in 1935. (Bertin's mentor, Antonio Banfi, had begun teaching at the University of Milan in 1932.) In 1937 and 1938, Bertin taught philosophy and pedagogy at the Teacher Training Institute of Vibo Valentia. He transferred to a high school teaching position in 1938, and in that year he married Maria L. Orgnieri. For the next eleven years, Bertin taught philosophy at the state classical high school of Busto Arsizio (northwest of Milan); after that period, he occupied a similar position at the "C. Beccaria" classical high school of Milan, where he remained until 1953. From 1945 to 1953, concurrent with his high school teaching duties, he held an instructorship in pedagogy and moral philosophy at the University of Milan. In 1953, Bertin was selected for appointment to a chair in pedagogy at the University of Catania, in

Sicily. He remained in Sicily for four years and then became a professor of pedagogy in the division of teacher training at the University of Bologna, where he has remained to date.⁴⁰

Bertin's first publication was, appropriately, a bio-bibliographical study of Antonio Banfi (1943). Three books on specific topics in philosophy were followed by Introduzione al problematicismo pedagogico (Introduction to Pedagogical Problematicism), published in 1951. His next publication on education was Etica e pedagogia dell'impegno (The Ethics and Pedagogy of Commitment), 1953; that was soon followed by Stampa, spettacolo, ed educazione (The Press, Entertainment, and Education), 1957; Aspetti e problemi della scuola italiana (Aspects and Problems of Italian Schools), 1957; Il problematicismo pedagogico e le sue aporie (Pedagogical Problematicism and Its Pitfalls), 1957; Esistenzialismo Marxismo Problematicismo (Existentialism, Marxism, and Problematicism, an essay on ideology with strong implications for education), 1960; La pedagogia umanistica europea nei secoli XV e XVI (European Humanistic Pedagogy in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries), 1961; L'idea pedagogica e il principio di ragione in A. Banfi (The Idea of Pedagogy and the Principle of Reason in A. Banfi), 1961; Educazione alla socialità e processo di formazione (Education for Socialization and the Process of Development), 1962, reissued in 1968; Scuola e società in Italia (School and Society in Italy), 1964; Scuola e riforme educative (School and Educational Reforms), 1965; Educazione alla

⁴⁰La mia pedagogia (Padua: Liviana, 1972), p. 92.

ragione: Lezioni di pedagogia generale (Education Toward Reason: Readings in General Pedagogy), 1968; and still others that appeared in the 1970's. Among Bertin's publications that did not focus on education were works on esthetics, medieval mysticism, ancient Greek philosophers, and the personalism of a Swiss philosopher, Ernst Hello. Evidently, Bertin's output on education increased considerably after his 1953 appointment to a university chair in that subject.

A Poet Finds a Philosophy

In his autobiographical sketch furnished for the anthology, La mia pedagogia (My Pedagogy), G. M. Bertin outlines his intellectual development as a youth and his eventual attraction to philosophy.⁴¹ He was, by his own account, an irrationalist and near solipsist, drawn to the literature of esthetics and religion. His early philosophical concerns were chiefly "metaphysical"; as he explains, ". . . the problems that interested me most concerned the origin and destiny of man, the nature of reality, and the ultimate meaning of life."⁴² Bertin's attraction to Catholicism was diminished by exposure to positivist (scientific) authors, but until the early 1930's he continued to study romantic writers and went so far as to write poems and short stories, some of which were published in a Palermo literary paper. He reports that his literary characters were creatures of fantasy, filled with "desperation" and

⁴¹Giovanni Maria Bertin, in La mia pedagogia (Padua: Liviana Editrice, 1972), pp. 67-93.

⁴²La mia pedagogia, p. 70.

a longing for peace.

At the University of Palermo, Bertin became familiar with the neo-Hegelian idealism of Gino Ferretti and Vito Fazio-Allmayer. In his own attempts at philosophy, Bertin was still quite subjectivistic and irrationalistic. When he transferred to the University of Milan in 1933, Bertin encountered Antonio Banfi. There, in a small group of students that Banfi had formed, Bertin's views were subjected to rational criticism, and he began to move toward an understanding of Banfi's "transcendental reason." In that period, Bertin's interests in metaphysics and esthetics waned somewhat, and he developed new interests in ethics and education. Under Banfi's tutelage, Bertin learned of Husserl's phenomenology and its value as a methodology for analyzing cultural experience. Bertin did not entirely abandon his interest in Christianity, but under Banfi's influence he came to believe that the Christian message had been misunderstood by organized religions, leading to the churches' support of a conservative social order and their resistance to social and cultural change.

Subjective elements remained in Bertin's philosophy through the early war years, even though he came to share Banfi's ideal of a postwar economy based on practical, collectivist structures in which the scientific and technical elements would dominate. Perhaps as a result of his early interest in esthetics, Bertin retained a vision, in the postwar years, of a pedagogy capable of allowing emotion and interior equilibrium to complement the forces of rational intellect and practical

concern. Nevertheless, Bertin admitted that esthetism could assert contemporary relevance only by fitting into the political, economic, and social situations defined by history. These curious assertions seem to mean that an esthetic or religious outlook is permissible and even advantageous, but only if it does not shut the individual in an ivory tower of subjectivism, ". . . detaching him from the reality in which he must work. . . with regard to reason."⁴³ Bertin developed a psychology (partly from Jungian sources) in which opposing psychic forces move in dialectic tension, requiring the individual to produce a dynamic personality structure ". . . in relation to the energies and possibilities offered by experience."⁴⁴ The forces which Bertin refers to here include subjectivity and objectivity, individuality and universality; that an individual might be expected to construct a personality from them leads inevitably to considerations of behavior and learning; hence, to social ethics and pedagogy.

As Bertin's thought developed in the postwar era, he came to see philosophy as a discipline whose task is to clarify problems, suggest hypotheses, and verify solutions. Bertin intended philosophy, understood in this way, to confront social problems; thus philosophy was to have an important social-cultural function. His own social philosophy supports a rational socialism against the ideologies of existentialists and orthodox Marxists, both of whom he derides as "mystical evaders."⁴⁵

⁴³La mia pedagogia, p. 82.

⁴⁴La mia pedagogia, p. 83.

Bertin's socialism is an attempt to find a plausible balance between the necessary autonomy of the individual and the inevitable connections between individuals and social forces. Time and again, Bertin's philosophical writings return to a perennial theme in Italian philosophy, that of the conflict between individual man and society. His social philosophy and his pedagogy are aimed at finding acceptable solutions to that conflict.

Reflecting on his postwar teaching experience, Bertin recalls his high school students as "lively." He confesses that becoming a father made him more aware of the needs of young people and stimulated his pedagogical thought. Eventually, he came to see the satisfaction of youth's developmental and individual needs as a prime area for the employment of a problematic approach. In 1957, Bertin had an opportunity to expose teacher-trainees to his style of philosophy and thus to affect young people through their teachers. Therefore, after four years of teaching pedagogy as an academic subject at the University of Catania, he eagerly accepted the post offered to him at the teacher training institute of the University of Bologna.

Bertin's Pedagogical Formulations

The years between 1949 and 1971 were particularly productive for Giovanni Maria Bertin in terms of publications: nineteen books and long essays appeared in that period. Most of those writings had something to do with education, directly or indirectly; but there are a few particu-

⁴⁵La mia pedagogia, p. 84.

larly useful sources in which Bertin discusses his concept of problemat-icity and spells out its relation to education.

One particularly illuminating text is Introduzione al problematismo pedagogico (Introduction to Problematicism in Education), a book that was published in 1951. In the first part, Bertin sets forth a concept of philosophy as "critical awareness of cultural experience," an awareness of problems in the historical-cultural milieu and of the need to resolve them rationally.⁴⁶ Philosophy of education, then, is a particular kind of cultural reflection, aimed at the awareness of problems in education. Its special function is to delineate the process of educational experience, pointing out those kinds of educational experience which are ". . . most apt to comprehend problematicity."⁴⁷ In other words, given the problematic nature of experience, Bertin sees philosophy of education as a guide to the discovery of those educational experiences able to assist the educand in the incessant problem solving activity of life. Such a level of consciousness in education has another characteristic beside encouraging the solution of problems: it fosters opposition to rigid formulae and dogmas. As it was for Banfi and Spirito, "antidogmatism" is a watchword for Bertin; the problematist's assumption is that dogmatism can in no way meet the challenge of experience, as dogma of any kind (philosophical, social, or religious) implies rigidity, while the attitude of problematicity is a response to

⁴⁶Giovanni Maria Bertin, Introduzione al problematismo pedagogico (Milan: Dott. Carlo Marzorati Editore, 1951), p. 9.

⁴⁷Bertin, Introduzione, p. 10.

ngoing change.

Bertin makes a distinction between philosophy of education and pedagogy in this manner: philosophy of education reflects the purely theoretical need to comprehend educational experience in its structural and universally experiential framework; pedagogy refers to the pragmatic need to determine the means and ends of education and their concrete possibilities of realization. In this section of Introduzione al problematicismo pedagogico, Bertin applies himself to the philosophical dimension of education (the theoretical understanding), rather than to the pedagogical principles that he and others might derive from it.⁴⁸

Basically, the philosophy of education that Bertin outlines is dialectical in nature. Educational experience, he argues, can be understood only as a problem, inasmuch as experience never exhausts itself in solutions (that is, it does not come to a halt). The nature of that problem is best expressed as a process of antinomies whose terms result from contrasting positions that nevertheless move education toward syntheses.⁴⁹ As Bertin tells us, the process conforms to the description of a Hegelian dialectic. He finds it possible to analyze education in terms of antinomies--a basic antinomy, and others resulting from it. Bertin justifies the dialectical method by asserting the partiality of all positions, and the awareness that every position is a choice among many possibilities and is therefore fatally deficient in some respect

⁴⁸Bertin, Introduzione, p. 10.

⁴⁹Bertin, Introduzione, p. 11.

(that is, in whatever way the alternative is not lacking).⁵⁰

But what is the "basic antinomy" of education to which Bertin refers? It is the conflict between the autonomous development of the individual and the necessity of integrating that individual's development in a larger (social) framework. Ultimately, it is the problem of the individual and society. Bertin notes that Banfi saw it as the problem of personality caught in the individuality/universality conflict presented by experience.⁵¹

In this analysis, Bertin does not attempt to "solve" the problem. The only suggestion that he offers here is that no possible position may be absolutely excluded; all options remain active forces, even when they are negated or absorbed by some other choice. In that configuration, they enter into a compromise or equilibrium of some sort.⁵² What Bertin is saying, in effect, is that problems exist, but final solutions do not. Conflict cannot achieve a final resolution, because its elements change constantly; what it may achieve is an equilibrium, a temporary balance that is subject to an endless process of imbalance and readjustment.

In the second part of Introduzione al problematicismo pedagogico, Bertin discusses what educators must take into account to function rationally, and what kinds of problems they are called upon to solve.

⁵⁰Bertin, Introduzione, p. 12.

⁵¹Bertin, Introduzione, p. 13.

⁵²Bertin, Introduzione, p. 13.

In the first place, educational activity deals with the individual; and the individual's life may be organized egocentrically, objectively (around the demands of others and the environment), or in a creative synthesis of the two that Bertin calls "rational" because it resists the universal claims of any partial rationale. (That is, it is rational to see the shortcomings of any value system, be it one's own or someone else's.) That critical and rational orientation, however desirable, lacks determinacy in itself and therefore demands a continuous process of personal research and action. Contemporary education, Bertin suggests, should be constructive and efficacious in assisting the development of that rational personality.⁵³ From Bertin's point of view, to educate means to make efficient problem definition the directing principle of rationality. Critical rationality of that sort allows the individual to escape the limits of subjectivity (because other points of view become possible), and to resist the temptation of flight into pure other-directedness; it gives the individual confidence in the force of rationality. Bertin here contrasts rational pedagogy with what he considers irrational positions. Among the irrational pedagogies are individualism and "sociologism" (Deweyan or Marxist-oriented theories); these enclose the individual in limited structures of individuality or community. Bertin suggests that educational thought must have a goal of universality, inasmuch as universality (not in the vulgar Fascist sense, but as an abstract ideal) signals the desired overcoming of any limited

⁵³Bertin, Introduzione, p. 36.

formulation. To pursue universality, Bertin (faithful to Banfi's vision) proposes rationality: reason is the tool by which one critiques all forms of dogmatic and normative pedagogy, leaving the individual free to seek true universality through whatever constructive efforts he or she might make in the process of living; and reason is especially apparent in the choice and organization of a value system.⁵⁴

The mention of a value system inevitably brings up the matter of ethics. According to Bertin, the search for (impartial) universality gives educational thought an essentially ethical character, inasmuch as it is on the ethical plane that questions of the interaction of individual and community must be answered. They are, in effect, ethical questions. For the individual to deal with ethical problems, it is supremely necessary for a moral sense to be developed within, hence the need for moral education. Such education begins with the creation of optimal conditions: the educand must not be allowed to lapse into anarchic subjectivity, nor to be closed in by social authoritarianism. In the school setting, something like self-government is useful in creating the appropriate conditions for learning to synthesize individual needs with the needs of others. The educator must seek to develop three desirable attitudes in the learner: courage and self-affirmation, willingness to understand others and compromise, and a relentless desire to undertake actions combining both forces.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Bertin, Introduzione, p. 37.

⁵⁵Bertin, Introduzione, p. 37.

To assist in the creation of constructive ethical attitudes, Bertin requires an education of the intellect that is of a clearly critico-rational nature. Such education must be historical and critical on the one hand, and technical and experimental on the other, so that human experience is revealed to the learner as a process of incessant development toward rationality. Applied to instruction, the critico-rational method must affirm a principle of "infinite problematicity," resisting any definite trend toward child-centered or authoritarian education (the two poles of contemporary education).

Inasmuch as education (in Bertin's view) aims to unite the objective and subjective, the exterior reality with the individual person, it must not neglect either (objective) matters of intellect or (subjective) matters of the personality. The latter area corresponds to the affective domain. The individual must be guarded from allowing the subjective and affective to control his or her life; rather, the individual must learn to utilize the creative urges that originate in the psyche. In the course of developing an "ethical integrality" in the person, an "esthetic horizon" must be formed where the individual may enjoy a ". . . richness and fineness of lyrical resonances from the entire experience of the world and of things."⁵⁶ When education deals with such concerns, it is fundamentally esthetic.

⁵⁶Bertin, Introduzione, p. 38.

Finally, Bertin warns that professional training of any type must not undo the work of critico-rational education. The danger is that it will encourage a technocentric viewpoint, impoverishing and restricting that open and constructive horizon that is the foundation of man's rationality and the most urgent necessity of contemporary education.⁵⁷

Bertin's theoretical position did not alter appreciably in the 1950's and 1960's, but he turned his attention increasingly to practical issues in education. In Aspetti e problemi della scuola italiana (Aspects and Problems of Italian Schooling), published in 1956, he begins by stating that he is offering suggestions for the reform of schooling in Italy.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, he first considers it necessary to reexamine the matter of antinomies in education, from the basic individual/collective antinomy to some of the more subtle (humanism/technology, individual/environment). In the course of the discussion, Bertin attacks both existentialists and Marxists for their one-sidedness. He also rejects Ugo Spirito's position on "love" and "dialogue."⁵⁹ Bertin ends the chapter by calling for a simplification, purification, and amplification of Italian schooling, especially at the elementary level; however, Bertin does not elaborate on those points, but saves his specific comments for later chapters in which he deals with such issues as the effects of economic conditions on education, the prospects of

⁵⁷ Bertin, Introduzione, p. 39.

⁵⁸ Giovanni Maria Bertin, Aspetti e problemi della scuola italiana (Milan: Dott. Carlo Marzorati Editore, 1956), p. 5.

⁵⁹ Bertin, Aspetti e problemi, p. 30.

reform programs, and the teaching of mathematics and philosophy.

In 1964, Bertin published Scuola e società in Italia (School and Society in Italy), a book of practical material and discussion that arose out of a conference in which Bertin participated, the subject of which was schooling and Italian society in transformation. It is replete with facts and figures on social and economic progress and school situations worldwide, as well as on the state of schooling in Italy and numerous aspects of its development. The book illustrates Bertin's ability to apply himself (and his philosophical approach) to problems of a concrete nature. The concerns which it expresses provide a fitting and not totally unexpected counterpart to the issues of a more theoretical nature dealt with in earlier writings.

It is not surprising that Giovanni Maria Bertin enjoys a position of respect among many of his colleagues in education in Italy. Although a student of Banfi, Bertin has managed to avoid the rather distracting ideological polemics of his mentor, and without falling into the peculiar aimlessness and tendency toward contradictory speculation that marks some of the work of Ugo Spirito, Bertin has demonstrated the efficacy of a critico-rational approach to the problems encountered in a life and a career.

Problematicism and Laic Philosophy

Among the laic philosophies that survived World War II or developed in the postwar era, problematicism was not a school with large numbers of adherents. In whatever ways they developed their philoso-

phies, and whether they addressed questions of education, ethics, economics, or other concerns, the problematicists are of interest principally because of their shared disdain for dogmatism, their efforts to challenge the "isms" of the Italian cultural past: idealism, historicism, positivism, and Catholicism. Perhaps in their zeal to criticize and reform Italian life, they raised too many questions about the familiar world. Moreover, they could not hope to capture the glamor bestowed on certain other philosophers by shifts in public opinion and changes in Italian political life. In the postwar era, Italian problematicism was overshadowed by another laic school that employed a similar problem solving approach and was especially favored because of its association with the recently victorious Americans: Problematicism had to compete with Deweyanism.

CHAPTER VI

JOHN DEWEY AND THE SCHOOL OF FLORENCE

Of the laic schools of pedagogical thought that existed in Italy between 1945 and 1965, one was a major and relatively new development in the Italian cultural milieu. The School of Florence, developed around Deweyan principles and related to progressive education movements elsewhere in Europe, attracted considerable attention among Italian intellectuals and also produced a wave of new publications in philosophy and educational theory. Its history and evolution is of considerable interest because it represents, in part, a foreign and particularly "American" influence that was one of the cultural consequences of the Second World War.

American Philosophy and Italian Pedagogy

Although Italy had historically forged links to the New World from the time of the voyages of discovery through the era of massive emigration, the cultural products of European settlers in America were not taken quite seriously by Italians before the Second World War. American philosophers, for example, were not generally thought to be sufficiently steeped in the culture of centuries to be able to compete with their European counterparts. Americans were obviously capable of impressive technical and industrial achievements, but it was commonly held that as

intellectuals they lacked profondità --"depth."¹

The Allied victory created the psychological conditions necessary for a change in attitude toward America. If the U.S.A. was the chief power on the winning side in the war, then perhaps she deserved closer scrutiny, or even emulation. The American victory may have been due to superiority in manpower, weapons, and industrial production, but the Italians could easily interpret it in another way; they had a widespread belief in the arbitrary power of history. Indeed, even Hegel had once prophesied that America's time as a world power would come. If that time had arrived, then the Europeans had best study America and the Americans. Among American philosophers and educators in the postwar era, none was more prominent than John Dewey, and no one was more archetypally "American" in attitude. Although some familiarity with Dewey's works had existed among Italian scholars before the war, a widespread interest was awakened in the late 1940's when a group at the University of Florence began intensive study and translation of Dewey. From that time on, Dewey's importance in the intellectual milieu was assured, and many came to familiarize themselves with the thought of the newly respected great American philosopher.

¹The verb approfondire--"to deepen," related to the noun profondità, is commonly understood as a metaphor suggesting the digging of a hole to get to the bottom of things; the goal is to find out what the phenomena in question are "based" on, hence it is a "grounding" metaphor. See the Lessico universale italiano, 1969 ed., s.v. approfondire.

Defining Deweyanism

One of the first problems in presenting Dewey's thought to the Italian intelligentsia was that of finding appropriate denominations--ways of categorizing it for a public that knew nothing of pragmatism or instrumentalism, or at best had negative associations with such terms. Although Ernesto Codignola continued to insist that Dewey was part of the Hegelian idealist tradition, to consider Dewey as a representative of that discredited school would not have made him attractive to the postwar generation of Italian philosophers and educators. It made more sense to find a new term for Dewey's corpus of ideas, a term that would be meaningful in a positive way. The words "progressive" and "progressivism," often used in the United States, do not translate well into Italian, as progressivo means "graduating by steps or degrees," as in the case of a tax; obviously, traditional schools proceed by grades or steps, a recollection that the Deweyans wanted to avoid. The term Deweyismo is sometimes found in the literature, but it does nothing to explain what Dewey is about.

Some Italian scholars of the postwar era noted a similarity between Dewey's educational theories and those of Durkheim.² It is true that many of the European members of the New Education Fellowship were not schooled in the Deweyan tradition, but in that of the French sociologists. Clearly, there is a "social" emphasis in Dewey's work that harmonizes with that bias in Durkheim. For both Dewey and Durkheim, it

²Fabrizio Ravaglioli, Profilo delle teorie moderne dell'educazione (Rome: Armando Armando Editore, 1980), p. 44.

has been pointed out, education ". . . coincides with the process of socialization."³ Thus, it was (and is) not uncommon for Italian scholars to refer to Dewey's pedagogy as a form of sociologismo, meaning "sociologism."

By far the most common descriptive word used in Italy to denote Dewey's philosophical and educational theories is attivismo--"activism." As a philosophical term, it is evocative of the socialistic writings of Georges Sorel (French, 1847-1922), for whom a social philosophy is a myth to unite the working class and to inspire it to action in the interest of overcoming its oppressors. More generally, however, attivismo denotes an attitude that influences the subordination of abstract values to the demands of action, and particularly to the outcomes or success of projected action that is of a political nature.⁴ A less political construction of attivismo is also possible. It may mean simply the tendency to affirm the primacy of practical activity over theorizing, placing emphasis on the autonomous and dynamic possibilities of one who acts rather than on the passive and purely mechanical aspects of a situation.⁵ For educators, the term attivismo had a particularly fortunate association with the most salient feature of Deweyan education--the continual activity of the children. That activity is in clear contrast to the character of the traditional Italian classroom,

³ Ravaglioli, Profilo delle teorie, p. 44.

⁴ Dizionario di filosofia, 1977 ed., s.v. "attivismo."

⁵ Dizionario delle idee, 1977 ed., s.v. "attivismo."

the scuola seduta or "seated school" where the children sit at their desks, listen to lectures, answer a barrage of questions, and write copiously in their notebooks. Thus, from a philosophical standpoint (emphasizing action over speculation) and from a teacher's viewpoint (experiencing active rather than passive learning), attivismo seems an appropriate term to denote Dewey's thought; from the 1940's onward, it has been so used.

It is important to note, however, that activism or attivismo does not refer exclusively to Deweyan pedagogy. An educational activist movement existed in Europe long before World War II; the general term was applied to the activities of a host of progressive and innovative educators that included the Englishmen Cecil Reddie (1858-1932) and J. Haden Badley (1865-1940), the Germans Hermann Lietz (1868-1919) and Georg Kerschensteiner (1854-1932), the Frenchmen Edmond Desmolins (1852-1907) and Roger Cousinet (1881-1973), the Spaniard Andres Manjón (1848-1926), the Swiss Adolphe Ferrière (1879-1960) and Edouard Claparède (1873-1940), and the Belgian Ovide Decroly (1871-1932).⁶ Activism, as the Europeans understood it, was a movement that had many adherents; but in the post-World War II era, Dewey became a major source of inspiration for the activists, largely because his extensive system of philosophical and educational thought became available to educators by means

⁶Mario Mencarelli, "Il movimento dell'attivismo," in Nuove questioni di storia della pedagogia (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1977), 3:381-465. This essay also mentions several Italian educators among the pioneer activists; curiously, they are associated almost exclusively with preschool and early elementary education.

of numerous publications.

John Dewey's Progress in Italy

Long before World War II, John Dewey's philosophy and educational thought were known in Italy. Curiously, Dewey himself seems to have had little to do with the Italians. In Dykhuizen's carefully researched biography of Dewey, only a few references to Italy appear. According to this source, Dewey and his family spent some time in Italy in 1894 and 1895; early in 1895, Dewey's son Morris, aged two and a half, contracted diphtheria and died in Milan.⁷ The Deweys went to Europe again in 1904, and this time their eight-year-old son Gordon contracted typhoid and died in Ireland. On a visit to Italy shortly thereafter, the Deweys adopted an Italian boy named Sabino who was about the same age as Gordon.⁸ There are no mentions of scholarly contacts made by Dewey on those trips to Italy, and in view of the tragic family events overshadowing those journeys, it would not be surprising if Dewey had restricted his attention to family matters. In later years, Dewey traveled widely, visiting China and Japan, the U.S.S.R., Turkey, and Mexico, but there is no evidence to suggest further travel in Italy. Perhaps a diligent search of archival material would reveal scholarly contacts with Italians, but neither Dykhuizen nor Dewey's daughter, Jane, sees fit to discuss any "Italian connection" of John Dewey in the scholarly

⁷George Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), p. 79.

⁸Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey, p. 115.

world.

By whatever means Dewey's fame as a philosopher and educator may have traveled in the early twentieth century, it is safe to say that he came to enjoy a worldwide reputation. His books were translated into many languages and were discussed by scholars everywhere. The first Italian translation of Dewey was of excerpts from School and Society. They appeared in an article on Dewey written by Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, the Hegelian idealist philosopher.⁹ Although Lombardo-Radice developed and retained an interest in Dewey's instructional theories, he rejected the American scholar's philosophical formulations and tried to reinterpret Dewey's work to harmonize with the tenets of idealism. A complete translation of School and Society appeared in 1915, and was the work of Giuseppina Di Laghi, who was a student of Lombardo-Radice.¹⁰ In 1930, Italian interest in Dewey was stimulated from another quarter when Giovanni Vidari (1871-1934), a Christian spiritualist philosopher, went to the United States to deliver a series of lectures at the University of California at Berkeley. While there, Vidari developed an interest in Dewey's theories, which he later introduced to his own students in Italy.¹¹ A translation of Reconstruction in Philosophy was published by Laterza of Bari in 1931, the work of Guido De Ruggiero (1888-1948), a

⁹Francesco Cafaro, "John Dewey e il pensiero italiano," L'Italia che scrive 33 (July 1950):1.

¹⁰Graziella Federici Vescovini, "La fortuna di John Dewey in Italia," Rivista di filosofia 53 (January 1961):64.

¹¹Cafaro, "John Dewey e il pensiero," p.1.

noted liberal historian, philosopher, and educator. De Ruggiero wrote an introduction to the book which was also published as an article in La critica, a journal edited by Benedetto Croce.¹²

The first major Italian study of Dewey's work appeared in 1939. This was Il pensiero di Giovanni Dewey (The Thought of John Dewey) by Maria Teresa Gillio-Tos, published by Loffredo of Naples. Gillio-Tos was a member of a religious order and a student of Bernardino Varisco (1850-1933), an idealist philosopher with religious leanings. The publication was an effort to analyze all of Dewey's works from his first article of 1886 to A Common Faith of 1934. Although her research was thorough and scholarly, Gillio-Tos missed no opportunity to criticize Dewey from a religious and absolutistic viewpoint.

Thus Dewey had been introduced to the Italians before the Second World War, but to a large extent by persons who wished to critique Dewey, reinterpret him, or incorporate elements of his thought into a system that was not his. For example, Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice and Ernesto Codignola discovered what they presumed were Hegelian elements in Dewey's thought and sought thereby to make him more palatable to Italians who were familiar with neo-Hegelian idealism. It was not until after World War II that less biased interpretations of Dewey began to appear in Italian publications in sizable numbers. In addition, numerous Italian translations of Dewey's writings began to appear in 1949 and

¹²Cafaro, "John Dewey e il pensiero," p. 1. The translations by Di Laghi and De Ruggiero are corroborated in Jo Ann Boydston and Robert L. Andresen, John Dewey: A Checklist of Translations, 1900-1967 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), pp. 43 and 47.

continued to be produced into the mid-1950's. Many of these came from Codignola's publishing house, La Nuova Italia Editrice.¹³

Part of the change was an indirect result of the Allied victory, which brought Colonel Carleton Washburne to Italy to assist in the reconstruction of the Italian school system; Washburne encouraged several Italian educators to join the New Education Fellowship, an organization with a progressive orientation. Beyond the attention aroused by Washburne and the N.E.F., there were Italian scholars whose respect for Dewey was sufficient to encourage them to promote a general awareness of Dewey in Italy. The influence of Ernesto Codignola at the University of Florence has been discussed in a previous chapter. The strength of the center at Florence was that it did not depend on one man: in those postwar years, there was a School of Florence, and its leading figures deserve further examination.

Lamberto Borghi's Discovery of American Thought

Of all the Florentine scholars who interpreted Dewey in the post-war era, Lamberto Borghi was the most familiar with the American intellectual environment of the 1930's and 1940's. Borghi was born in Livorno on January 9, 1907. He studied at the University of Pisa and received a degree in philosophy in 1929. In the following year, he completed the requirements for a teaching diploma in German language and literature. Borghi passed the state competitive examination for the position of high school teacher of history and philosophy, and in 1931

¹³Boydston and Andresen, John Dewey: A Checklist, passim.

he was assigned to the classical high school of Urbino. He was transferred in the next year to La Spezia, and in 1934, he was transferred to Pisa. Borghi remained at his post in Pisa until 1938, when the Fascist racial decrees of May and November were invoked against him. Because of his Jewish background, Borghi was forbidden to teach.¹⁴ Like many of his faith, Borghi found it prudent to flee the anti-Semitic hysteria of Axis Europe. He left Italy in May of 1940 and traveled to New York.

In New York there is an institution called the New School for Social Research; founded in 1919, its founders include Charles Beard, Thorstein Veblen, James Harvey Robinson, Alvin Johnson, and John Dewey. In the 1930's, Johnson was president of the New School, and in 1933, he decided to invite a group of refugee German scholars to form a "University in Exile" connected with the New School.¹⁵ John Dewey served as an active member of the University in Exile's advisory committee. Over the next few years, the institution attracted a number of talented Europeans who, because of religious or political reasons, could not remain in Europe. Lamberto Borghi was one of those refugees.

Borghi's sojourn in America in the 1940's was a busy one. His first year in New York was spent at the University in Exile, where he assisted Lionello Venturi in a research project on the history of art. In the academic year 1941-1942, Borghi was a Research and Visiting Fellow at Yale University, participating in philosophy seminars with

¹⁴Mauro Laeng, ed., I contemporanei (Florence: Giusti Barbera, 1979), p. 934.

¹⁵Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey, p. 269.

Ernst Cassirer and Charles W. Hendel. From 1942 to 1944, Borghi taught Italian language courses at Harvard University and Cornell University. In 1943, the International Institute of Education at Columbia University asked him to prepare an essay on the possible postwar reconstruction of Italian schooling. On that project, Borghi had the assistance of Gaetano Salvemini and Giorgio De Santillana. Another scholarly activity in which Borghi was involved was the publication of Italian cultural journals with Bruno Zevi and Aldino Felicani.

In 1945, Borghi began work on a historical study called Educazione e autorità nell'Italia moderna (Education and Authority in Modern Italy). During the first stages of that project, he was supported by fellowships from the Littauer Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the American Philosophical Society. In 1946, he enrolled in the New School for Social Research, where he studied with Horace Meyer Kallen and Felix Kaufmann.¹⁶ The book which Borghi had begun to write, Educazione e autorità, was eventually accepted as a doctoral thesis, and he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Social Science. Borghi returned to Italy in mid-1947.¹⁷

When Borghi returned to Italy, he found employment as a teacher of history and philosophy in the state high school system. In 1949, he was licensed as an instructor at the university level; however, in that year

¹⁶According to Johnson's autobiography, the University in Exile eventually became the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science of the New School for Social Research. See Alvin Johnson, Pioneer's Progress (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1952), p. 347.

¹⁷Laeng, I contemporanei, pp. 934-935.

he was also awarded a UNESCO fellowship that allowed him to spend much of academic year 1949-1950 in England and the U.S.A., conducting research on the problems of children affected by the war. From 1950 to 1952, Borghi taught pedagogy at the University of Pisa. For a brief time in 1952, he returned to New York as Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research. Between 1952 and 1955, he had two university appointments in pedagogy: the University of Palermo (1952-1954) and the University of Turin (1954-1955). Finally, in 1955, Borghi was called to the University of Florence to take the chair of pedagogy vacated by Ernesto Codignola, who retired in that year. It is not surprising that Borghi received the appointment in Florence, inasmuch as he had been in contact with Codignola and the Florentine group almost from the time of his return to Italy. Florence was Borghi's final academic appointment, where he remained until attaining emeritus status.¹⁸

In the two decades following the Second World War, Borghi was active in a number of educational organizations and assisted Ernesto Codignola in publishing the journal Scuola e città (School and City). Borghi's principal activity beyond teaching, however, was the writing and translating of books on education, particularly those having to do with educational developments in America.

¹⁸Laeng, p. 935. I contemporanei, p. 935. As of late 1982, Borghi was still in Florence, living in an apartment near the Ponte Vecchio.

Erasmus, Dewey, and Beyond

Lamberto Borghi had done scholarly writing before his sojourn in the United States. In 1935, an article on Renaissance humanism appeared in the yearbook of the Superior Normal School of Pisa. In 1936, Borghi published a book called Umanesimo e concezione religiosa in Erasmo di Rotterdam (Humanism and the Religious Concept in Erasmus of Rotterdam). It is important to note the element of religion in the title, a concern that played a major role in Borghi's work for many years, and one that was shared by his mentor, Horace M. Kallen, who expressed interest in ". . . extending pragmatic philosophy to the arts, education, culture, and religion."¹⁹

While in America, Borghi wrote articles for an Italian exile journal, and in 1944 he contributed his English-language essay²⁰ to the last volume of I. L. Kandel's Educational Yearbook of Teachers College, Columbia.

The Yearbook article begins with a historical survey of Italian educational developments from the pre-Gentile era through the Fascist period and the Bottai reform of 1939. A populist leaning in Borghi's essay is evident in his criticism of the 1939 reform, where he states that the reform accomplished nothing toward ". . . the creation of a

¹⁹Alfred J. Marrow, "Introduction," in Horace Meyer Kallen, What I Believe and Why--Maybe (New York: Horizon Press, 1977), p. 10.

²⁰Lamberto Borghi, "Italy," in Educational Yearbook of the International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University, vol. 21, ed. I. L. Kandel (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944) pp. 173-216.

real people's school for the Italian people."²¹ Borghi deplores the preservation of the class structure under Fascism and looks for the end of those cleavages among the Italian people. Education, in particular, ". . . must become a solvent of the obsolete divisions, a promoter of unity, a bearer of the gifts of culture to everybody."²² He continues: "All the Italian schools must become the schools of the Italians and cease to be the privilege of the children of the bureaucrats of the Fascist party and of the war profiteers."²³ In place of the Fascist schools, Borghi insists on reconstructing the Italian system of education on "really democratic" principles.

Borghi goes beyond mere rhetoric in his advocacy of a democratic school system. In the Yearbook essay, he offers concrete suggestions, some rather novel. For example, in order to keep the schools under popular control, he suggests total decentralization of public education, replacing the Ministry of Education with ". . . local committees for the reconstruction of popular education . . .", representing cultural and political groups that are actively engaged in studying the problems and conditions of the populace.²⁴ As for the characteristics of the new schools,

²¹Borghi, "Italy," p. 202.

²²Borghi, "Italy," p. 203.

²³Borghi, "Italy," p. 203.

²⁴Borghi, "Italy," pp. 206-207.

All types of schools . . . will be free. The ages of compulsory attendance will be from three to fifteen. The training will be scientific, anti-authoritarian and anti-dogmatic, aiming to create in the students the capacity to think for themselves and to guide themselves.²⁵

Borghgi wants religion to play an important role in inspiring the education of Italians, but it will be a religion based on a new conception of "God as unifying love," helping each individual to master his selfish impulses; to that religion he contrasts the "worldliness" of Roman Catholicism. Moreover, he will not allow any church (e.g., the Catholic church) to enjoy a privileged status in the new society, or to impart its doctrines to the young enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools.²⁶

Borghgi outlines programs for primary and secondary schools. Essentially, the primary schools' concern must be ". . . the formation of character and the strengthening of (the children's) social aptitudes through cooperative activity."²⁷ Secondary schools must ". . . look to the development of the pupils on a broad humanistic basis," emphasizing "social and practical work" along with classroom instruction. In the secondary school classroom, ex cathedra teaching must be abandoned for free discussion. Differentiation is maintained at the secondary level, but admission to all four types of school (classical, technical, scientific, and normal) must be available to all based on merits and apti-

²⁵ Borghgi, "Italy," p. 204.

²⁶ Borghgi, "Italy," pp. 203-205.

²⁷ Borghgi, "Italy," p. 208.

tudes. Above all, "Culture will be considered as an end in itself," and education cannot be regarded as a guarantee of social privilege. Scholarly individuals must do their share of hard work, and Borghi points to China and Israel for example of this ethos.²⁸

Introducing Dewey in Italy

After Borghi's postwar return to Italy, his proficiency in English and his familiarity with the American educational scene enabled him to work successfully at translating American educational writers for his countrymen. He collaborated with Ernesto Codignola in a translation of John Dewey's School and Society, which appeared in 1949 and was conveniently published by Codignola's own publishing firm. In 1950, Borghi's translation of Dewey's Education Today appeared in Italy. The year 1952 saw the joint Codignola-Borghi translation of Carleton Washburne's Winnetka's Schools. In 1954, Borghi, Codignola, and Enzo Agnoletti published a translation of My Pedagogic Creed by Dewey, contained in a book of essays on Deweyan education. In addition, Borghi produced Italian translations of Horace M. Kallen's The Education of Free Men and William Heard Kilpatrick's Philosophy of Education and he wrote an introduction to Aldo Visalberghi's 1958 translation of Dewey's Human Nature and Conduct.

Borghi's educational writing was certainly not limited to translation. In the 1950's and 1960's he maintained a high output of original scholarly works. The book that Borghi began in the United States,

²⁸Borghi, "Italy," p. 215.

Educazione e autorità nell'Italia moderna, was published in Italy in 1951. In his introduction, Borghi asserts that his book really grew out of the 1944 article for the Educational Yearbook of Teachers College, Columbia.²⁹ The content of the book, however, is more heavily historical than the article. Each chapter deals with a separate phase in the development of Italian education, beginning with the Italian state of the Risorgimento and ending with the World War II resistance. Borghi comments freely and interprets the major phases of Italy's educational history. His underlying theme is that of the struggle for control of Italian education, a struggle involving the Church and various political movements; he underlines the contributions of liberal and progressive forces contending against reaction. Even though it is a historical study, the ideological bias in Educazione ed autorità is clearly discernible.

Borghi wrote several studies on American thought. Among them are John Dewey e il pensiero pedagogico contemporaneo negli Stati Uniti d'America (John Dewey and Contemporary Pedagogical Thought in the United States of America), 1952; "Aspetti morali e religiosi del pensiero americano contemporaneo" ("Moral and Religious Aspects of American Religious Thought"), in the journal Il saggiatore, January-March 1953; "I fondamenti della concezione pedagogica di Dewey" ("The Bases of Dewey's Pedagogical Concept"), in Rivista critica di storia della filosofia, October-December 1952; "La categoria della socialità nel pensiero

²⁹Lamberto Borghi, Educazione e autorità nell'Italia moderna (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1951), p. ix.

pedagogico di John Dewey" ("The Category of Sociality in the Pedagogical Thought of John Dewey"), in an anthology called Il pensiero americano contemporaneo, (Contemporary American Thought) 1958; and a book published in 1955, bearing the title L'ideale educativo di John Dewey (The Educational Ideal of John Dewey).

Franco Cambi points out three phases in Borghi's approach to Dewey: in the first, Borghi is presenting and summarizing Dewey for his Italian readers, a phase that was completed around 1955; in the second, Borghi is expanding upon Dewey (in the Italian idiom, "deepening" Dewey) and developing a more complex idea of education and society, a phase that extends into the mid-1960's; and in the third, from the 1970's onward, he is critiquing Dewey from historical and dialectical viewpoints.³⁰

Of the books published in Borghi's first (introductory) phase of Deweyan activism, L'ideale educativo di John Dewey, published in 1955, is one of the most important. Borghi begins with a historical gloss of Dewey's early "pedagogical" activities, and points out the already present linkage of thought and action in Dewey's work, ". . . the theme that constitutes the golden thread in all Deweyan speculation."³¹ The second chapter contrasts Dewey to Herbart and Kant, two significant figures in European educational thought. Most of the chapter is really concerned

³⁰ Franco Cambi, La "Scuola di Firenze" (Naples: Liguori Editore, 1982), p. 66.

³¹ Lamberto Borghi, L'ideale educativo di John Dewey (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1955), p. 4.

with moral education; Borghi takes a cue from Herbart, who teaches that education has a moral end, the formation of moral attitudes in the individual. According to Borghi, Kant's concept of moral education is authoritarian, demanding submission and obedience to the authority of a teacher.³² It requires the suppression of the young person's inclinations, with the result that nature is opposed by reason. One of Dewey's intentions was to overcome that kind of dualism. Dewey relied on Hegel as a guide, but there was a right-Hegelian clique that stressed obedience, abnegation, effort rather than interest; one of its representatives, writes Borghi, was William Torrey Harris, an early influence on Dewey. Dewey had to critique that group in order to develop a nonauthoritarian concept of moral education. Herbart's concept of moral education is less oppressive, based on the learning of self-control and ideas of goodness and justice; but it is still dualistic, requiring an intellectualistic mistrust of natural impulses. Borghi contends that Dewey wanted to overcome those dualities and involve the whole mind and personality of the learner in the moral process:

Here, morality is made by Dewey to consist of harmony of soul, in an accord between internal and external, motive and action, attention turned to what is prescribed and attention turned to one's own inner fantasies. . . .³³

Morality, Borghi continues, must lie within the continuity of the psycho-spiritual life. In the same continuity with morality are effort and interest (which are not opposed, as in Herbart), and all are unified

³²Borghi, L'ideale educativo, p. 18.

³³Borghi, L'ideale educativo, p. 22.

by personal impulses that lead to self-expression. Hence for Dewey, Borghi argues, morality is a component of self-expression.³⁴

To this point, Borghi has traced an argument that he perceives in Dewey, leading from psychology through morals to a doctrine of self-expression; but it is really morals that Borghi wants to return to, and to do so he must affirm the synthesis of what he has revealed. The key is Dewey's "unitary concept of psychic activity," in which the dynamics of the personality have a strong moral import. Unlike Kant, Dewey cannot invent a moral end extraneous to the impulses of personality. Extrinsic motivation, such as fear of external authority (e.g., a teacher) impedes self-realization and is therefore detrimental to genuine morality. Even Herbart, who would arouse interest in preselected ideas, proposes a psychology of subordination that could lead to the submission of a people to an arbitrary authority.³⁵ A Deweyan school, in contrast, would allow students to develop active powers through occupations that spring from inward impulse and the need for self-realization. Thus Dewey creates both a morality and a rationale for education that are based on self-realization. Borghi is thus convinced that a "profound moral sensibility" exists in Dewey. The moral task of education is to insure the integrity and continuity of personal development, concludes Borghi.

³⁴Borghi, L'ideale educativo, pp. 23-29.

³⁵Borghi, L'ideale educativo, p. 32.

Yet to make that vision of the moral task acceptable to the Italians, Borghi must explain it further, which he does in the following section.³⁶ He asserts that mind is no longer considered a discrete entity, opposed to an external world; in contemporary psychologies, it is a function of the social life, requiring constant stimuli and nourishment from the social milieu. The mind that belongs to the self is neither separate from nor opposed to the society in which it lives. While the moral ideal may be self-realization, the self is supremely revealed in its social functioning. Thus the moral ideal concretizes itself in the individual's social development. Here, contact with the (social) environment must promote its continuation and development as well as that of the person. Unlike morality based on morbid and narrow conformism, the Deweyan morality that Borghi draws out suggests that true moral motivation stems from an understanding of and response to the need for human solidarity.

Morality in education, then, is achieved through social understanding and shared interests. Every activity, every subject taught in school, has a social aspect and therefore moral weight as well. Understanding that, the child might pass from an individualistic, self-centered attitude to a positive attitude of altruism. The ethos of the school must be one of common effort, in which everyone including the teacher takes part. The child develops a capacity for practical judgment in response to social demands, and he or she learns sensitivity to

³⁶Borghi, L'ideale educativo, pp. 34-41.

the needs of others. Public conduct is a powerful criterion of moral development: without that criterion as a test, the individual can be a moral impostor, ". . . and the old social and moral order of privilege and injustice will remain intact."³⁷

Responses to Critics

From the end of the first essay in L'ideale educativo di John Dewey, Borghi proceeds to discuss other aspects of Dewey's philosophy and pedagogy, assured that he has accomplished the most arduous task of the Deweyan facing the Italian intelligentsia. In essence, Borghi has defended Deweyanism from the criticisms of "essentialists and traditionalists" (by which he means Catholics and aging idealists) who found a sense of morality lacking in Dewey, and who thought that Dewey's insistence on the right to self-expression would lead to intolerable narcissism. By pointing out that morality exists primarily in the social context, and by placing the essential aspects of individual development there as well, Borghi sought to sustain the moral sense of Deweyanism from those critics. There were other critics, however, whom Borghi eventually had to face.

In 1962, Borghi published another important book on educational theory. This was Educazione e sviluppo sociale (Education and Social Development). Its theme is announced by its title, but the "social development" that Borghi intends is not simply the development of the child (or learner) in society; he implies a program for the development

³⁷ Borghi, L'ideale educativo, p. 41.

of human society itself. This book is representative of the period in which Borghi extended the concepts of Dewey, largely by finding compatible ideas in the work of others.

In the preface to Educazione e sviluppo sociale, Borghi states his intention to examine the links between pedagogy and social factors. Education, he insists, is an "irreplaceable" agent of social development. In view of education's social role, schooling is faced with a double task:

In the first place, it must select and filter social contributions in such a way as to transmit cultural models to youth that will constitute both the bases of their personal security and the instruments of social continuity, however without anchoring youths to those models, but allowing them the irrevocable capacity to rectify and transform those models, and to open them to other influences in an expansive process without limits; and in the second place, schooling must act as a renewing ferment in society by means of the forms of free and associated activity that are created in the school, and also through (the schools') active participation in the field of adult and community education.³⁸

In that statement, Borghi denies that education is only an instrument of cultural transmission. Its function is the facilitation of a process of endless development among learners of all ages.

In the first chapter, called "The Transformation of the Environment as Inherent to Behavior and Learning," Borghi draws on several sources to support essentially Deweyan concepts of behavior and learning. In the first place, Borghi asserts that behavior and learning are irrevocably linked in the total activity of the human being. To define learning, he borrows words from William Heard Kilpatrick:

³⁸Lamberto Borghi, Educazione e sviluppo sociale (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1962), p. xiv.

To learn now means, and most properly means, to acquire a new mode of behavior, and to do so in such a way that it (the behavior) solidifies in the character so that it may subsequently flow back into life at the right moment to exercise its appropriate function.³⁹

Borghgi then places that concept of learning in the biological matrix, as adaptation of intelligent organisms. What is really important is the transactional relation of the individual to the environment: the individual organism is in the center of an environment that he or she perceives and is also always reorganizing or conserving. In this regard, Borghgi quotes from Dewey's 1939 article, "Theory of Valuation," where Dewey uses the term "transaction."⁴⁰

Now Borghgi attempts to clarify the meaning of the term "behavior." In contrast to the behaviorists, Borghgi posits a distinction between adaptive and expressive behavior, and that distinction requires a consideration of motivation; he points his readers to the American psychologist G. W. Allport. Considerations of motivation, Borghgi suggests, help to explain the learner's role in reorganizing the environment, as stressed by Dewey and Kilpatrick.

Borghgi proceeds to a discussion of adaptive and expressive behavior in work and play, emphasizing the development of creativity in the learner. This section reveals Borghgi's interest in the dynamics of individual and environment. He has not forsaken his earlier interest in

³⁹Borghgi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 2. The reference is to an article by Kilpatrick that appeared in a festschrift for Ernesto Codignola, Prospettive storiche e problemi attuali dell'educazione (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1960).

⁴⁰Borghgi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 7.

morality; rather, he is developing a wider context for it. In finding a paradigm for the relation of the human being to the environment, he turns to the field psychology of Kurt Lewin. Borghi then declares development and maturation as dynamic processes, and invokes Abraham Maslow and Piaget. This foray into psychology is not really a digression; Borghi sees the psychologists as supportive of the dynamic view that is properly associated with Dewey.

One of Borghi's announced purposes is to establish an "ideology of action." Action, he contends, is influenced by attitudes and perceptions, but action also influences them in its turn. Human experience necessarily involves action: "True knowledge does not remain on the verbal plane, but links itself with activity, and is nurtured by experience."⁴¹ The values that enhance experience are openness, free choice, and a willingness to experiment. Here Borghi relies on Kilpatrick to support his thesis that affective and intellectual activities are inseparably linked. Above all, the student's attitudes are strongly influenced by others, particularly when a situation of social acceptance exists. Those socially derived attitudes affect everything the learner does, even to acquiring logical language and powers of reasoning.

Drawing heavily on Piaget, Borghi advocates a "cooperative" classroom environment to promote affective and intellectual development; he relegates the authoritarian environment to the stage of prelogical thought. Preadolescent children, allowed to interact with one another,

⁴¹Borghi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 10.

are forced by the confrontation to doubt and to prove their ideas; thus they are assisted in developing hypothetical reasoning and logical discourse. The social environment provides opportunities for reality testing. Borghi strengthens his "social" argument with material from Nicholas Bowlby on the intellectual consequences of emotional deprivation.

In the following paragraphs, Borghi restates the notion of learning that is based on the modification of cognitive structures. Again the emphasis is on action, now as a necessary factor in the modification of those structures; but Borghi warns against forced or repetitive action that leads to satiety and may be counterproductive. Borghi suggests that properly educative action must be freely pursued; thus he must develop a concept of freedom in education:

Education is the reinforcement of a natural process, not the substitution of an activity for its absence, since "no cognition learned by force is kept in the soul."⁴²

Education by force, on the other hand, satisfies the needs of the teacher rather than the learner, and to underline this point, Borghi alludes to education in Nazi Germany.

Borghi closes this essay with a consideration of democratic group dynamics appropriate for the classroom, and stresses the importance of sensitive leadership, toleration for diversity, and group identification through individual participation and voluntary cooperation. Importantly, the social climate of the Italian classroom must change from

⁴²Borghi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 42. The quoted line is a reference to Plato's Republic, 536e.

what it was in the past: "The change of social atmosphere creates new feelings and new values in individual awareness, and cognitive change is expanded through a change in affective attitudes."⁴³

Having made his points about education and the democratic environment, Borghi proceeds into chapters on a variety of topics including the importance of group work, the place of manual labor in education, the uses of free time, aspects of international education, and possible directions for adult education. The Deweyan presence is felt throughout the book. Borghi's increased emphasis on society and social change is largely a response to criticism from Marxist philosophers and educators. Whereas in the early 1950's, Borghi had had to defend Deweyan thought from Catholic and idealist charges of amorality, in the 1960's he sought to defend it from Marxist charges that Dewey was socially naive, did not understand the class structure, and foolishly advocated reform as a remedy for the ills of society.

Educazione e sviluppo sociale contains a direct response to those Marxist critics. In a chapter on education and social change, Borghi points out the limitations of Marxist social and educational doctrines. He objects to the Marxist notion that man's liberation from present alienation will come about through inevitable changes in the nature of productive forces. That contention is not only without an empirical basis, but more importantly, by concentrating on production as man's liberation, it bespeaks ". . . the emancipation of things and not of

⁴³Borghi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 46.

men. . . ."⁴⁴ In fact, he observes, the organization of industrial production in socialist states is no less oppressive than in bourgeois states. The cult of production and efficiency is present in both systems, when what is really required is a transformation of productive technology to favor the growth of the individual. Moreover, the socialist system of production has reintroduced alienation and a society split into two factions, the managers and the workers. In that context, education tends to be a support for the ruling bureaucracy, inculcating conformity and obedience to the system. Finally, the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat not only separates society's brains from its heart, but also permits inhumane treatment of the masses and sets aside personal liberty while claiming to pave the way for greater freedoms. Thus, observes Borghi, "A leftist dialectic becomes a cloak for a more sinister (left-handed) reality."⁴⁵ The closing remark on the matter is a brief reference to Dewey's disillusionment with education in the U.S.S.R. after 1928, when the Soviet educational system, having abandoned the spirit of free experimentation, had become a dispenser of state-approved verities.

Presenting and defending Dewey in the Italian cultural milieu was not the sum of Borghi's activities as an educational writer. His interests, in fact, were quite wide-ranging. In 1951, he published a book of essays on psychology of education. In the next few years, he published

⁴⁴Borghi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 314.

⁴⁵Borghi, Educazione e sviluppo, p. 315. The deliberate pun on sinistra (left) is nearly lost in English.

studies of educational programs and child development in specific communities. A very useful survey of contemporary Italian education appeared in 1958; Borghi called it Educazione e scuola nell'Italia di oggi (Education and Schooling in Today's Italy). The first part of that book deals with attempted school reforms in Italy and relates them to expenditures for education, school attendance, and other factors. The second and third parts summarize Italian pedagogical thought and major pedagogical trends in the contemporary world. Borghi closes with chapters on the educational impact of liberty in postwar Italy and violations of religious freedom in Italian state schools.⁴⁶ Borghi's productivity as an educational writer continued unabated through the 1960's and 1970's, but gradually his attention was claimed by specific projects and problems in Italian education, and he therefore devoted less energy to writing on educational theory and the defense of Dewey's ideas.

The School of Florence in Evolution

Lamberto Borghi, like Ernesto Codignola, was a key figure in the founding of the School of Florence; but those men were not its only noteworthy representatives. A number of bright, younger scholars were attracted to Florence in the 1940's and 1950's, and each developed unique syntheses or interpretations of what was being taught and studied there. It is instructive to consider their accomplishments.

⁴⁶Lamberto Borghi, Educazione e scuola nell'Italia di oggi (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1958), passim.

Raffaele Laporta: Freedom and Progress

Raffaele Laporta was born in Pescara, on the Adriatic coast, on March 11, 1916. He was educated at the University of Rome, where one of his teachers was Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, the idealist philosopher.⁴⁷ Laporta completed a degree in jurisprudence in 1937, but his growing interest in education led him away from a career in law. In 1939, he was hired to teach philosophy, history, and pedagogy in the state upper secondary schools, and began a lengthy period of teaching. From 1954 to 1957, he was involved in an adult education project in the mountainous Abruzzo region.

In 1958, Laporta was invited to Florence to become director of the Scuola-Città Pestalozzi, the institution which Ernesto Codignola had founded and from whose directorship Codignola was retiring. Having recently obtained a university lecturer's license, Laporta accepted a concurrent appointment to a teaching post at the School of Social Services of the University of Siena. In 1960, he was offered a position as professor of pedagogy in the Division of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Florence.

Laporta remained in Florence, teaching at the university and directing Scuola-Città Pestalozzi until 1965. In that year, he accepted a chair in pedagogy in the Division of Teaching at the University of Cagliari, in Sardinia. At the same time, he became director of refresher courses for middle-school teachers in the three Sardinian

⁴⁷ Cambi, La "Scuola di Firenze", p. 78.

provinces. In 1967, Laporta went to Bologna, and held a professorship in pedagogy at that city's university until 1969. His final move, in 1969, was to the University of Rome, where he accepted a chair in pedagogy in the Division of Teaching; from 1970 to 1975, he also directed that university's Institute of Pedagogy.⁴⁸

Laporta's professional activities have included membership in progressive (or "activist") educational organizations. In 1952, he and a group of teachers formed the Cooperative della Tipografia a Scuola (Cooperative for Typography in School); that group evolved into the Movimento di Cooperazione Educativa or M.C.E. (Educational Cooperation Movement) in 1955. Laporta attended and addressed many meetings held by the M.C.E. and by similar organizations. He was secretary of the Italian section of the New Education Fellowship from 1955 to 1962, and served as Italian editor of the N.E.F. journal, The New Era. After 1960, he was on the editorial board of the laic education journal, Scuola e città. In the 1970's, his activities in the field of education drew him into government commissions. Laporta has been adjudged to be one of the more classic and orthodox of the Italian interpreters of Dewey.⁴⁹

All of Laporta's principal publications date from the early 1950's onward. Journal articles written by Laporta began to appear around 1952, and his first book was published in 1957. That book was La

⁴⁸Laeng, I contemporanei, pp. 975-976.

⁴⁹Cambi, La "Scuola di Firenze", p. 13.

libertà nel pensiero di Vincenzo Cuoco (Liberty in the Thought of Vincenzo Cuoco), a study of concepts developed by a major Italian historicist philosopher who lived from 1770 to 1823. It was Laporta's first extended effort on a recurring theme in his work, that of the meaning of freedom. In 1957 he published Il senso del comico nel fanciullo (The Child's Sense of the Comic), and in 1959 another book, Per una didattica della scuola secondaria superiore (Toward a Theory of Teaching for the Upper Secondary School), went to press.

Laporta's first important theoretical work was published in 1960. That was Educazione e libertà in una società in progresso (Education and Liberty in a Society in Progress). In it, Laporta addresses the problem of freedom in human society. He states his intention to approach freedom in an empirical, commonsense way, and not as a metaphysical concept.⁵⁰ Human societies, he argues, are located in time and space, and the individual lives in the social context in relation to physical elements and other people. The individual's personality is determined by his or her efforts, within that context, to attain a dynamic equilibrium, nourished by personal expansion; and equilibrium and expansion constitute the elements of individual functionality. The quest for equilibrium and expansion is spontaneous, governed by interior impulses; that spontaneity is the basis of its freedom. Laporta's definition of freedom is:

⁵⁰Raffaele Laporta, Educazione e libertà in una società in progresso (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1960), pp. 3-4.

. . . the constant drive of the individual to react, among all the convergent stimuli that are presented to him in a given moment, to that which is apt to determine the maximum increment in his functionality.⁵¹

Whether the individual's reaction to the environment is purely mechanical is a problem that Laporta refuses to try to solve. What is important to Laporta is that one reaction is more apt than any other to increase the equilibrium-expansion of the subject in the environment; thus he or she can act "for the better," and anything that interferes with such a possibility is an obstacle to human functionality, hence also to human freedom. Laporta notes that there are both active and passive obstacles to human action, and the passive (physical) obstacles are the easier to overcome; few of us, for example, are locked in cells. The active obstacles are social interferences with liberty, such as laws, taboos, and the constraints of social class. To an extent, these exist in all societies, but it is desirable to keep them to a minimum; and their minimalization depends on expanding the educational level of the populace to allow intelligent reform of social institutions. A bad society, suggests Laporta, is not only oppressive, but also fails to extend the general educational level.

As for the choice involved in "acting for the better," Laporta does not care to quibble over whether it is a true choice or not, or whether (as some contend) the best choice is the only possible choice. What is important to Laporta is the individual's conviction of freedom in the matter of choosing, and the resulting commitment to what is

⁵¹Laporta, Educazione e libert , p. 9.

perceived as his or her own choice. The elements of one's freedom are impulse and conviction of action, and these are subjectively interior; therefore, he insists, freedom is immune from externally imposed "metaphysical" formulations.⁵²

For Laporta, then, freedom comes to be not simply the possibility of individual expansion and dynamic equilibrium, but also the interior conviction of the same. He sees all normal human behavior as a "protest of liberty" against impeding factors. Nevertheless, there are criteria for judging the success of our actions, and they are primarily rational; it is rationality that also provides the controls of morality. The free, moral individual defends liberty in all that he or she is and does; yet that liberty exists in a physical and human context from which it cannot be separated. Laporta explains:

We are not talking about absolute freedom . . . but the freedom of each individual insofar as he is connected with his peers in the organic framework of nature: in other words, it is the freedom of each with respect to all and everything.⁵³

Thus Laporta realizes that there is interdependence and common interest in human society. He refers his readers to Dewey's Democracy and Education for the outlines of the desirable society.

Returning to the role of law (an understandable concern for a philosopher trained in jurisprudence), Laporta allows that laws must exist to protect society from the damage caused by overzealous individ-

⁵²Laporta, Educazione e libertà, p. 15. The metaphysical formulations to which he refers are undoubtedly those of the late Fascist philosophers.

⁵³Laporta, Educazione e libertà p. 21.

ual interest. But law must not overarticulate; it must not stifle the individual, and it must allow freedom to "act for the best." Freedom, concludes Laporta, makes two demands upon society:

. . . to guarantee and increase the area of legal rights to the maximum possible limits; and to place all citizens in positions of enjoying their own liberties equally . . . which is the same as requiring equality of economic, social, and cultural levels for all members of society, a necessary and sufficient condition for providing an objective liberty.⁵⁴

The second essay in Educazione e libertà is a reflection on social function and dysfunction. Laporta points out two key functions in society--the productive and the directive. He contends that individual activity of the expansive kind, when socialized, leads to production, either in a material or a cultural sense. Social obstacles, including ruling classes, restrict expansion and therefore production. The more the individual's productive efforts are socialized, the more efficiently productive that society becomes. To insure maximum socialization, a directive function becomes necessary in society; and the panorama of forces operating in society furnishes the agenda of problems to be confronted and resolved by the directive function.

Society, says Laporta, must be kept functional; otherwise, it requires reform or revolution. To remain functional, society's processes must have a dynamic and expansive character, and that character is central to the concept of progress. The debate between liberals and socialists is over whether individual freedom may be allowed to impede social progress, or whether social progress may be allowed to

⁵⁴Laporta, Educazione e libertà, p. 42.

deny individual freedom. Laporta, as before, affirms society's right to laws that restrain an individual from becoming the opponent of everyone else. (Even the ruling class has limits on its action in the form of threatened uprisings and revolutions.) Moreover, the freedom of the individual is essentially subjective. Therefore, there are restraints and limitations on freedom in society; but Laporta wants to define an "objective" liberty determined by the interaction of the productive and directive forces in society, a freedom reckoned by the maximum reciprocal gains realized from that interaction. He devises a formula: $Lo=Lp-Li$, where objective liberty (Lo) equals the potential free energy of society (Lp) minus the coefficient of inertia (Li), inertia that represents the restrictive and authoritarian factors in society.⁵⁵ Obviously, unless $Li=0$, the value of Lo is less than Lp , and according to Laporta, that signifies a degraded form of liberty, and is the usual condition of human society. The greater the value of Lo , the greater is the degree of social progress that one may infer.

The maximal value of Lo is Laporta's social goal, and he finds that its greatest possibilities may be realized through education. Education, he says, works on the whole reality of man and his world and explores the possible connections between them. Its function is not to produce laws, formulas, and techniques but ". . . a better human substance of all individuals."⁵⁶ That is the highest aim of education;

⁵⁵Laporta, Educazione e libertà, p. 109. Laporta does not indicate whether or not this formula was derived from another source.

⁵⁶Laporta, Educazione e libertà p. 119.

and what education may best accomplish is a facilitation of maximal freedom and progress in the social organism.

In the following chapters of Educazione e libertà, Laporta explores the actual and possible work of education in greater detail, expanding upon the themes announced in his opening chapter. In the appendix, he reflects on some of the failures of "active" education and warns against the myth of the perfect, error-free school. He also discusses the prospects for a single, unified middle school in Italy.

In 1963, Laporta published a lengthy book on the concept of community in the school, La comunità scolastica (The School Community). His interest in entertainment and free-time activities led to Il tempo libero giovanile (Youth's Free Time) in 1964. Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, Laporta continued to write and published on themes as varied as the unified school, education through films, technical education, dietology, and proposals for school reform. In 1971 he published another important theoretical work, La difficile scommessa (The Difficult Wager), developing some of his earlier themes; its content, however, is outside the scope of the present study.

De Bartolomeis: Science and Pedagogy

Francesco De Bartolomeis has been called the "last and best" of Ernesto Codignola's students.⁵⁷ De Bartolomeis was born in Pellezzano, Salerno province, in 1918, and was educated at the University of Flor-

⁵⁷Raffaele Laporta, "L'educazione nuova nel secondo dopoguerra," in Ernesto Codignola in 50 anni di battaglie educative (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1967), p. 166.

ence. He taught at the University of Florence and subsequently transferred to the University of Turin, where since 1956 he has been a professor of pedagogy and director of the university's Institute of Pedagogy and its school for specializations in psychology, pedagogy, and psychopedagogy. During the 1950's and 1960's, he was particularly interested in the problems of active education, and to further that interest he joined progressive educational associations, including Laporta's Movimento di Cooperazione Educativa.⁵⁸ De Bartolomeis was also on the editorial board of the important laic journal Scuola e città.

Much of De Bartolomeis' scholarly attention was focused on the problem of linking a scientific pedagogy to classroom instructional practice. That was the basic concern of his first major book in education, La pedagogia come scienza (Pedagogy as Science). In it, De Bartolomeis states his intention to

. . . remove educational theory from a priorisms of various hues and origins, and particularly from the despotism of idealistic philosophy which. . . has shown itself to be an adversary not only of science but also of the democratic orientation of society and contemporary culture.⁵⁹

In attacking idealism so vehemently, De Bartolomeis may be wounding a dragon that was already dead or dying, but whose memory was nevertheless strong in the Italian psyche; by invoking it, he is able to set up a contrast for the purpose of making the newness of his position clearer

⁵⁸Further biographical information is available in Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 958.

⁵⁹Francesco De Bartolomeis, La pedagogia come scienza (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1953), p. ix.

to his readers.

In La pedagogia come scienza, De Bartolomeis catalogues the forms of scientific research that are valuable to the educator. He insists that education is not the province of one specific science, nor of one approach to science (e.g., experimentalism alone); rather, he desires education to have the rigor in procedures and appropriate control that pervade the scientific mentality. A broadly based scientific approach is necessary, because a broad range of concerns must be addressed in education:

To educate means to further psychic development for the satisfaction of fundamental human needs considered in solidarity with the socio-cultural situation of experience. In this definition appear concepts, or rather, groups of problems: psychic development; the satisfaction (and implicitly, frustration) of needs; and the socio-cultural situation.⁶⁰

The pedagogical sciences which De Bartolomeis goes on to discuss are psychology, sociology, and experimental pedagogy.

From his scientific viewpoint, De Bartolomeis cautions educators against renouncing the "infertile haughtiness" of philosophy only to become ancillaries of a narrowly conceived science that they cannot practice. It is the business of educators to draw on the various sciences and thus hold them together, finding the educational value in each. There can be a "science of education," but it must be a science in the sense of a body of systematic knowledge, with its sources in various related disciplines:

⁶⁰De Bartolomeis, La pedagogia come scienza, p. xvi.

To investigate the nature, the means, and the aims of education, from the outset seems unable to mean anything other than to systematize the kinds of knowledge that refer to education and to organize them into a science--pedagogy--with its own characteristics and ends.⁶¹

While he can accept the notion of philosophy of education as a realm of critical thought valuable to the educator, De Bartolomeis denies that a particular philosophy of education can proclaim itself independent of and superior to the pedagogical sciences. Philosophy of education must take its place among the sciences of education, limiting its sphere to ". . . illuminating human areas that remain obstinately closed before investigative attempts of other sorts."⁶² The usual focus of philosophical inquiry is on values, and in that field it reigns supreme: "Thus the philosophical attitude is better defined as the reflected on and discovered sensitivity to values than as a presumed power of all-comprehensiveness."⁶³ De Bartolomeis continues this line of discourse by suggesting themes for philosophy of education to explore: education and crisis in the contemporary world, educational and social transformation, the aims of education, and many others.

On the issue of teacher preparation, De Bartolomeis predictably finds scientific training the sine qua non of the new kind of educator; and for its efficacy in linking science to instructional activity, he recommends what he calls "the new education," embodying the scientific

⁶¹De Bartolomeis, La pedagogia come scienza, p. 3.

⁶²De Bartolomeis, La pedagogia come scienza, p. 39.

⁶³De Bartolomeis, La pedagogia come scienza, p. 40.

approach of the activist or Deweyan educator. Much of La pedagogia come scienza is devoted to the origins of the new education, a comparison of the traditional vs. active models of schooling, and the place of education in the social context.

In a thin volume that appeared in 1958, De Bartolomeis returns to an examination of active education. The book is called Cos'è la scuola attiva (What the Active School Is). The author chastizes those who hope that the solution to educational difficulties can be found in a formula. He advocates personal reflection and research: "Learning is intelligent understanding."⁶⁴ The "new" education, he insists, is not a miracle, nor was the "old" education entirely bad. Pedagogy is in an evolutionary process, and now it has reached the point where passivity is seen to be undesirable in terms of the needs of the child; hence the present need for active education.

De Bartolomeis, ever interested in psychology, examines personality theory and the hierarchy of needs (based, he admits, on Abraham Maslow). De Bartolomeis concludes that

. . . activity has educational value when it satisfies a need, or rather when it arises from a motivation (either conscious or unconscious) that constructively involves the affective, social, and expressive aspects so as to contribute to the formation of the personality.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Francesco De Bartolomeis, Cos'è la scuola attiva (Milan: Gianasso Editore, 1958), p. 12.

⁶⁵ De Bartolomeis, Cos'è la scuola attiva, p. 20.

Returning to the theme of pedagogical evolution, De Bartolomeis notes that the history of education is a story of progress that reveals a series of reforms from Plato to positivism. While it is futile to apply present-day criteria to past reforms, considering a historical person or movement "progressive" or "activist," recent developments in psychology and the social sciences can help us to evaluate the nature and efficacy of past educational practices.

In reviewing the history of modern education, De Bartolomeis comes to the conclusion that not all reformers and reformist movements have been revolutionary in nature. To clarify this point, he wants to use the term "new education" to refer to reformist education in general, while he will apply "active education" or "the active school" to the revolutionary trend, which he sees as analogous to "progressive education" in the U.S.A.⁶⁶ It is revolutionary education that interests him--revolutionary, that is, not only in its own right, but also politically and socially.

⁶⁶There is some ambiguity here. Deweyanism and progressivism are generally considered reform movements in the United States. Certainly, Dewey did not advocate violent overthrow of the U.S. government, and his statements about Communism after the Commission of Inquiry on Leon Trotsky (Mexico City, 1937) were sufficiently negative to disabuse anyone of the idea that Dewey was a Communist revolutionary. Nevertheless, Dewey expressed admiration for the "revolutionary power" of education in Turkey and Mexico in the 1920's, emphasizing his belief in the power of education to effect profound social change. In that sense, perhaps, De Bartolomeis interprets Deweyanism/progressivism as "revolutionary." See Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey, p. 284, and Jane M. Dewey, "Biography of John Dewey," in The Philosophy of John Dewey, vol. 1, ed. Paul A. Schilpp (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1939), p. 42.

De Bartolomeis believes that the active (revolutionary) school derives its character from the attitudes of individual teachers; thus it is not chiefly a matter of institutional organization. The teacher is not called upon to be perfect in all matters, but to oppose the collective and intellectualistic wisdom about teaching, and to take account of ". . . expressive and constructive demands, of the need for movement and exchange, initiative and responsibility."⁶⁷ What will aid the teacher in overcoming particular difficulties, De Bartolomeis contends, is a rigorous scientific foundation.

A major key to active education, in De Bartolomeis' view, is the normal behavior of children in nonschool situations. Children are active, exploring the world and adapting themselves to situations. It is not necessary to idealize or romanticize the child, but one must interpret children's behavior accurately and realistically. Free from artificial restraints, children behave according to their developmental needs. That is not to say that children can care for themselves and educate themselves entirely, for the difficulties they encounter are often overwhelming, and adult help is needed. The knowledge based on observation of children's natural behavior can be systematized in order to maximize the benefits of adult intervention in the lives of the young.

⁶⁷De Bartolomeis, Cos'è la scuola attiva, p. 34.

In this book, De Bartolomeis presents a consideration of personality factors involved in the learning process, then moves to the evaluation of school activities based on the needs they serve. "It is needs that reveal to us the logic of human behavior, even at its most intricate and absurd," insists the scholar.⁶⁸

De Bartolomeis closes Cos'è la scuola attiva with a discussion of Dewey and some early French activists and includes material about programs of active schooling.

In 1962, De Bartolomeis published Lezioni di pedagogia (Readings in Pedagogy), an investigation of the role of pedagogy in the social and political milieu. School policy, he suggests, is conditioned from an ". . . ideological, social, and economic point of view."⁶⁹ Politics, he states, is involved in all human activities, and whoever fails to confront political questions is apparently satisfied with the existing system. An attitude of pure scientific detachment is not an alternative to political involvement, because it bespeaks an unwillingness to face facts and a desire to retain privileges.

Pedagogy, De Bartolomeis contends, is a potentially revolutionary study whose aim for the individual is ". . . to acquire that knowledge and those attitudes that make us able to contribute, to some degree, to the transformation of educational institutions."⁷⁰ He makes it clear

⁶⁸De Bartolomeis, Cos'è la scuola attiva, p. 71.

⁶⁹Francesco De Bartolomeis, Lezioni di pedagogia (Turin: Gheroni and Company, 1962), p. 3.

⁷⁰De Bartolomeis, Lezioni di pedagogia, p. 5.

that science should not be confounded with politics, but he wants scientific and educational thinkers to stir up general political awareness and combat noxious influences in the schools.

De Bartolomeis charges that the political system in Italy provides free speech and other personal freedoms while it impedes social and public actions: thus there is liberty, but without the power to do one's duty and save the community. De Bartolomeis uses the image of a medical doctor, one who does not talk about medicine, but who actually cures sick people; the educator, he says, has no such freedom.⁷¹

De Bartolomeis refers to some of the critical problems that Italian educators had not solved in that era. He blames those in power for propagating the weaknesses of Italian schooling, and suggests an alternate vision:

The school should help the individual to be free, to use his "head-instrument" constructively, to make a coordinated use of critical powers, to form firm convictions for himself, to appreciate the highest and most noble things of life, and to increase his sensitivity to important problems. And what does the school do instead? It prepares him to be a conformist, to accept solutions that others impose on him selfishly, to let himself be diminished by decadent cultural products, and to prefer superficial and passive assimilation to active and involved participation.⁷²

While obsolete and dysfunctional education continues, De Bartolomeis laments, the government creates an atmosphere of capitalistic euphoria and seeks to silence the leftists and intellectual malcontents.

⁷¹De Bartolomeis, Lezioni di pedagogia, p. 10.

⁷²De Bartolomeis, Lezioni di pedagogia, p. 14. The use of the term "head-instrument" is an allusion to the positivist philosopher, Aristide Gabelli.

Democracy becomes increasingly illusory in Italy. Yet there is no virtue in remaining silent, for the schools are deteriorating and government-instituted government-instituted reforms fail to solve any of the basic problems.

From this point in Lezioni di pedagogia, De Bartolomeis catalogues the urgent needs of Italian schools and discusses possible reforms and their socioeconomic consequences. He has some particularly bitter words for the Catholic church and its interpretation of the "freedom of teaching" principle. Only laicism, he argues, can guarantee freedom to all. Finally, he adds a historical survey of scientific influences in Italian education, concentrating on the era of positivism.

De Bartolomeis provides suggestions about the uses and diffusion of teaching methods in I metodi nella pedagogia contemporanea (Methods in Contemporary Pedagogy), published in 1963. In that book, he argues against the old Gentilian prejudice against practical training for teachers, based on the notion that whoever knows a subject can teach it and therefore needs no training or apprenticeship. De Bartolomeis advocates a reform of teacher-training institutions, with a simplified system putting more emphasis on scientific thinking and creating more opportunities to apply pedagogical knowledge. His appreciation of method is quite Deweyan: ". . . method, instead of being a system of norms or rules to apply externally according to pre-established procedure, is education in action."⁷³

⁷³De Bartolomeis, I metodi nella pedagogia contemporanea (Turin: Loescher Editore, 1963), p. 5.

De Bartolomeis' goal for teachers, then, is not the mechanical application of methodological formulae, but a critical, problem-solving use of technique as developed by educational specialists.⁷⁴ Unsurprisingly, the methodological knowledge which he prizes most is that which enhances student-centered teaching and maximal individualization.

Starting from a strong scientific bias and a rather orthodox Deweyan position in 1953, De Bartolomeis moves increasingly into the area of social and political concerns. In effect, his ideology went farther to the left, until by 1969 he was criticizing the educational establishment for its apolitical facade, and in 1972 he was urging educators to undertake a struggle for social and cultural renewal. The shift to the left is evident in his later publications, notably in La ricerca come antipedagogia (Research as Anti-pedagogy), published in 1969, and in La professionalità sociale dell'insegnante (The Social Professionalism of the Teacher), published in 1976. Since the late 1960's, De Bartolomeis has come to be thought of as one of the leading spokesmen for the left wing of the School of Florence.⁷⁵

Aldo Visalberghi: Education as Transaction

Still another major educator of the Florentine group deserves attention for his careful study and interpretation of Dewey. Aldo Visalberghi, who was born in Trieste in 1919, was first educated in his native city and then at the Superior Normal School of Pisa, where he

⁷⁴De Bartolomeis, I metodi, p. 32.

⁷⁵Cambi, La "Scuola di Firenze", p. 13.

completed his degree in 1941. Visalberghi's thesis, on values in the philosophy of Benedetto Croce, was directed by Guido Calogero. In his early teaching career, Visalberghi held positions in the upper secondary schools of Aosta and Turin. Subsequently, he became a professor of pedagogy at the University of Milan and the University of Turin. His most recent university post was (and is) that of professor of pedagogy in the Division of Letters and Philosophy at the University of Rome.⁷⁶

Visalberghi's association with the School of Florence is the result of his affinity for certain principal features of Deweyan theory. He did not study in Florence, but there are instances of his cooperation with the Florentine scholars in the matter of editing and preparing publications. Among other enterprises, Visalberghi is an editor of a scholarly series published by La Nuova Italia (the Florentine publishing house founded by Codignola), and he is on the editorial board of that group's journal, Scuola e città.

Many of Visalberghi's more important books appeared after 1965. Nevertheless, there are a few from an earlier period (roughly 1951 to 1965) that illustrate his thought and set forth themes for later development.

It is interesting that Visalberghi's first major publication was a study of John Dewey, published in 1952 and called, simply, John Dewey. It was a successful academic work that went through new editions in 1961 and 1973. In it, Visalberghi presents a portrait of Dewey as a philoso-

⁷⁶Laeng, I contemporanei, pp. 1010-1011.

pher and as a man, outlines the connections between Dewey's philosophy and his pedagogy, discusses the concept of interest as a central part of Dewey's formulations of morals and pedagogy, examines Deweyan concepts as they apply to concrete teaching situations, and reflects on the nature and importance of Dewey's thought in a broad intellectual context. Visalberghi strongly defends Deweyan philosophy and inveighs against those (chiefly leftist) critics who want to "go beyond" activism, denying Dewey's democratic inspiration.⁷⁷

Visalberghi's John Dewey is not intended as a complete and systematic treatment of Dewey's life and thought; rather, it is a study aimed at demonstrating the "unity and overall coherence of his attitude."⁷⁸ At the outset, it is a reply to the early right-wing critics of Dewey who tried to separate his pedagogy from his philosophy. Visalberghi defends Dewey's relativism and his unwillingness to assert absolute values: thus, says the author, Dewey affirmed that there is value in all and that every man's life is worthy of being lived. Visalberghi also chides the Marxists, who want to replace Dewey's critical attitude with their own style of (historical-materialist) absolutism. Dewey, asserts Visalberghi, intended economics to serve mankind, and not vice versa; he was concerned about the rights of the individual. Nevertheless, Dewey was also concerned with social renewal. His social as well as his educational interests grew out of his basic doctrine of action.

⁷⁷Aldo Visalberghi, John Dewey (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1952; 1961), pp. vii-viii.

⁷⁸Visalberghi, John Dewey, pp. 196-197.

According to that doctrine, all particular activity, whether in the educational, ethical, or sociopolitical realm, is subsumed as a species of action and is irreversibly linked to other forms of action. The question of universality in Dewey's pronouncements is answered by his appeal to the pervasiveness of human communication and by the expansive quality of experience itself.⁷⁹

In the next few years, Visalberghi refined his understanding of Dewey's concept of action, leading to a 1958 publication with the Dewey-an-sounding title of Esperienza e valutazione (Experience and Evaluation). Although it is primarily aimed at the problems of evaluating school learning, the book begins with a crucial theoretical discussion. Visalberghi announces that among the conflicting theories of evaluation, he has chosen ". . . the critical instrument provided by the most mature form of naturalism, that is to say the 'transactional criterion,' the latest development of Deweyan instrumentalism."⁸⁰ Visalberghi then proceeds with a historico-critical examination of the concept of transaction. He admits that he has borrowed the term from a study by John Dewey and Arthur B. Bentley, Knowing and the Known. Visalberghi finds the term "transaction" superior to "interaction" to denote the circuit of nature and experience⁸¹ in Dewey's theory of knowledge, and he

⁷⁹Visalberghi, John Dewey, pp. 107-131.

⁸⁰Aldo Visalberghi, Esperienza e valutazione, (Turin: Taylor Editore, 1958), p. 2.

⁸¹In one of his later articles, Visalberghi draws spirals to illustrate the nature of experience.

relates the concept to contemporary developments in the psychology of perception.

The main differences between interaction and transaction, as Visalberghi sees them, are in the areas of intentionality and value. An interaction may be accidental and accomplish little; but in a transaction, something is intended and something (of value) is accomplished. While Visalberghi has studied the logic of discourse, he concludes that a somewhat different logic applies to transactions. They cannot be made intelligible by the usual (interactional) analyses of discourse: as an example, Visalberghi refers to the logic of imperatives. "Do thus-and-so and I'll reward (or punish) you . . ." is an imperative (or a performative, some linguists now say) that has no overt truth value; yet as a human transaction it has a great deal of meaning. The consequences of such a statement are practical rather than logical. An imperative, says Visalberghi, is really a kind of norm, a prescription for action. Out of the complexity of human transactions come value judgments that are equally impervious to ordinary logical analysis, but their consequences are verifiable in physical and psychological terms, and thus they have a logic of their own.⁸² On those grounds, Visalberghi asserts that value judgments are normative--that they are instruments for action-orientation.

⁸²Visalberghi, Esperienza e valutazione, pp. 37-66.

From that point, Visalberghi begins to build a theory of transactional evaluation based on an elaboration of transactional criteria. He discovers difficulties in objectifying such criteria and establishing their reliability, but nevertheless he advocates a concept of transactional evaluation that might be developed in a methodological instrument to be used as an adjunct to scientific research.

In 1960, Visalberghi published Scuola aperta (The Open School), in which he outlines his vision of rejuvenated public schools open to a multiplicity of positions, different viewpoints, and genuine dialogue, while engaging students and teachers in common lines of research. Above all, such schools should be socially open, he proposes; and "open" means free from structural constrictions and premature social distinctions or exclusiveness.⁸³ Visalberghi offers suggestions for school policy and provides a historical and comparative study of educators whom he sees as sympathetic to the open school, including Edouard Claparede and John Dewey.

The concept of transaction became increasingly central in Visalberghi's intellectual life in the late 1950's and 1960's. Although he was involved in a host of research activities in philosophy and education, it was a recurrent concept in his work. Asked to summarize his basic position in 1972, Visalberghi replied: "Life educates. It educates us when we are involved in a serious vital transaction."⁸⁴

⁸³ Aldo Visalberghi, Scuola aperta (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1960), pp. ix-x.

⁸⁴ "Aldo Visalberghi," La mia pedagogia (Padua: Liviana Editrice,

Other Florentines and Followers

Not all of the accomplishments of the School of Florence can be summarized by the work of Borghi, Laporta, De Bartolomeis, and Visalberghi. There were many in Italy associated with or influenced by the School of Florence in the 1950's and 1960's. Educators, philosophers, and psychologists were involved in that movement, and have been so up to the present day.

One of the more interesting figures to be loosely associated with the Florentine group is Nicola Abbagnano, the existentialist philosopher. Born in Salerno in 1901, Abbagnano was educated in Naples and completed a degree in philosophy. He was a high school teacher for several years, and from 1936 to 1939 he taught philosophy in the Division of Teaching of the University of Turin. In 1939, he accepted a position in the same university's Division of Letters, and since that time he has devoted himself to teaching philosophy and the history of philosophy.⁸⁵

Despite his early efforts in the field of education, Abbagnano directed most of his scholarly output toward theoretical philosophy and the history of philosophy. In his mature years, he added his personal touches to a philosophy of existentialism, and had the distinction of being one of the few Italian existentialists. Abbagnano's work in philosophy centers around the concept of "possibility," a development

1972), p. 292.

⁸⁵Nicola Abbagnano et al, La filosofia contemporanea in Italia (Asti: Arethusa Editrice, 1958), p. 381.

that renders his work rather less nihilistic than that of his northern European counterparts. For interested scholars, there is an excellent English-language study of Abbagnano called Education as Existential Possibility, by Gari Lesnoff-Caravaglia.⁸⁶ Dr. Lesnoff-Caravaglia derives pedagogical ideas from a number of Abbagnano's written works and provides a splendid interview of her subject.

One of Abbagnano's considerable services to the Deweyan cause was the publication of a brief article in Rivista di filosofia in 1948, "Verso il nuovo illuminismo: John Dewey" ("Toward the New Illuminism: John Dewey"). The article compares Dewey's faith in scientific problem solving to the scientific faith of the eighteenth-century illuminists; however, Abbagnano asserts the superiority of Dewey's vision, which, in his words,

. . . abandons the optimistic illusion of eighteenth-century illuminism and the weighty dogmatism of nineteenth-century rationalism, and sees reason for what it is: a humane force directed at making the world more humane.⁸⁷

Abbagnano's article, appearing at a propitious time (1948) and bearing the name of an already respected philosopher, certainly helped to prepare the Italian cultural ground for the interest in Dewey that flourished in the 1950's. It is often cited by Dewey scholars in Italy.

⁸⁶Gari Lesnoff-Caravaglia, Education as Existential Possibility (New York: Philosophical Library, 1972).

⁸⁷Nicola Abbagnano, "Verso il nuovo illuminismo: John Dewey," Rivista di filosofia 39 (October-December 1948):325.

There are others associated with the School of Florence who might be mentioned: Giacomo Cives (b. 1927) and Maria Corda Costa (b. 1922) of the University of Rome; Egle Becchi (b. 1930) of the University of Milan; Guido Petter and Lydia Tornatore, who are primarily psychologists; Angelo Broccoli (b. 1933), Antonio Santoni Rugiu (b. 1921), Tina Tomasi Ventura (b. 1912), and Fortunato Brancatisano, all considered part of the left wing of the Deweyan movement.

No matter what their particular interpretations, the scholars associated with the School of Florence established Deweyan thought (or its criticism) as a major feature of the Italian intellectual firmament. As such, it was an influence on educational theory: although in Italy as in the U.S.A., Deweyanism was a force resisted by many educational practitioners. Nevertheless, the power and novelty of Deweyanism in the 1950's led one Italian scholar to prophesy: "The interest in such a complex personality as that of Dewey cannot cease, nor will it cease."⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Iclea Picco, "Note sul Dewey in Italia," Problemi della pedagogia 1 (1955):514-515.

CHAPTER VII
ORIGINATING A MARXIST PEDAGOGY

In any study involving contemporary European intellectual movements, the existence of socialism, and particularly Marxist socialism, must not be ignored.

European socialism has its origins in the utopian and chartist movements of the 1830's and 1840's. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the anarchist teachings of Proudhon and Bakunin had achieved some currency; but socialism in the second half of the century was dominated by the thought of Marx and Engels. The social-democratic movement associated with Jaures and Bernstein emerged from the Second International after 1903. Following that split, both factions continued to exert a considerable influence in European political matters and do so to the present time.

Earlier chapters of this study, particularly those dealing with the problematicist and Deweyan philosophers in Italian education, have hinted at Marxist tendencies among the laic groups. Yet the involvement of Marxist thinkers in Italian education is more extensive than the few instances mentioned. In fact, the Marxist group, especially by the 1960's, was articulate and visible enough to be considered a separate school of philosophy and not part of the laic current at all. Thus

Marxism, as a major ideology affecting both philosophy and education, demands separate attention.

The Political Background of Italian Marxism

The history of Marxism in Italy is entangled with that of leftist movements in general. The Communist Manifesto was published in 1848, but in that year Italian attention was turned to the campaign to liberate Italy from foreign rule. Right-wing Manchesterian liberals dominated the Italian parliament from its inception until the election of 1876; then the parliamentary left came into power. The left-right struggles that began in the 1870's continued until the imposition of Fascist power in 1922. The early parliamentary left, it should be noted, was not a revolutionary left: its principal heroes were Mazzini and Garibaldi rather than Marx and Bakunin.

Outside of parliamentary circles, early Italian radicalism was strongly anarchist in character. Most of the Italian delegates to the Socialist First International were followers of Bakunin. From the 1870's on, their presence was made known by assassination attempts against government figures: in November 1878, an anarchist attempted to kill King Umberto I during a visit to Naples and wounded the prime minister instead; in 1894, an anarchist fired a shot at Prime Minister Crispi; and in 1900, an anarchist succeeded in assassinating King Umberto I.¹ The years 1897 to 1900 were a time of social unrest and

¹Sergio Romano, Storia d'Italia dal risorgimento ai nostri giorni (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1978), pp. 278-283.

popular uprisings, and anarchist agitation contributed to the strife.

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, certain forms of socialism began to develop as political forces in Italy. A Workers' party was formed in 1880 to represent the extreme left in parliament, but it was dissolved by the government in 1886. Opposition to the authoritarian policies of the Crispi government led to the founding of the Italian Socialist party in 1892. The head of the new party was Filippo Turati (1877-1932). In the interest of ideological solidarity, the party's first action was to expel its anarchist faction. A subsequent congress in September 1902 confirmed the ascendancy of Turati's socialist-revisionist group, resulting in policies of opposition to the revolutionary faction.

By 1911 or 1912, the socialists had become an accepted feature of the Italian political scene. When an anarchist attempted to shoot King Vittorio Emanuele III in April 1912, three socialist deputies were among those who congratulated the monarch on his escape from injury.² Shortly thereafter, however, Mussolini and his supporters took control of the party and expelled the three, took over publication of the socialist newspaper Avanti! (Forward!), and exercised a major influence until after World War I when Mussolini organized a new party. Socialists joined with anarchists and republicans in a brief insurrection that took place in 1914, but World War I soon turned national attention to other matters.

²Romano, Storia d'Italia, p. 286.

In the chaotic years following the First World War, the nature of socialist and Marxist groups in Italy changed considerably. The success of Bolshevism in Russia encouraged the formation of a "maximalist" (pro-Soviet) faction in the socialist party, many of whose members withdrew in January 1921 to become a separate entity, the Communist Party of Italy (PCd'I). The new party was led by Palmiro Togliatti (1893-1964), who was to become a leading figure in Italian politics. The Communists, despite their revolutionary fervor, continued to participate in parliamentary government until they were banned by Mussolini.

While the Marxist-socialist camp was in disorder, Mussolini (who had become independent of the socialists in 1919) was building his party and consolidating his political base. By October 1922, Mussolini had rallied enough support to lend credibility to his "march on Rome" and his demand for power.

Mussolini's first cabinet contained two revisionist socialists (then called Social Democrats). But the election of 1924 gave the Fascists 65% of the vote, and they then began to eliminate the non-Fascist opposition. On June 10, a group of Fascists murdered a socialist deputy named Giacomo Matteotti; in protest, most of the opposition deputies walked out of the parliament. Mussolini soon empowered Fascist party secretary Farinacci to use violence against opposition leaders, many of whom went into exile or became active in the underground.

During World War II, antigovernment "partisan" groups were formed to assist Allied efforts against the Fascists and Nazis. The Communists

figured prominently in that struggle and achieved a reputation for effectiveness, dedication, and honesty. Their actions did much to prepare the way for the emergence of the Italian Communist party (PCI) as a major postwar political force.

Palmiro Togliatti spent a number of years in exile in Spain and the Soviet Union, but he returned to Italy in 1944 and participated in coalition governments until 1947. At that time, the Communists adopted an anticlerical line that was one of the major reasons for their subsequent exclusion from coalitions with the dominant Christian Democrat party.

In the socialist camp, 1947 was important for the formation of two rival parties. The more radical of the two was the Italian Socialist party (PSI), led by Pietro Nenni (b. 1891). The more conciliatory party, called the Partito Socialdemocratico Italiano (PSDI), was led by Giuseppe Saragat (b. 1898). The PSDI participated regularly in coalition governments, and Saragat himself became president of the republic in 1964. The "Nenniani," increasingly disillusioned by Soviet heavy-handedness as a force dimming the prospects of international socialism, finally agreed to participate in the Italian government in 1963. The Italian Communist party remained an opposition party, strong but out of power; it participated in no coalition governments in the years between 1947 and 1965.³

³H. Hearder and D. P. Waley, A Short History of Italy, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 236-238 et passim.

Considering the political turmoil of the period from the Risorgimento to the end of World War II, it is not surprising that the Italian Marxists did not direct much energy toward the creation of a coherent pedagogy. Nevertheless, there were some intellectual pioneers who prepared the way for such a development.

Marxism as an Intellectual Movement

Marxism was understandably slower to develop as an intellectual force in Italy than it was as a political force. When Marxism began to appear in Italy around the end of the nineteenth century, it did not arrive in a cultural vacuum. Among laic thinkers of the late nineteenth century, positivism was an important philosophy. In the early twentieth century, positivism was eclipsed by neo-Hegelian idealism, which was later favored by the Fascists and remained an "official" philosophy until the end of World War II.⁴ Moreover, a new philosophy arriving in Italy at any time has to contend with the perennialist philosophy of Catholicism, a major feature of the Italian intellectual environment. Gradually, however, from the 1890's on, and despite strong opposition, Marxism began to establish itself as an intellectual movement in Italy.

⁴Positivism and idealism are further discussed in Chapters II and IV of this study.

Pioneers of Marxist Thought in Italy

The first noteworthy Italian Marxist intellectual was Antonio Labriola (1843-1904). He was a student of Bertrando Spaventa, the neo-Hegelian philosopher, and in his youth Labriola was an adherent of neo-Hegelian idealism. In the 1890's, however, he became interested in political socialism and theoretical communism, and his published titles of the period bear witness to that fact: among them are In memoria del manifesto dei comunisti (In Memory of the Communist Manifesto), 1895; and Del materialismo storico (On Historical Materialism), published in 1896.⁵

Labriola was attracted to two particular features of Marxism: the "scientific" character of Marxism as contrasted with the utopian nature of some other forms of socialism; and Marxism's philosophy of praxis, according to which Marxist philosophy cannot be separated from social and political action. Nevertheless, Labriola's interpretation of Marxism was heretical in some ways. Labriola accepted the tenet that historical materialism is a philosophy of history, but he denied its power to explain all historical facts. Rather, he saw historical materialism as a method of historical study and a means of discovering the relations of historical facts. To reduce history to economics seemed to Labriola to be reductionist system building, imputing a "metaphysical" structure to history.⁶ Labriola agreed that class consciousness is an

⁵ Dizionario dei filosofi, 1976 ed., s.v. "Labriola, Antonio."

⁶ Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Labriola, Antonio."

important phenomenon, but he contended that its nature is as much cultural and sociological as it is economic. Furthermore, he insisted on voluntaristic and idealistic impulses as the effective antecedents of concrete political action.

Labriola was not entirely silent on the subject of education, but the few pages he addressed to it date from his "Herbartian" period prior to his discovery of Marx.⁷ They are therefore of minimal interest in an examination of Marxist philosophy and pedagogy.

In different ways, Labriola's thought influenced both Benedetto Croce and Antonio Gramsci. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Croce moved away from Marxist analyses and developed a complex theory of history,⁸ while Gramsci became an important Marxist theoretician.

Labriola's successor as the leading Marxist academic was Rodolfo Mondolfo (1877-1976). He was a professor of the history of philosophy and taught at the universities of Turin and Bologna; during the Fascist period, however, he went into hiding and eventually left Italy, whence he emigrated to Argentina. Thus, the last three decades of his life were spent principally in South America, and his reputation in Italy was maintained mainly through his publications. Like Labriola, Mondolfo emphasized the activist character of Marxism, but he refused total

⁷Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979), p. 653 ff.

⁸Croce's philosophy is discussed at greater length in Chapter III of this study.

acceptance of its materialistic interpretations of human activity.⁹ For Mondolfo, Marxism became a philosophy of liberty and humanism. That attitude is expressed in one of his later works, Umanesimo di Marx (The Humanism of Marx), published in 1968.

The Life and Work of Gramsci

Among Italian Marxist thinkers of the early twentieth century, one name in particular stands out: Antonio Gramsci. Born in Ales, Sardinia, in 1891, Gramsci grew up in poverty, and his early education in the local schools was interrupted for several years as he worked to help support his family. Gramsci was always in poor health, suffering from internal disorders, a nervous condition, and a malformation of the spine which stunted his growth and caused him to become hunchbacked. His poor health also impeded his education. Nevertheless, in 1908, Gramsci passed a competitive examination that enabled him to enroll in the senior high school in Cagliari.¹⁰

In 1911, Gramsci won a scholarship to the University of Turin, where he encountered social and political radicalism of all kinds. One of his fellow students was Palmiro Togliatti, who was to become the founder of the Communist Party of Italy. Eventually, ill health caused Gramsci to abandon his university studies, but not before he had read some leading radical thinkers, including Antonio Labriola and Rodolfo

⁹Dizionario dei filosofi, s.v. "Mondolfo, Rodolfo."

¹⁰Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), "Introduction," pp. xviii-xx.

Mondolfo. Gramsci also read and appreciated Benedetto Croce. Although in his later years Gramsci chastened Croce for his insipid resistance to the Fascists, there were elements of Crocian idealism that Gramsci retained and even used in the critique of his fellow Marxists.¹¹

In Turin, Gramsci joined the Socialist party (PSI) and became active in leftist journalism. When the Bolshevik revolution occurred in Russia in 1917, he was favorably impressed, and his published articles soon called for the formation of "workers' soviets" on the Russian model.

At the socialist convention in Livorno in 1921, Gramsci joined the radical group headed by Palmiro Togliatti, which combined with a similar group headed by a Marxist purist from Naples, Amadeo Bordiga. Together they left the PSI and formed a new party, the Communist Party of Italy (PCd'I). From May 1922 to November 1923, Gramsci was in the U.S.S.R. at the invitation of the Third International. Later, he traveled to Vienna to do political work on behalf of the International.¹² When he returned to Italy in 1924, the Fascists were already in power but had not yet attempted to eradicate their opposition. Gramsci resumed party activities in Italy, and was arrested by the Fascists on November 8, 1926. Eventually, he was incarcerated in Bari province.

¹¹Hoare and Smith, "Introduction," p. xxv.

¹²Antonio Gramsci, L'alternativa pedagogica, ed. Mario A. Manacorda (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1972), "Nota biografica," p. xlv.

While in prison, Gramsci wrote and studied endlessly. He kept voluminous notebooks which survived the war and have been published and translated widely. He was also an avid letter writer, and his prison letters now constitute a separate volume.

Between 1931 and 1933, Gramsci's health began to deteriorate seriously. He was released from prison in 1935 to obtain medical treatment, but he remained under police surveillance. In a Rome clinic on April 27, 1937, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died at the age of forty-six years.

Gramsci's early journal articles, as well as his prison letters and notebooks, survived World War II and constituted a unique patrimony for the reconstituted Communist party, the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI), and for postwar leftist intellectuals in general. In his lifetime, Gramsci was often concerned with questions of education, and sections of the Prison Notebooks attest to that fact. Essentially, Gramsci's writings on education urge a reorganization of schooling in order to eliminate class privileges and to train intellectuals from the working class. That material is one of the major sources upon which later Marxist educators were able to draw.

The Sources of Marxist Education

Before the establishment of the Soviet regime, the Marxist political parties in Europe did not devote much energy to delineating the possible character of Marxist education. A few scattered passages in the works of Engels and Lenin are all that Marxist educators can draw on

from the period leading up to the Russian revolution. On the eve of that revolution, when the Bolsheviks formed a sizable opposition to the Russian government and were planning their own accession to power, some educational policy principles were set forth. Those policies led to official documents that were published shortly after the Bolshevik take-over in late 1917. In effect, the new government was forced to think about problems of education, and it responded as well as it could; thus, a Marxist approach to education had to be created in that period.

The Soviet Sources

In December 1917, the Bolshevik government of the U.S.S.R. issued a decree that stated, in part, that universal compulsory education was to become law; the new government would increase provisions for education at all levels; a new emphasis was to be given to scientific study; and school building and teacher-training programs were to intensify.¹³ Those decrees were intended to counteract the most obvious shortcomings of schooling in the late Tsarist period. Further elaborations of the principles of Marxist education were yet to come.

The first People's Commissar of Enlightenment, A. V. Lunacharsky (1875-1933), made an early statement supporting the principle of education for the masses. He desired a "high level of public education" to make popular government possible.¹⁴ A major principle of the new Soviet

¹³James Bowen, Soviet Education (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 27.

¹⁴Bowen, Soviet Education, p. 29.

school was that it would be "polytechnic," uniting intellectual understanding with manual work, and its style of operation would be aimed at eliminating class distinctions.

In the early years, however, the optimal form of instruction could not be specified. During the period of Lunacharsky's tenure as People's Commissar of Enlightenment, from 1917 to 1929, the official line favored scientific experimentation on the social level and allowed a variety of methods to be tested in the Soviet schools. Among the contending currents of educational thought was Pavel Blonsky's "pedology" movement, Krupskaya's ideal of politically-controlled polytechnical schools, and several instructional theories imported from America.¹⁵ In general, the experiments failed to produce the desired results. When Andrei Bubnov became People's Commissar of Enlightenment in 1931, the era of experimentation came to a rapid end.

The greatest of the Soviet educators was neither a commissar nor a politician, but a country schoolteacher named Anton Semyonovich Makarenko (1888-1939). Intensely loyal to the Soviet regime and an avowed admirer of the OGPU (the political police), Makarenko was given charge of colonies of delinquent and homeless youths in the 1920's and 1930's. Makarenko introduced a military style of discipline in his colonies, complete with uniforms, drums, and bugles. At all times, he stressed the primacy of the collective over the whims and desires of the individual. While sometimes at odds with local officials, Makarenko believed

¹⁵ Bowen, Soviet Education, pp. 139-144.

in the ideal of a new Soviet society and culture, and he was sure that in his colonies he was approaching that ideal.

In the mid-1930's, the Soviet government began to promote Makarenko's approach as a means of solving the problem of reviving a disciplined, competitive system of education while not losing sight of collective aims. Makarenko's views of education were widely disseminated through the publication and translation of his books. Makarenko obviously considered himself a man of action rather than By the 1950's, his Pedagogicheskaya Poema (Pedagogical Poem, translated as The Road to Life), was one of the favorite books of Soviet readers and was available in several world languages as well.¹⁶ In addition to the Pedagogicheskaya Poema, Makarenko published two other books, Flagi na Bashnyakh (Learning to Live), and Kniga dlya Roditelei (A Book for Parents), both of which achieved wide circulation.

Education in the Works of Gramsci

In the 1950's and 1960's, Marxist educators in Europe were generally aware of the contributions of Lunacharsky, Krupskaya, Makarenko, and other Soviet educators. The Italian Marxists also had a native source of educational thought in the writings of Antonio Gramsci. Sections of the Prison Notebooks contain discussions of education that are ideologically "safe" as foundations upon which to build.

¹⁶Bowen, Soviet Education, p. 3.

In the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci envisions a new type of schooling that removes class barriers and eliminates the special privileges of the few. The basis of the new socialist education can be nothing other than productive work; by this Gramsci means that learning is itself a form of work, while it prepares individuals for their future work. Nothing extraneous to that ethic must be permitted.

To replace the traditional world view of the school (particularly the conservative ethos of the confessional school), Gramsci advocates the development of a "historical, dialectical conception of the world"; obviously, such a viewpoint would be consistent with Marxist theory.¹⁷

Gramsci directs several arguments against the idealist concept of education, the "rhetorical" type of school resulting from the 1923 reform law, and the "romantic" nature of most experimental education. For Gramsci, education must be closely linked to work, and learning itself ought to be an arduous task. He admires the discipline imposed upon schoolchildren by the study of Latin and Greek, but he concedes that the crisis of modern culture demands a new focus for the formative school. One possible remedy is formal logic, which requires study because its principles are not innate, and whose study necessarily imposes discipline and self-control.

The main criticism that Gramsci launches against contemporary education is its perpetuation of the class structure. Italian education is oligarchic, he contends, because each social group has its own type

¹⁷Bowen, Soviet Education, p. 3.

of school carrying on its own tradition. Gramsci's antidote for the class nature of Italian education is the abolition of the variety of schools and the establishment of a single type of school for all citizens:

If one wishes to break this (class) pattern one needs . . . to create a single type of formative school (primary-secondary) which would take the child up to the threshold of his choice of job, forming him during this time as a person capable of thinking, studying, and ruling--or controlling those who rule.¹⁸

Gramsci refers to this proposed school as the "common" school and envisions it as a state school whose task would be to provide

. . . a general, humanistic, formative culture; this would strike the right balance between development of the capacity for working manually (technically, industrially) and development of the capacities required for intellectual work. From this type of common schooling, via repeated experiments in vocational orientation, pupils would pass on to one of the specialized schools or to productive work.¹⁹

Finally, Gramsci intends the power of the working class to be consolidated and maintained by the creation of a new group of intellectuals from the working class itself. That must be a major aim of socialist education in spite of the great difficulties involved.

Thus, in the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci announces some of the main themes of Marxist education: the single school, maximal education for all, suppression of the religious influence, the linkage of education to labor, and the creation of a working-class intelligentsia. That

¹⁸Quintin and Hoare, Selections, p. 40.

¹⁹Quintin and Hoare, Selections, p. 40. The school that Gramsci describes is easily compared to the Unified Labor School created by the Soviet government in the Lunacharsky era.

program, ideologically unassailable, was to remain essentially unchallenged by successive Marxist educators.

Marxist Pedagogy in Postwar Italy

During the Fascist period, avowed Marxists and those suspected of leftist sympathies were persecuted by the state; whenever and wherever possible, Marxist scholars in university or secondary school teaching positions were removed from their posts and forbidden to teach. One legacy of the period is that, in the 1940's and 1950's, few Marxists enjoyed prestigious positions in the Italian universities. That is especially true of the field of education, where Gentilian idealists predominated until the early 1950's, when they were gradually replaced by Deweyan activists. Partly because of political considerations within the state university system, it was difficult for Marxists to establish themselves firmly before the mid 1960's. Therefore, the educational theorizing of Marxist scholars of the 1940's and 1950's was often carried on outside of the universities or at best by professors whose academic appointments were not in philosophy or education.

In the scholarly summaries of philosophers and educators of the postwar period, the Marxist entries are invariably few. One important figure who is often included among the Marxists is Antonio Banfi.²⁰ Undeniably, Banfi was a Marxist in the political sense, a prominent member of the Italian Communist party, and a committed activist in

²⁰See, for example, Giovanni Giraldi, Storia della pedagogia (Rome: Armando Armando Editore, 1969), p. 512, and Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979), pp. 685-702.

public affairs. Yet his intricate system of philosophy can hardly be encompassed by the term "Marxism." His sources are far too varied--Husserl, Bergson, Dilthey, and Natorp and Cohen, among others--to lend ideological purity to his work. His insistence on the "problematic" nature of experience permits unorthodoxies to enter at will, creating a philosophical dialectic whose dimensions are wider than that of the class-oriented dialectic of orthodox Marxists. As Giraldi reflects on Banfi, ". . . his relativist position, contained in his problematicism, endures to cover the present and the future."²¹

Among the Deweyans there were those who attempted to combine elements of Marx's social theory with reformist pedagogy; but elements drawn from Marx do not make theory necessarily Marxist.

The Marxists found reliable sources in their journal, Riforma della scuola (The Reform of Schooling), which began appearing in 1955. In fact, it was the successor to an earlier publication, Educazione democratica (Democratic Education), which began publication at the end of World War II. That journal, however, was not as well edited as Riforma della scuola and did not attract as much attention in scholarly circles. From 1955 on, Riforma della scuola appeared regularly in an attractive format and accepted contributions by both Marxist and non-Marxist educators. Its editorial policy did not require it to accept only articles by bona fide Communists, although the sympathies of the editorial board were apparent.

²¹Giraldi, Storia della pedagogia, p. 512.

To a large extent, Riforma della scuola was concerned with basic policy issues, those that grew out of economic and demographic constraints on the schools and that figured into the parliamentary debates of the time: school expenditures, attendance laws, curriculum changes, and so forth. More esoteric discussions of educational theory rarely appeared on its pages in the first decade of publication. For example, an article contributed by the illustrious Banfi in 1956 (the year before his death) attacks a suggestion made to the Italian parliament to reform the schools without any financial expenditures.²² In the article, Banfi makes a few ideologically inspired claims about education to the effect that education for all is a right rather than a privilege and that the cupidity of the ruling class has impeded the implementation of that right. Yet the theme of the article (that educational expenditures must be increased) rests upon comparisons of the percentage of the national income spent upon education in several countries, on statements of various experts, on denunciations of spending for armaments, and so forth. Although there is argumentation, it is hardly a study in philosophy despite its authorship, and it is fairly typical of the material published by Riforma della scuola in the early years.

The contributors to Riforma della scuola did not turn their attention to more abstract matters of theory until 1965, when the debate was touched off by recognition of a publication of the preceding year. In 1964, Mario Alighiero Manacorda published the first volume of Il

²²Antonio Banfi, "Riforma ad alto prezzo," Riforma della scuola, May 1956, pp. 3-5.

marxismo e l'educazione (Marxism and Education), a three-volume historical study of Marxist documents pertinent to education. A "reader's guide" to the book, actually an introductory chapter, appeared in Riforma della scuola in January 1965. Eleven months later, several articles appeared in the same journal in response to Manacorda's piece. They marked the beginning of an intensifying theoretical discussion, spurred by the political unrest of the late 1960's.

New Reflections on Marxist Pedagogy

Mario Alighiero Manacorda was born in Rome on December 9, 1914. He was educated at the Scuola Normale Superiore (Higher Teacher Training Institute) of Pisa and at the University of Pisa, where he received a degree in literature in 1936. After a year of postgraduate study at the University of Frankfurt/Main in Germany, he began a career as a scholar and translator. His early work was in disinterested literary study, but the occurrence of major political changes, particularly at the end of World War II, gradually led him into research of a more politically committed nature. Thus his early studies of the German romantics, Novalis (in 1942) and von Hofmannsthal (in 1946), gave way to intensive studies of Marx and Engels.

In the postwar years, Manacorda's political sympathies drew him into a number of practical activities. Qualified and experienced as a secondary school teacher, Manacorda accepted the responsibility for directing a boarding school in Rome for the children of partisans and war veterans under the sponsorship of the National Partisans Association

of Italy. He remained at the school from 1946 to 1948. Later, he became active in the Cultural Commission of the Italian Communist party, which led him to participate in a Communist-backed law project for the establishment of a single middle school in Italy. In 1962, he became a member of the Pedagogical Section of the Gramsci Institute, a Communist cultural organization.

In the 1950's, Manacorda was heavily involved in editing and publishing Marxist-oriented books and periodicals. He served as a director of Edizioni Rinascita, a Communist publishing house, from 1954 to 1957. At various times, he prepared or edited articles on schooling and pedagogical matters for a number of small journals circulated among Marxist intellectuals, and in 1964 he joined the editorial staff of Riforma della scuola. He contributed to various other pedagogical and historical journals, including Scuola e città (published by the Deweyans in Florence), and two journals published in the U.S.S.R.

Manacorda's article in Riforma della scuola, January 1965, addresses what he considers to be the principles of Marxist education. He announces a basic thesis in these words:

Marxism, insofar as it is a theory of the emancipation of man, has an implicit pedagogical component that is articulated by a sociological investigation of the state of instruction, by a philosophical critique of the problem of man's nature and ends, and by a specific delineation of determinate pedagogical choices.²³

²³Mario Alighiero Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," Riforma della scuola, January 1965:7.

Manacorda extracts pedagogical significance from many of the works of Marx and Engels. He refers to an exemplary passage from Engels: The Situation of the Working Class in England, describing the deplorable state of nineteenth-century schooling. Manacorda insists that the passage provides evidence of Engels' humanitarian sympathy for the oppressed.

Manacorda suggests that the Marxist approach to education, separated from historical accidents, reveals an extraordinary thematic consistency. It is based on a consideration of the nature of man and of what is unique to man--labor. That "work created man" is an essential article of Marxist belief which Manacorda also affirms:

In work, man actualizes his true human essence, distinguishing himself from the animals insofar as he produces his own means of subsistence in a way that is voluntary, conscious, and universal--that is, extended to all nature.²⁴

Having made that point, Manacorda summarizes the standard Marxist theory of the socialization and division of labor, emphasizing the alienation of workers. According to this theory, what is produced in the industrial system becomes increasingly extraneous to the needs and aims of the workers, subjugating them to a social order imposed by others. The promise of education is ". . . as a form and method for man's reintegration in work, in contrast to work that has divided men."²⁵

²⁴Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 7.

²⁵Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 8.

The division and specialization of labor has created what Manacorda calls "unilateral" man, who is necessarily limited, dehumanized, divided within himself and isolated from others. Marxist education, in contrast, aims at creating "omnilateral" man, a being who is completely developed in every way. The alienation that besets the working class, according to Manacorda is equally devastating to the ruling class; thus it is useless to propose any (class-oriented) conservative pedagogy as the possible salvation of society.

Manacorda stresses the group nature of social processes and insists that overcoming the conditions of the working class is a necessary part of the historical process ". . . independent of the abstract will of isolated individuals."²⁶ The task before the working class is to abolish the condition of its own alienation. "Thus," he concludes, "while any individualistic pedagogy must be excluded from the objective of personal reintegration, the pedagogical process is linked to the general process of society as an objective and revolutionary process. We posit, in effect, a close relation of education to revolution."²⁷

Referring to Marx's Kapital, Manacorda states that modern production methods, while encouraging specialization, also require the versatility of individuals in the labor force. That need has led to the establishment of polytechnical and professional schools, but therein Manacorda sees a source of revolutionary ferment. Any educational

²⁶Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 8.

²⁷Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 8.

concession won by the workers is a step toward revolutionary victory, and will reveal the "contradictions" of capitalistic production.²⁸

Various writings of Marx, says Manacorda, go beyond asserting a polytechnical versatility as the proper educational goal of the workers. They should study science and technology in order to understand and control the process of production. Marx outlines a complete education for the working-class young, encompassing intellectual development, physical education, and polytechnical instruction, at the same time combining productive labor. In fact, Marx opposes the abolition of child labor, calling it a "democratic-humanitarian illusion." The early union of classroom instruction with productive work, he contends, is a powerful force for the transformation of society.²⁹ Only a growth of revolutionary consciousness and activity, Manacorda writes, is necessary to impel the process to its logical end.

Recapitulating, Manacorda states the central motif of Marxist pedagogy as ". . . the recovery, by means of technological instruction united with productive labor, of human omnilaterality lost in the historically-produced division of labor. . . ." ³⁰

²⁸Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 9.

²⁹Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 9. The idea of uniting learning with work is reflected in records of early Soviet experiences in education. Makarenko, for example, had his students produce furniture and similar objects for use in the school or for outside sale, with the proceeds going to the school.

³⁰Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 9.

There are other pedagogical points that Manacorda derives from his study of Marxist thought. For example, he links the relation of man and environment to the doctrine of labor. That doctrine is part of the materialistic theory of history, in a nontraditional sense, because it asserts that human beings have the power to modify their environment. The ruling class must be educated to the fact that the workers can modify not only their environment but their social situation as well. Thus the educators must be educated; they must learn that man's activity educates. In Hegelian fashion, Manacorda predicts that the reign of things and circumstances over man will be overcome by the reign of man over things and circumstances. The environment will then be understood as an outcome of the revolutionary activity of humanity.³¹

Manacorda proposes an intellectual struggle against both naturalistic determinism and individualism. His opposition to naturalistic determinism recalls the arguments of the preceding paragraphs; and he opposes an individualism that sees education as nothing but the discovery of a pre-existing nature of the self. Both doctrines are inimical to Marxist theories of man, labor, and revolution.

Education is part of the moral order, asserts Manacorda, and it is thus related to religious concepts, the family, and the state. Marx wanted to change the nature of the family, abolish religion, and create a new and higher social ethic. That change demands a revolutionary, social education in place of the older family style of education, and it

³¹Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 10.

must be free from the class-oriented ideological influences of the (bourgeois) state and the church.

The instructional content of education, asserts Manacorda, must be oriented toward science: the history of science, the relations among the sciences, and the relations of science to philosophy. Philosophy, in turn, must concentrate on the relations of man and nature and must avoid arid metaphysics. Philosophy must provide dialectical and historical concepts of nature and the social world.³² Eventually, Manacorda refers to Engels' classification of the sciences (in Antidühring) as evidence of a plan for the study of the sciences; in any case, that classification supports the general principles of Marx on the importance of technological learning and the study of the sciences.

Manacorda returns to the theme of omnilaterality and finds it in the optimal coincidence of science and productive work, wherein human occupations are indefinite and varied. He can allow a reasonable division of labor, however, as long as it is conscious and voluntary.³³ Moreover, he suggests that the Marxist discussion of education is not necessarily exhausted on matters of productive necessity. Questions of human liberty and the relation of work to culture are also mentioned in Marx's writings, and have implications for education. For Marx, the true realm of freedom lies where the development of human abilities becomes an end in itself, beyond the sphere of material production. In

³²Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 10. Manacorda does not seem to consider dialectical theories as metaphysical in any important sense.

³³Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 11.

that realm beyond economic realities, Manacorda leaves room for a "disinterested" human culture, nevertheless resting on the philosophical bases previously discussed.³⁴

In response to Manacorda's article, three articles appeared in subsequent issues of Riforma della scuola. The first, by Armando Plebe, is called "Esiste una pedagogia marxista?" ("Does a Marxist Pedagogy Exist?"), and it is found in the April 1965 issue of the journal. At the time of the article, Plebe was a professor of history of philosophy and history of ancient philosophy at the University of Palermo. He was the author of several books on ancient history, esthetics, and ancient and modern philosophers; and he had edited some of the works of ancient philosophers. As of 1965, he had published nothing on education. Detailed biographical data on Plebe is not provided in Riforma della scuola or the standard biographical sources.

Plebe raises two questions: whether Marxist pedagogy exists and, if so, whether it is a good thing. From the evidence of Manacorda's book, he concludes that Marxist pedagogy does in fact exist. He sees it as based on the nonbanal roots of an often banalized concept, that of alienation. The alienation which Plebe wishes to consider is not trivial alienation, the "alienation of home appliances," but the dilemma of contemporary man, ". . . embattled between the necessity of working in order to have an aim and the danger of losing the sense of his own life in the mechanicalness in which work thrusts him."³⁵

³⁴Manacorda, "L'uomo onnilaterale," p. 11.

Yet the matter is not entirely settled for Plebe. He refers to Marx's 1849 essay, "The Misery of Philosophy," in which Marx insists that misery demands action and not theorizing. Plebe considers that Marx would have taken a similar approach to education, declaring the uselessness of abstract pedagogy. ". . . (T)he pedagogy of misery serves rather to demonstrate the misery of pedagogy."³⁶

Plebe agrees with historian Karl Löwith, who said that Marx's major revolutionary innovation is not in overturning Hegel and putting him, so to speak, on his feet; rather, it is in suppressing the "philosophical" nature of the enterprise. Plebe adds that a similar judgment should be made on pedagogy. Modern educators should realize ". . . the impossibility of a theoretical doctrine of education, and the opportunity of replacing it with empirical directives for educational practice."³⁷ While Marxism certainly has theoretical aspects, what is living for Plebe is a certain attitude, that of saying ". . . pedagogy as a science of education no longer exists today, no longer makes sense."³⁸ Here Plebe paraphrases Marx: ". . . I would say, pedagogy understood as a science is constructed to conceal the absurdities that now lie at the base of relations between teachers and students."³⁹

³⁵ Armando Plebe, "Esiste una pedagogia marxista?" Riforma della scuola (April 1965):10.

³⁶ Plebe, "Esiste una pedagogia marxista?", p. 10.

³⁷ Plebe, "Esiste una pedagogia marxista?", p. 10.

³⁸ Plebe, "Esiste una pedagogia marxista?", p. 10.

³⁹ Plebe, "Esiste una pedagogia marxista?", p. 11.

Obviously, Marxist education understood as advocacy of positions on contemporary problems of schooling is quite a different thing from education as a pedagogical science. What interests Plebe are not theoretical questions and the foundations of education, but concrete suggestions for the resolution of problems that may have been debated a hundred years ago but are still not resolved. He refers to Engels' polemic about "isolated" studies in the debate against Dühring. For Plebe, intellectual isolation is one of the still crucial problems that emerges from Manacorda's study.

Plebe also mentions that Manacorda's sources, none of which is dated after 1923, emphasize the role of history as the final judge. Yet in 1922, James Joyce's Ulysses first appeared, and in it was the warning that history is a nightmare from which we must awaken. The ranks of those who no longer trust history have grown, and they threaten even the historical-materialist Marxists. Today, contends Plebe, a significant number of Marxists are ready to abandon "historiolatry" (Plebe's word).

Plebe concludes that the texts gathered by Manacorda are classical Marxist texts. We modern readers must regard them with respect and interest, but we must be aware of their remoteness. Such texts may be interpreted as significant in the present day, but the best way to begin is by accepting the "frankly Marxist" concept of the misery of pedagogy. On that basis, one may search the classics for solutions to particular problems of contemporary schooling.

The next response to Manacorda came from Gabriele Giannantoni, a professor of ancient philosophy at the University of Rome. His article appeared in Riforma della scuola in the May-June issue of 1965. Additional information on Giannantoni was not available.

Giannantoni attacks the common contention that Marx and Engels are authors whose thought is really limited to politics and economics and who have little to offer in extraneous fields such as esthetics or education. He states that ". . . if Marxism is able to justify itself as a determinate and comprehensive 'world view,' then it cannot avoid formulating its own esthetic and its own pedagogy."⁴⁰ The problem for Giannantoni is not whether a Marxist pedagogy exists, but to what extent it is stimulated by the writings of Marx and Engels, and how the modern Marxist must adjust and correct it in order to develop a scientific theory adaptable to practical situations.

Giannantoni finds Manacorda's book useful because, by his careful choice of texts, Manacorda draws the thoughtful reader's attention to issues related to education. Many of those issues are theoretical and philosophical matters necessary for the creation of a pedagogy: the relation of the individual to the environment, education's relation to morality, the relation of instruction to work, mass education versus individual needs, and others. What is especially important in Manacorda's book, in Giannantoni's view, is his emphasis on the Marxist philosophy of man and society. No pedagogy can be formulated without refer-

⁴⁰Gabriele Giannantoni, "La pedagogia del marxismo," Riforma della scuola (May-June 1965):13.

ence to that issue. Furthermore, Manacorda has pointed out the specific features that have come to be associated with Marxist education, such as compulsory attendance, the union of instruction with productive labor, and the entire polytechnical concept of education.

Giannantoni notes that some of the points in the selected texts have meaning for the educational situation today, while others are of historical interest only. Among the still meaningful material is Engels' charge that an "antidote" is needed for the kind of instruction that the bourgeois class allows to the proletariat; the instruction that the working class ought to have would satisfy its own productive needs.

The article by Giannantoni closes with a reflection on the situation created by the shortening of working hours and the resulting free time at the disposal of the working class. Marx envisioned free time as an opportunity for cultural and spiritual uplift, but Giannantoni sees the worker's free time as a new form of "slavery"--to second jobs, mass media and entertainment, advertising, and consumerism. The situation, he contends, is as suffocating and alienating as long, tiring hours in the factory would be. In fact, Giannantoni thinks that the granting of free time presupposes the alienation of the workers, and the only way to overcome that alienation is through a new unity of education and work, aiming at an education of the spirit that is distinct (in Marx) from polytechnical education. Giannantoni thus suggests an area that Marxist educators might explore further.

The third article in the group generated by Manacorda's book is by Giorgio Bini.⁴¹ Bini takes issue with Armando Plebe's question as to whether the existence of Marxist pedagogy is a good thing, and with Plebe's subsequent suggestion that too much philosophy might stand in the way of practical action in the schools. Bini asserts that a pedagogy of Marxist derivation is always a reality, arising from the Marxist political program and concept of the world; Lenin, after all, writes of the "educational" nature of both the party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Moreover, a Marxist pedagogy based on philosophy need not be lost in clouds of obfuscating ideology; Marx reminds us that ideas are material forces when the masses are in possession of them; and Engels tells us that economic factors are not the sole determinants of history, that even philosophers may have an active role in transforming the world. Bini reflects:

In this sense, pedagogy may be considered as a superstructural fact that can be utilized in the struggle for emancipation, and (may) even have a theoretical component, as long as it is not separated from observable practices and thus from the possibility of being an interactive force in social confrontations.⁴²

Therefore, Bini concludes, if it can provide a critique of actual facts and is linked to the practical struggle, a Marxist-inspired pedagogy is entirely justified. It is well that it exists.

⁴¹In general, the lives of Marxist educators are less well-documented than those of educators of other schools. Nothing about Bini was found in any of the standard biographical reference works, but the card catalog at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Rome revealed that after 1965, Bini published several books on education.

⁴²Giorgio Bini, "Esistenza e necessita di una pedagogia d'ispirazione marxista," Riforma della scuola (December 1965):9.

Bini turns to the omnilateral concept that Manacorda stresses in the introduction to his book. Like Manacorda, Bini believes that omnilaterality is of great importance in the liberation of the worker. He adds that it is also of great importance in developing a Marxist sense of ethics. The present class structure, according to the Marxists, denies the possible emergence of a universal type of man. Analytic philosophies that reduce ethics to a description of human group behavior have much to offer in that they reveal hypocrisy in the use of value-laden language. Catechisms, for example, may instruct the young to "love their neighbors," but in fact they learn to love only the neighbors who are identifiable as members of their own social group; they glory in the harm done to other clans and tribes. Marxists propose to liberate man from alienating labor and social situations through omnilateral education, thus creating a universal man who transcends tribal identity.

Such revelations create new respect for the classics of Marxism, Bini announces. The "scientific" emphasis of Marxism comes to be valued, especially because the judicious application of social science--psychology, sociology, anthropology--can help one to understand the roots of modern alienation. Yet Bini affirms his Marxist conviction that, basically, the alienation of man from man and from himself is due to the nature of labor in a capitalist society. The worker is simply an appendage to the machine and his vocational training suggests nothing more. Increasing technical complexity may require a more versatile type

of worker, but the real problem is whether workers' consciousness will develop to the point at which they are ready to change the basic relation of workers to managers. Only in that way can the worker liberate himself or herself from the "chains" of production.

Near the close of the article, Bini fires a salvo at Dewey and the Deweyans. While Dewey and his followers criticized capitalist society, Bini argues, they sought to transform it through education and not by the revolutionary means of abolishing the class system that sustains capitalism. "They did not understand . . . that what is decisive is the revolution and the abolition of classes."⁴³ The problems of society cannot be resolved within the school; democratic education that is not linked to the class struggle in society must fail, asserts Bini. Rather, the class struggle must be extended to the classrooms, and with that aim in mind, Marxist pedagogy and all contributions to its progress are amply justified.

Marxism and the Scientific Attitude

The debate in Riforma della Scuola signaled a growing interest in pedagogical issues among Marxist thinkers; and the first volume of Manacorda's historical work, published in 1964, set the stage for that debate. Nevertheless, there was a slightly earlier book on education by a Marxist, which, while not figuring into that 1965 debate, achieved a lasting popularity and may well be called a milestone in Italian Marxist pedagogy. Its author was Lucio Lombardo-Radice, and the book was L'edu-

⁴³Bini, "Esistenza e necessita", 10.

cazione della mente (The Education of the Mind), published in 1962 by Editori Riuniti of Rome.

Lucio Lombardo-Radice is the son of a famous father, the idealist philosopher Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice. Although the scanty biographical sources do not record his date of birth, he was probably born between 1915 and 1920, as he alludes to events in the early 1920's as having taken place in his childhood. (The elder Lombardo-Radice was married in 1910.) Lucio Lombardo-Radice is a mathematician and, as of 1980, a professor of complementary mathematics in the Department of Mathematics, Physics, and Natural Sciences of the University of Rome.⁴⁴ Despite his mathematical background, he has a lively interest in social and historical matters, and his published titles and personal activities reflect that interest over and above his professional expertise. He is the senior editor of Riforma della scuola and a member of the Central Committee of the Italian Communist party.⁴⁵

In 1960, Lombardo-Radice wrote an introduction to L. Laghezza's Italian translation of Makarenko's The Road to Life. Lombardo-Radice published a biographical study of Antonio Gramsci in 1961, and in 1962 L'educazione della mente appeared, his first really significant contribution to Italian pedagogy. A second edition followed in 1965, and there were later editions as well. A scrap of significance in the title is the use of the word mente, a biologist's and psychologist's word for

⁴⁴Otto J. Groeg, ed., Who's Who in Italy, 3d ed. (Milan: Who's Who in Italy S.r.l., 1980), p. 297.

⁴⁵Who's Who in Italy, p. 297.

"mind," rather than spirito, the word preferred by philosophers. By using the former word, Lombardo-Radice announces his "scientific" orientation.

Although the text of L'educazione della mente displays certain theoretical biases, it does not deal with material of great theoretical significance; it is a series of informal essays, full of anecdotes and advice for parents and teachers. Evidently, the formula was successful, as Lombardo-Radice's book has enjoyed a certain popularity.

The book is divided into five sections whose themes are suggested by their titles: "L'educazione della mente," repeating the title of the book itself; "Come vediamo il mondo" ("How We See the World"); "I ragazzi e la politica" ("Children and Politics"); "La prima scienza" ("The First Knowledge"); and "La ragione aperta" ("Open Reason"). While the tone of the chapters is often light and conversational, Lombardo-Radice obviously has serious purposes in addressing parents and teachers so directly. In the first (and main) section of the book, Lombardo-Radice argues for the early, deliberate training of the child's sense of reason, against the "animism and artificialism" of the public elementary school. He accuses the public school seems of inculcating superstition and infantilism. While there is room in the child's life for fantasy and imagination, he states, the child must be helped to keep fantasy separate from reality and thus to overcome unnecessary fears of the supernatural. Explaining realities to children in plain, simple language is of great benefit. In fact, Lombardo-Radice advocates that

all of a child's intellectual capacities be stimulated quite early, and this can be done to great advantage if parents are willing to make the effort: "The mother-teacher and the father-teacher are, really, the father and the mother who play with the little one; and through play they teach grammar, logic, sciences, and arithmetic."⁴⁶

Lombardo-Radice advocates not only early reasoning but also early literacy. He divides mankind into "persons with books" and "persons without books," and clearly encourages the latter. He wants parents to prepare their children for literacy by reading aloud to them and limiting their exposure to television, radio, and films. He admits that some media presentations have educational value, but he insists that the child needs a literate background in order to comprehend what is being presented. That is, the child needs a certain personal "level of culture," which is not the mere sum of experience but ". . . the mental organization of experience and knowledge."⁴⁷ Cultural frameworks, he contends, are important in organizing knowledge; thus he recommends the use of encyclopedias and maps in the home. Other possible educative activities for the home include playing guessing-games and letting the child experiment with writing materials and tape recorders.

⁴⁶Lucio Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1961;1977), p. 28. Although this sentence is innocuous enough, it certainly reveals Lombardo-Radice's opinion as to "what knowledge is of most worth."

⁴⁷Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 43.

On the matter of planned and systematic learning, Lombardo-Radice takes a strong stance. While facts and notions do not create culture, he argues, they are its necessary precedents. He takes issue with the "extreme activists" who trivialize culture, and here he echoes Gramsci to an extent: "Intellectual development, the acquisition of a serious and useful cultural heritage, requires a systematic effort: it is work."⁴⁸ Diligent study is good for students, he contends, and nothing worthwhile can be achieved without it.

Lombardo-Radice denies the common idea that people who succeed in school are drudges who fail in life. It is true, he says, that in our unjust capitalist society some incompetent people attain high positions because they are "daddy's boys" (they have patronage), but at the same time, a failure without connections is still a failure.

Parents may help the child to correct imbalances in its learning and use of talents, Lombardo-Radice suggests. Eventually, too, parents may help the adolescent to choose a career intelligently (and not too early or for social reasons, as often happens in capitalist societies). All of that is done through rational discussions and by knowing the young person well. Parents, he says, must also have "educated minds."⁴⁹

A chapter is devoted to arguing against the sexism of Italian culture. Girls are no less intelligent than boys, Lombardo-Radice contends, and most succeed if given a chance. Social history, however,

⁴⁸Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 79.

⁴⁹Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 79.

imposes a burden on women and girls, teaching them to "please others" and to remain in second place. This inferior condition of girls causes young males to behave like "cretins" around them, and thus the situation is negative for both sexes. Women should demand equal consideration, Lombardo-Radice concludes.

Lombardo-Radice ends the first section of L'educazione della mente with praise for the character of Leonardo Da Vinci. For Lombardo-Radice, he is the symbol of science in its infancy, observing and reflecting on everything, yet without elaborate equipment. We who are parents, advises Lombardo-Radice, must ". . . train our children in observation, analysis, and scientific reasoning, the first understanding of the great visions of modern science."⁵⁰ That scientific understanding must oppose the "magical spirit" of necrology and incantation present in the schools.⁵¹

The struggle against magic and superstition is very much alive in Italy, he charges, where even the teachings of the Catholic church have become paganized. The real enemy of reason, however, is not religion but superstition:

We want to educate rational and efficient persons, who know well that in the heaven and earth there exist more problems than any of their philosophies might know, but who otherwise know well that man knows how to resolve such problems, one by one, with science, work, and the force of brotherly concord.⁵²

⁵⁰Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 93.

⁵¹Obviously, the use of such terms as "necrology and incantation" (closely paraphrased) is hyperbolic and a rather extreme example of Marxist anti-Catholic rhetoric.

The second part of L'educazione della mente is concerned with worldviews: "Come vediamo il mondo," "How We See the World." At the outset, Lombardo-Radice affirms that "It is necessary for our children to know, from the time that reason dawns in them, how we, their parents, see the world."⁵³ Against the tendency of children to simplify experience and dogmatize about it, Lombardo-Radice wants progressive parents to provide an honest, historicist view of the world.⁵⁴ We need not fear that our lessons in reality will produce skepticism; the study of history can provide a new faith in humanity.

On the subject of religion, Lombardo-Radice charges that the religion taught in schools is not true Christianity but idolatrous foolishness based on fables. The enlightened (nonbeliever) parent should not allow a child to be coerced into religious participation and should counter the effect of religious fables by stressing science and history at home. Such a parent should explain why he or she has chosen to practice no religion. Morality, Lombardo-Radice adds, does not need a basis in religion: "Independence does not mean disrespect, nor negation, of certain great ideas that incubate in positive religions. . . ." ⁵⁵

⁵² Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 93.

⁵³ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 97.

⁵⁴ Although Lombardo-Radice has not mentioned history before, a historicist position is an important feature of Marxism.

⁵⁵ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 107.

Nevertheless, Lombardo-Radice continues, parents who expose children to their own beliefs must avoid imposing them on the children. It is proper for children to learn about religion, for example, but they need not participate in rites in which they have no faith. Among the positive features of the public schools is exposure to persons of various traditions and the resulting opportunities to consider many ideas. Having made this statement of support for pluralism, Lombardo-Radice says: ". . . I am happy if that confession of mine were 'illuminating' for someone, and I am even happier if my materialist and Marxist words put some comrade of mine on his guard about the danger of a 'materialist and Marxist dogmatism' in education. . . ."56 What is most important, Lombardo-Radice stresses, is that children learn to think rather than to believe. Thus they will become mentally open to dialogue.

Continuing on the theme of religion, Lombardo-Radice laments the social pressure to be religious that exists in spite of judicial freedom of religion in Italy. The schools, he says, need more faith in the individual; and freedom of individual belief is worth defending, and would be so even in a Marxist society! Public schools should not be "confessional," but should embody common beliefs in justice, democracy, and equality.

It is the duty of parents to live their faith, rather than to merely preach it, Lombardo-Radice warns. They must avoid imposing fanaticism or intolerance upon their children: "Not to impose our

⁵⁶ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 111.

faith, but to propose it; to be more worried about maturity of choice, and to fear nothing so much as premature, ruinous closures of the mind."⁵⁷

Returning to an earlier theme, Lombardo-Radice insists that ". . . parents must explain to their children how they (the parents) see the world, from the time the children are very small, and without fear of 'upsetting' them."⁵⁸ If opinions are exposed rather than imposed, he suggests, the young will develop their own reasons for what they believe.

Lombardo-Radice digresses somewhat to discuss perplexing and difficult issues: death, film censorship, sex education, and sexual morality. His recipe for achieving equity between the sexes is one of the stronger Marxist-inspired statements in the book:

The boy and girl who are oriented toward a concept of life and the world based on a collective and not individual morality, on the principles of equality, justice, and the equal worth of every human being, and not on postulates of privilege, race, or egoism of class or nation, are at the same time oriented toward a sane, complete concept, worthy of sexual life and of the relations of love between man and woman.⁵⁹

Lombardo-Radice continues on the theme of sexual morality, suggesting that Western views of either extreme in behavior (abstinence or debauchery) are inadequate. Economic and legal systems are needed that permit early marriage and convenient divorce, as in the U.S.S.R.

⁵⁷ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 120.

⁵⁸ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 122.

⁵⁹ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 136.

Only through such a system can the sexual instinct be integrated into the whole life of the person.

In the third part of L'educazione della mente, Lombardo-Radice turns to the subject of "Youth and Politics." He divides the human race again (although he will eventually deplore those divisions), separating those who think in terms of general principles from those who think only of their own interests. Politics is a matter of general principles, Lombardo-Radice affirms, and political awareness grows out of family table talk. In the home, parents should avoid discussing local issues and concentrate on global matters such as antifascism and the liberation of colonial peoples.⁶⁰

On the subject of political understanding, Lombardo-Radice points out that children's stories take place in fantasy kingdoms, never in republics; children have little native understanding of modern government and economics. The subtleties of parliaments, social classes, and political parties elude them. He notes that there are child prodigies in music, mathematics, and fine arts, but never in political science. That is because a child's judgment is quite individual; the understanding of social situations requires considerable experience. Children ought not to be forced to parrot adults' political opinions or to make premature political identifications. Parents, rather, may prepare their

⁶⁰ Lombardo-Radice reports that, as a small child in 1924, he overheard his parents discussing the Matteotti political murder. Today, he suggests, children are or ought to be interested in such matters as the martyrdom of Patrice Lumumba or events in China. See L'educazione della mente, p. 152.

children for political thinking by discussing global social ideas with their children. Gradually, the state and its functions may be explained to them.

Expanding on the virtues of tolerance, Lombardo-Radice states that parents cannot make all choices for their children. They must be allowed to be themselves. The process of social growth should be guided by a principle drawn from religion: Love your neighbor as yourself. In that way, Lombardo-Radice suggests, children may be spared from the evils of mankind--fascism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, ethnocentrism, and the maintenance of aristocracies and hierarchies, all of which are transgressions against that commandment.⁶¹ Antifascism, Lombardo-Radice insists, is an essential part of the moral education of children. History and geography lessons must be imbued with remembrances of the evils of Fascism, and the young must appreciate the Italian constitution as an antifascist document. The worst attitudes to impart to children are indifference and self-centeredness--the "mind your own business" syndrome. Rather, the young must have ". . . the knowledge that individual destiny is also always collective destiny and vice versa. . . ."⁶² Parents and teachers must set good examples for the young, teaching them to value liberty, democracy, justice, and peace.

⁶¹ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, pp. 160-162. Although Lombardo-Radice calls it the "first commandment," in the Gospels it is the second great commandment.

⁶² Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 163.

The ideal of political education is to produce young people who are neither apathetic nor fanatical, Lombardo-Radice says. Of the two, however, fanaticism is preferable to apathy, as passion is preferable to no feeling at all. The adolescent who has never experienced generous impulses is poor and dull. The young should not be taught to stay away from politics as though it were a dirty business. Certainly, politics can be corrupted, but the political process is not inherently corrupt. Through political activity, the individual can learn to be aware of civic duties and the public good. The parent whose child goes to political meetings should not worry, as that is a part of developing political maturity. The only real danger is that the young person will become closed in a narrow political sect. Against that kind of sectarianism, Lombardo-Radice recommends the broad exposure that young people have in the public schools.

The fourth section of L'educazione della mente is called "La prima scienza," "First Knowledge" or "First Science," a deliberate play on the ambiguity of the word scienza. Lombardo-Radice deploras contemporary (early 1960's) science instruction in the Italian schools primarily because it is almost entirely nature study and is hence unsuited to the needs of urban children who are interested in their man-made environment of industry and machinery. Moreover, the science taught in the middle schools presents natural adaptation as purposeful. This error, he contends, is the product of a hidden Catholic agenda for teaching children to contemplate the creation with awe and wonder. For Lombardo-

Radice, there is poetry in science, but it speaks of reason rather than of mystery. Scientific instruction must place the child firmly on earth in both time and space. That observation leads to another critique of Deweyan activism, which, according to Lombardo-Radice, fails to give the child an appropriate sense of time (conceived as history).⁶³

Lombardo-Radice points out that the Italian attitude toward science instruction changed greatly from 1923 to 1963. In the age of the Gentile Reform, science was not admitted to be an authentic form of knowledge; hence it was relegated to an inferior position in the schools. By 1963, science had come to be accepted as a genuine form of knowledge having humane value. For that development, Lombardo-Radice gives much credit to Antonio Banfi and his disciples, Ludovico Geymonat, Enzo Paci, and Remo Cantoni.⁶⁴ A factor that now favors science instruction in the schools is its increasing currency in society at large: individuals use scientific terminology in their speech, and they train for scientific/technical careers. Social change has weakened the monopoly of traditional, rhetorical education. Lombardo-Radice sees a new standard of scientific education emerging. At the same time, he finds opposition to it among conservative Catholics. According to Lombardo-Radice, they want dogmatic, ritualistic, and bigoted schools.

⁶³ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 182.

⁶⁴ The pedagogy of Banfi is discussed in Chapter V of this study.

One fault that Lombardo-Radice finds with scientific education is its episodic, unsystematic character. Human beings, he says, must organize experience as it occurs, and for that purpose they require a worldview; the appropriate worldview for children is scientific. The school has a duty to introduce scientific concepts from the outset. As science instruction builds up a worldview over time, it has the added virtue of having a historical character. Children should be introduced to the great scientific concepts, Lombardo-Radice insists, and that instruction can be active and not bookish. He criticizes the narrowness and the oversimplified nature study of the middle school science curriculum, and concludes that bold new ideas must be assimilated into science teaching.

Lombardo-Radice takes a look at the historical dimension of science teaching and finds that what were complex, difficult ideas a few decades ago are commonplaces of the present. But the process of change continues, and teachers now need more training in up-to-date mathematics and science; moreover, new methods and curricula must be developed to teach these new concepts. Inevitably, he reflects, there will be opposition as new ideas are introduced, but children who do not have rigid mindsets will learn them. Above all, scientific ideas must not be "aristocratized," taught only to a select few. To advance properly, science needs the support of the masses.

The final section of L'educazione della mente is "La ragione aperta," "Open Reason," meaning something close to open-mindedness. It

elaborates on one of the major themes of the book. Lombardo-Radice says that he has advocated giving children a modern education, and he has attempted to define "modern," not directly, but through illustrative instances. He admits that the discourse could continue, covering more fields or defining the concept more systematically, but he would rather turn to a different problem.

The question that Lombardo-Radice raises is this: How will we succeed in modernizing the young? He answers that it must be done by keeping their minds open and by teaching science as a revolutionary process that both renews and destroys in a process of confrontation.⁶⁵ Lombardo-Radice alludes to an old saw to the effect that our education is what we remember after we have forgotten everything else. What we remember will depend to a large extent on what was emphasized in our education, and how it was presented. Children must be taught the high points of culture: their learning cannot be flattened out into a series of lines and rules. Lombardo-Radice attacks the "global" (whole-word) method of reading instruction as a technique that ignores important principles of literacy and thus does not truly educate the mind. He contrasts its feeble educative potency to a story by Rudyard Kipling about the origins of literacy. Similarly, certain mathematical ideas are advocated for their great educative value.

⁶⁵ The Marxist-dialectical inspiration of the statement is apparent.

Lombardo-Radice insists that "open reason" is a democratic ideal. The learner's mind must not be allowed to crystallize; the nature of work is changing and now requires intelligence and flexibility. With new technologies liberating man from servile work, it is less important for the worker to possess specific skills than to have the capacity to learn new skills. Furthermore, revolutions are creating new classes, new nations, and a new era in history, as old dogmas and hierarchies break down despite the protests of the privileged classes. Lombardo-Radice quotes liberally from Bertolt Brecht's play The Life of Galileo to illustrate the possibilities of a new rapport between science and the common people. He concludes with Brecht that all men of reason belong to one group no matter what their class origins.

Reason is an irresistible force, Lombardo-Radice believes, but only when it is the vehicle of those who are disinterested. Defenders of privilege, hierarchies, and class egoism are impermeable to reason. The basis of a solid personal morality and dynamic open reason is education for disinterest.⁶⁶

It is impossible to retain old dogmas and discover new facts, Lombardo-Radice asserts. "Interest in conservation" is a major obstacle to new discovery, while discovery itself requires great courage; overcoming a mental obstacle takes more audacity than crossing a new continent.

⁶⁶ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 223.

Lombardo-Radice also suggests that there is a class dimension to discovery and progress. There are those, he says, who have everything to gain from progress, and those who have everything to lose; and they are roughly equivalent to those who work and those who live on the work of others. Again Lombardo-Radice divides humanity: one person likes to work, another works to achieve position; one talks about serious things, and another only chatters. It is not only the mind but also the character that is formed through sacrifice and intellectual courage.

There are those who object to open reason, saying that children need absolute principles to avoid becoming skeptics and opportunists. Lombardo-Radice replies that absolute principles are not prerequisites of morality. Many have fought for noble causes without believing in divine beings and absolutes. Moreover, the danger in absolutism is that if one belief falls, the entire structure is threatened. Lombardo-Radice suggests that there can be a dynamic, historicist faith that opposes the dogmatic mentality:

The man of faith, in the modern sense, is the man who has profound and passionate convictions, however derived from open reasoning and liberal judgment, and not from a tradition or a revelation from above. He is the man who knows well that the convictions or ideals for which he is willing to sacrifice even his individual life have a historic value as transient and not eternal, and will be overcome and absorbed by other convictions, by other ideals responding to new historical necessities.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 228. Lombardo-Radice's Marxist historicism as expressed here is clearly far from the historicism of Croce.

So Lombardo-Radice describes the champion of faith for what he perceives to be a new era, a person whose faith is in human reason. The rationality to which the philosopher alludes is not any form of human reason whatsoever, but a rationality constrained by certain social beliefs or premises which he defines as "modern." Throughout the book, he has insinuated that a modern outlook is one in which great value is placed on science, and that no modern thinker may admit the legitimacy of the capitalist class structure or the validity of conservative religions, those bugbears of all Marxist thinkers. It appears that only those with a scientific-materialist-historicist-proletarian worldview may be fully rational and modern, but Lombardo-Radice suggests this with less stridency than other Marxist writers.

According to Lombardo-Radice, a person with a modern worldview has in effect found a new faith, a set of convictions worthy of sacrifices similar to those made for charismatic religion, only with a difference: the rational faith promises no eternal paradise. Rather, this new believer is aware of the transiency of present conditions, and believes that his or her actions have value only as part of a historical process (understood dialectically).⁶⁸ The philosopher does not specify which actions or convictions will be changed by the dialectical process (insofar as the rhetoric of "new historical necessities" is used by Marxist thinkers, it might also be used against them). Nevertheless, Lombardo-Radice insists that open reason as he understands it is a

⁶⁸ Here Lombardo-Radice's vision of history is quite Hegelian.

dynamic faith that develops and transforms the life and mind of man. He closes the book with these words:

We have already said it, and we repeat it yet again: we are convinced that such faith and such reason can and must become characteristic of all mankind. We fight bitterly against a lack of faith in humanity, in whatever form, and the subdivision of the human race into learned and ignorant, into "philosophers and simpletons," into aristocracies and masses. We believe with passion and with shining reason in the possibility of giving everyone a positive intellectual and moral education from earliest childhood, founded on earthly commitment and an intelligent, disinterested, creative participation in the effort toward human progress in a determinate historical epoch. We believe that one ought to educate the child into an open, active, happy adult who discovers and builds with disinterested joy; a person who knows well that the houses he has built are ephemeral, but who is glad that they allow this generation to live more securely than the preceding one; a person who is perfectly aware of the brief life of his ideas and works, but is joyously sure of their value and indispensability for those who will come after and go beyond.⁶⁹

Here more details of the new rational faith are provided. It is a faith that can become "characteristic" of humanity, although Lombardo-Radice does not detail the mechanism by which this might occur; inevitably, education will play a major role. He returns to the theme of faith in humanity (rather than in supernatural agencies, for example), and in humanity as a whole rather than in any distinct group or class. The great vehicle of this faith must be education provided for everyone, based on the principles of earthly commitment and creative effort toward human (social) progress. He does not mention that such a general education of mankind is impossible in the world as we know it, and that it is really a goal for education in a socialist world utopia; but his statement is one of belief (with "passion" and "shining reason"), and there-

⁶⁹ Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente, p. 229.

fore it is strongly normative. Evidently, Lombardo-Radice simply believes that all humanity may be so educated, but he leaves the when and how to the workings of history and the dialectical process. Finally, he closes with the extended metaphor of the active, happy adult who is a builder of houses. Unlike the Biblical parable of the builder upon the rock and the builder upon the sand, Lombardo-Radice tells of the builder who is happy to build upon the sand of temporality, manifestly aware of the utility of building for future generations; it is a plea reminiscent of Communist exhortations to sacrifice and build for the future.

Afterword: Education in Upheaval

Neither the theoretical debate over Manacorda's interpretation of the history of Marxist education nor Lucio Lombardo-Radice's rather restrained advice to parents and teachers really heralds the upheavals in Italian education that occurred between 1967 and 1969. Marxists were involved in that turmoil, but perhaps in ways that neither Manacorda nor Lombardo-Radice foresaw. Politically motivated students at the university and secondary level went on strike, rioted, and occupied classrooms. Herbert Marcuse visited Italy and was lionized by leftist student intellectuals; leaders of terrorist groups were popular heroes. The Italian government, in an effort to quell the disturbances by appeasement, considered several reform measures for the state universities and secondary schools. Debates over those reforms filled the pages of pedagogical journals representing all opinions.

When calm returned, some changes had transpired, but the structure of Italian schooling remained essentially the same. What had really changed was the establishment of a strong Marxist presence in educational affairs. The existence of Marxist pedagogy, a matter that the scholars of 1963-1965 were trying to establish, was a fact that no one could doubt five or ten years later. Numbers, too, may be some indication: despite continued political control of the schools by Christian Democrat and center-left governments, by the early 1980's the largest political force among teachers in Italian state schools was the Marxist-sponsored teachers' union.

CHAPTER VIII
EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC FAITH

There was no major institution in Italian public life that went unmarked through the trying period of the 1920's and 1930's and the anguish of World War II. Of all Italian institutions, however, the one that emerged with minimal scars was the Roman Catholic church. While the church's critics have accused it of complicity with the Fascists, principally because of the signing of the Lateran Agreements of 1929, those agreements assured it of a place in Mussolini's Italy and served to ward off some of the political scrutiny that plagued other organizations. The signing of the Lateran Agreements by no means committed the church to Fascism or to a philosophy of actual idealism; rather, it allowed the traditions of the church to be respected and to survive the totalitarianism of the Fascist era. At the end of World War II, the church was both alive and ready to take on increased importance in Italian society.

The Church in the Fascist Era

When Pope Pius IX rejected the guarantees of the Italian state in 1871 and declared himself a "prisoner of the Vatican," a long period of mutual nonrecognition and bitterness ensued. In 1926, Pope Pius XI, seeking to establish relations between the church and the Italian state,

communicated to Mussolini's government through an intermediary that he was willing to negotiate toward an understanding. The Fascists, already under fire from the left, considered it opportune to placate the church by healing the old rift, thus increasing the likelihood of obtaining support from at least some elements in the church. There were obstacles to the agreement, and certain conditions had to be met on both sides; but lengthy negotiations led to the signing of the Lateran Agreements in February 1929. Essentially, the agreements provided for the creation of the Vatican State, papal recognition of the kingdom of Italy, and full liberty of the church in spiritual (but not political) matters.

Although Pius XI has been criticized for conciliatory behavior toward the Fascists, it is recorded that during the Fascist period he spoke out with "courageous Christian frankness" on such issues as state education, racism, and exaggerated nationalism.¹ The Vatican newspaper, the Osservatore Romano, often spoke out against Fascist misdeeds in the 1930's; but the paper could not be distributed to ordinary Italians. Historians note that some church leaders of the period showed a spirit of servility to Fascism and adulation for Mussolini. The worst that can be said is that the church's position regarding Fascism was unclear; but in any case, it would be gross exaggeration to say that the Lateran Agreements created a Fascist Catholic church.

¹H. Hearder and D. P. Waley, A Short History of Italy, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 213. Pius XI (Ambrogio Ratti) was elected to the papacy on February 6, 1922; he died in February 1939.

Philosophically and ideologically, the Catholic church had definite roots of its own. Obviously, the church was nineteen centuries older than the Fascist state and had a rich tradition on which to draw. In the 1920's it was undergoing an important philosophical renewal through the neoscholastic movement.²

Neothomism provided a certain metaphysical basis for Catholic philosophers in twentieth-century Italy, and its leading spokesman, Father Agostino Gemelli, was an educator who had expressed his particular views on education. Yet for all its significance, Neothomism was not the sole influence upon the development of Catholic educational thought. Catholic philosophers of education from the early 1900's onward found valuable sources among the European Christian philosophies that were considered part of the "Christian spiritualist" tradition. Christian spiritualism itself was not so much a philosophical system as an approach to philosophy, but it yielded much of value. Seeking to affirm a new and vital Catholic position on education, some Italian scholars searched the spiritualist tradition and found personalism, a doctrine which they imported from France and elaborated upon.

²The use of "neoscholasticism" and "Neothomism" as generally interchangeable terms is owed to the historian De Wulf, who studied the medieval scholastics (including Aquinas) and concluded that they all professed essentially the same perennial philosophy. That philosophy, purged of some embarrassing archaic elements, became the neoscholasticism or Neothomism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although De Wulf's views were later challenged by Gilson, Maritain, and others, the common use of the two terms continued. See the New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., s.v. "Neoscholasticism and Neothomism," by J. A. Weisheipl. Further discussion of neoscholasticism in Italy is provided in Chapter II of this study.

Personalism was not identical to Neothomism, but it was not intended as a challenge to Neothomism; rather, the Italian personalists who developed their philosophies in the 1920's and thereafter tended to work closely with Father Gemelli and various neoscholastic organizations, surely assuming that the Christian philosophy of personhood which they were developing extended and complemented the teachings of the neoscholastics.³ Jacques Maritain, who combined personalist and Neothomist traditions in his work, undoubtedly strengthened the Italians' opinion that there is no contradiction between personalism and Neothomism, even though they draw inspiration from different sources.

Meaning and Origins of Personalism

The Encyclopedia of Philosophy suggests several features that are peculiar to personalism (which the editors also call "personal idealism.") Those features are summarized as follows:

It (personalism) is idealistic: all reality is personal. It is pluralistic: reality is a society of persons. It is theistic: God is the ultimate person and, as such, is the ground of all being and the creator of finite persons.⁴

Apparently, the term "personalism" was first used by the French philosopher Charles Renouvier (1815-1903) in a book published in 1903, Le Personnalisme. That early version of personalism was a philosophy of

³ Father Carlo Nanni, a professor of pedagogy at the Pontifical Salesian University of Rome, explained in an interview on April 1, 1982, that Christian spiritualist philosophers have tended to be Neothomists on metaphysical questions but personalists on matters of direct human impact such as ethics and education.

⁴ Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967 ed., s.v. "Personalism," by John H. Lavelly.

nineteenth century inspiration that harmonized with the vitalism of Bergson and proposed ". . . the concept of the will as the expression of personal being."⁵

Contemporary Italian personalism, however, is more closely related to the principles announced by Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950), the French philosopher who published the journal Esprit (Spirit) from 1932 to 1941, and again from 1945 to 1950. Mounier's personalism, although related in some ways to existentialism and Marxism, is a strongly Christian philosophy that stresses the duty of the individual to seek communication among others while recognizing their uniqueness; its aim is universal understanding. The person as conceived in Mounier's philosophy is different from the political individual of the laic state theorists. While that individual is simply an abstract legal entity, the person in the Christian sense is also a spiritual being. From that belief, Mounier derives certain human values and rights that lead to a vision of human society as a community of "free men" who are neither individualists nor collectivists. Neither Renouvier nor Mounier provides a well-articulated philosophy of education, but there is much in their writings that has led others to pursue personalist education.

Scholars in several European countries--notably France, Spain, Poland, and Italy--have created national and individual versions of personalism. In the case of Italy, some pedagogical statements by

⁵ Sira Serenella Macchietti, Pedagogia del personalismo italiano (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1982), p. 13. Evidently, Macchietti is quoting an earlier source.

personalist philosophers were available as early as 1931. Before World War II, however, the Catholic scholars in Italy had to be circumspect in publishing what might be taken as criticism of the reigning Gentilian idealism. They tended to publish studies on particular historical themes or specific aspects of teaching, and their criticisms of actual idealism were likely to be veiled or implicit. Still, it is important to realize that personalist philosophers worked in Italy through the 1920's and 1930's toward the development of that pedagogy which they strongly endorsed after World War II.

In the postwar era, personalism attained a new position in Italian culture as one of the alternative philosophies of education vying to succeed the idealism that post-Fascist governments were discouraging in the universities, teachers' colleges, and schools. Several developments furthered the course of personalism in postwar Italy. Jacques Maritain, whose philosophical work combines the traditions of Thomism with personalism, served as French ambassador to the Holy See from 1945 to 1948. His presence in Rome was an encouragement to Catholic philosophers in Italy. Moreover, in the late 1940's the Catholic church was emerging as a political force in Italy; the Christian Democrats, supported by the church, won a majority in the parliamentary election of April 18, 1948. Political strength assured the church that its voice would be heard in parliamentary debates and at cabinet meetings and gave Catholic educators new opportunities to influence the course of events in state schools. A new freedom of action in that era led Catholic educators and

philosophers to see their individual differences of opinion as harmful to a greater cause, and they began to seek mutually agreeable formulations of Christian pedagogy. In that interest, a group of Catholic university professors in the early 1950's formed a group called Scholé and founded a Catholic center for pedagogical studies.⁶

The Scholé group held a conference on Christian pedagogy from September 9 to September 11, 1954. In retrospect, that date is considered the true birthdate of Italian personalist pedagogy as a discrete, identifiable movement.⁷ Several basic principles of Christian pedagogy were proposed at that meeting; what emerged was the outline of a program of epistemological study and educational activity. One of the key participants, M. Agosti, affirmed that the aim of Christian education is "integrality," meaning the whole, harmonious development of the individual, taking into account the physical, expressive, rational, economic, moral, and religious dimensions of humanity. Integrality, he suggested, leads to a maturity in ethical character, religious belief, and sense of vocation.⁸

⁶ "Scholé" is derived from the Greek word for "school" or "place of discussion." In the same period, a group of young Catholic teachers formed an organization after a meeting in the town of Pietralba; that organization also furthered the cause of Christian pedagogy. See Macchietti, Pedagogia del personalismo italiano, p. 19.

⁷ Macchietti, Pedagogia del personalismo italiano, p. 19.

⁸ Macchietti, Pedagogia del personalismo italiano, p. 27. The term "Christian" in these statements is understood as synonymous with "Catholic," as there were no non-Catholic Christians in the Scholé group.

Agosti elaborated on certain metaphysical points. The cornerstones of the Christian concept of the person, he said, are ". . . substantiality, individuality, rationality, and supernatural-ity."⁹ The purpose of pedagogy as theoretical inquiry is to elaborate upon the concept of education in light of the concept of person. The idea of the person as individual substance (cf. Aristotle) offers a counter to idealist and materialist reductionisms. Individuality allows the person to have originality and opens the possibility of an I-thou dialogue with another--specifically, with God. Rationality permits the person to discover values and to glimpse pure ideas out of the fragmented jumble of reality. Finally, supernaturality is the fundamental truth which guides personalist pedagogy, an affirmation that the human being is a creature of God. Agosti further delineated the metaphysical bases of Christian pedagogy: Man is aware of himself and his vocation, and also of his time; he is his own master; he is capable of self-discipline and self-instruction, and he is capable of engaging his talents in a field of action; he is capable of finding union with God through meditation, prayer, and introspection.¹⁰ Agosti concluded that the personalist educator has the duty of promoting the perfectibility of the person through education, and this duty is distinct from the task of civilizing people.

⁹Macchietti, Pedagogia del personalismo italiano, p. 27.

¹⁰Macchietti, Pedagogia del Personalismo Italiano, p. 28. Here the grammar of gender inflection in the Italian language creates a masculine bias that is probably not intended.

The ascent to perfection, if attempted, requires action on a practical level. The course of that action was suggested at the 1954 conference by Aldo Agazzi. Education, he said, requires theory for specific historical and social situations, not presented abstractly. Like the pedagogies that address the contemporary situation in terms of technology, work, and society in the empirical sense, Christian pedagogy is called upon to express itself as a theory oriented to the practical. In the actual world, the activity of educators has individual, historical, and existential determinants. Unlike other pedagogies, Christian pedagogy recognizes the essence behind empirical multiplicity and its differentiations. It proposes an absolute sense of spirituality and values and gives those absolutes a concreteness in the person.

The pedagogy of which Agazzi spoke is continually developing, aimed at increased understanding of existence through contact with human knowledge, ideologies, theologies, and worldviews. Its duty is to interpret human existence through study of what is historically determined, and to suggest modes of action in that realm. Christian pedagogy thus demands an interpretive understanding of human history, culture, philosophy, society, and education. Moreover, it provides a clear understanding of what Christian education is, and that is a vision that the secular sciences cannot offer.

The Christian character of education may be understood in various ways. Examples are education as vocation, in which the teacher is a minister of God; or education that is inspired and elevated by Christian

sensibilities. Agazzi recommended a ". . . general education of man according to the Christian concept of man, of the world, of culture, of civilization, and of existence."¹¹ Finally, he suggested that through Christian pedagogy, education can reawaken human beings' consciousness of their own free, creative, and unique work in the construction of self and history; and their reawakening may occur in spite of human frailty--a frailty that is overcome by will and grace.

There were other elaborations on the nature of Catholic pedagogy at the 1954 Scholé conference, but it is unnecessary to summarize them here. The existence of the organization and its subsequent activities did much to strengthen Christian personalism as a pedagogical movement in the 1950's and 1960's. No upheavals occurred in the movement, but rather there was a gradual shift away from purely metaphysical speculation and toward a concern with ethical, social, and practical issues. Eventually, some personalists attempted to find points of contact with scientists and scientifically-oriented educators. The evolution of personalism from a speculative, theological philosophy of education to a school of educators involved in practical affairs may be illustrated by examining two important figures within the movement: Luigi Stefanini and Aldo Agazzi.

¹¹ Quoted in Macchietti, Pedagogia del personalismo italiano, p. 30.

Stefanini, Founder of Italian Personalism

"Being is personal, and all that which is not personal in being belongs to the productivity of the person, as a means of personal expression and of communication between persons."¹² Those words are the central dictum of Luigi Stefanini, and they have been quoted in several texts. Although Stefanini was not the oldest of the personalists, he is generally given more credit than his peers for building the movement. More persuasive than flamboyant, he was a respected philosopher, a beloved teacher, and a man of profound faith.

Luigi Stefanini was born in the northern Italian city of Treviso in 1891. He studied at the University of Padua, where he received degrees in philosophy and literature; his thesis in philosophy was on the French vitalist Blondel. After military service in World War I, Stefanini turned to a scholarly life. He taught in senior high schools in Padua and Mantua, and was awarded a university instructor's license in 1925. Shortly thereafter, he was selected for a chair in theoretical philosophy at the University of Messina in southern Italy.

In 1937, Stefanini returned to Padua to teach at the university, first in pedagogy and later in the history of philosophy. His interests were always broad; as a historian of philosophy, he conducted research in several areas and taught occasional courses in pedagogy and esthetics.

¹² Luigi Stefanini, Il personalismo sociale (Rome: Studium, 1952), p. 11.

After the Second World War, Stefanini's interests in pedagogy and the reconstruction of Italian schools led him to accept responsible positions in the state Council for Public Instruction, the National Consultancy on Teaching, and the National Center for Secondary School Instruction. In the years immediately following the war, Stefanini was also a leading member of the Italian Philosophical Society, one who contributed much to its reconstruction and encouraged its members to discuss pedagogical issues. In addition, he participated in the efforts of the Center for Christian Philosophical Studies in Gallarate, an important center of Neothomistic thought.

Stefanini always urged Catholic thinkers to look beyond their immediate situations and to work with "adversaries" whenever possible in facing the major problems of contemporary life.¹³ His interest in dialogue with non-Catholic thinkers may have arisen from his difficulties as a Catholic professor in state universities during the Fascist era, when he found himself in a position between the laic idealist philosophers and the traditionalist church. In the course of his academic career, Stefanini developed contacts and personal friendships among philosophers of various schools, from Blondel and Gabriel Marcel to Giovanni Gentile. While his thought was fundamentally consistent with that of Plato and St. Augustine, his mature inspiration was derived from nineteenth- and twentieth-century personalism, and he is given

¹³ Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979), p. 881.

credit for establishing a particularly Italian school of personalism.¹⁴

Stefanini published numerous philosophical works in his lifetime, but his more significant efforts in philosophy of education include: La pedagogia dell'idealismo giudicata da un cattolico (The Pedagogy of Idealism Evaluated by a Catholic), published in 1926; Il rapporto educativo. Proemio alla scienza dell'educazione (The Educative Link: Preface to the Science of Education), 1932; Mens cordis: giudizio sull'attivismo moderno (The Heart's Reason: An Evaluation of Modern Active Education), 1933; Il momento dell'educazione. Giudizio sull'esistenzialismo (The Moment of Education: An Evaluation of Existentialism), 1938; Educazione estetica ed artistica (Esthetic and Artistic Education), 1954; and Personalismo educativo (Personalism in Education), 1955. Implications for education may also be derived from Stefanini's general philosophy, but Stefanini was aware of those implications and elaborated upon them in his pedagogical writings.

The Personalist Perspective

In 1950, Luigi Stefanini outlined his philosophy for a pamphlet in a series then being prepared by Editrice Liviana of Padua. The pamphlet, La mia prospettiva filosofica (My Philosophical Perspective), begins abruptly with Stefanini's dictum on the personal nature of being, whose truth the philosopher proposes to demonstrate. He states that the point of departure for such a demonstration is found in the experience

¹⁴ Unsigned review of new edition, Personalismo sociale, by Luigi Stefanini, in Italian Books and Periodicals, July/September 1979, pp. 360-361.

that the subject has of itself: "The I is the primordial and central fact of experience."¹⁵ The central point of experience, he argues, is not somewhere before the individual, but rather in the person's head. Both subject and predicate belong to a personal act that links them.¹⁶ In spite of the Copernican view of the universe, there remains a Ptolemaic element which is the individual participant and observer at the center of all experience: "There is no cosmic, social, or metaphysical participation that does not have to be mediated by psychological participation."¹⁷

In experience, the "I" manifests itself as a unity and an identity. It projects that unity/identity in space and time, yet all the multiplicities of space and time do not manage to shatter the experiencing I at the center. The nature of that I is psychospiritual, and it asserts its primacy over the empirical and corporeal nature of reality. If the primacy of mind over the empirical is lost, Stefanini states, it cannot be recovered: "No metaphysic can be constructed if its first chapter is not psychological."¹⁸

¹⁵ Luigi Stefanini, La mia prospettiva filosofica (Padua: Editrice Liviana, 1950), p.1.

¹⁶ Note the similarity here to Gentile's "thought as pure act." For elaboration, see Chapter IV of this study.

¹⁷ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 2.

¹⁸ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 5.

The various fragments of experience are related in the "connective unity" of consciousness. Moreover, perception is not exhausted in immediate experience but becomes the subject of discourse and mental process. It is part of a chain of reason; Stefanini posits reason as the psychological core of the person, and not as an anonymous or depersonalizing addendum to experience. He asserts that "free," "rational," and "personal" are equivalent attributes in that ". . . reason is the activity that, overcoming the moment of pure spontaneity and conquering the particularity of the impression, the emotion, or the impulse, allows the I to be itself in all that it thinks and wills and does."¹⁹

Stefanini insists that "reason" is not simply a matter of impersonal logic. To be "rational," he says, does not mean to be "cerebral." The realm of rationality is political rather than despotic; while reason implies disciplined and orderly thought that avoids destructive contradictions, rationality itself must accommodate the entire life of the person. On the other hand, Stefanini defines irrationality as a loss of personality, hence a loss of being. He conceives of a Person-Vernunft (person-reason), a personified sort of reason that is both active and watchful at once. That kind of reason protects the person from dissolution in negation, weakness, bestiality, or ephemerality. Its watchfulness also has a moral quality; it preserves us and edifies us through the first principles of philosophy, the categories and axiomatic truths.

¹⁹ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 7.

It appears that Stefanini is invoking a Platonic or Kantian system here, but he agrees with Rosmini that the single true category is being. For Stefanini, being is not indeterminate, but rather the being of personal experience, whose principles are identity and noncontradiction: the existential algebra²⁰ is "I = I; not I = not I." The self, he means to say, is indivisible and undeniable.

Having argued for the unity of personal experience, Stefanini now considers its uniqueness. The I is unrepeatable, unmistakable, has no exact equivalent in another, and cannot be substituted. There are many selves in the world, but for each individual there is only one "me." The personal sense of individuality cannot be inferred from the empirical determination of the individual, nor can traditional philosophy explain individuality by hypothesizing any individual whatsoever. Stefanini derives his understanding of the individual from religious teaching and intuition. If God became incarnate in one person, he reasons, then human existence must have infinite value and dignity. Individual value and uniqueness gives one the right to aspire to immortality; for how can a being of such value be utterly destroyed without a (cosmic) loss of that value and its potential? Stefanini writes, "A kind of ontological argument of love lies at the base of my aspiration to immortality."²¹

²⁰ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 9.

²¹ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 11.

In declaring the individual unique, Stefanini does not wish to support a solipsistic position. His psychospiritual monad is "all doors and windows," and in its self-definition it must account for all social and historical conditions to which it is linked. In the act of thinking (logos), the self recognizes others preceding and surrounding it. Every mental act is a new creation, and to that extent it imitates the creative activity of God. He has made men and women free beings as similar as possible to Him.

Unlike the Gentilians, Stefanini is careful to avoid asserting man as the world's creator. To say that thought is a creative act for the individual is different from saying that the individual creates the world. The world exists before us and impinges upon us; impression is different from expression. The individual produces images and models of reality that comprehend surrounding matter without imprisoning it. A thing remains a thing in itself (and an expression of God's creative power) even when it is partly fathomed by human thought.

Each human being is preceded by society and history, says Stefanini, and is enriched by connections with others. What is universal is interpersonal and can be mastered by anyone. Paradoxically, Stefanini asserts individuality as a universal principle. All beings are self-identical, but in that fact lies their similarity. "The category of human communion is similarity,"²² Stefanini observes. Similarity allows human beings to understand one another, and also to join forces.

²² Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 13.

For Stefanini, the sense of an individual "in-itself" precedes individual action. It is the inner self that demands mastery and expresses itself in the act of self-edification. Thus, Stefanini argues against Gentile that the I is not constituted purely by its actions. No human being is pure activity, for such a creature might well be unlimited in space and time (i.e., supernatural). Human finitude intrudes upon the acts of will, and no conscious activity can sustain the person indefinitely. Nevertheless, one persists and continues, sustained by the "giving gesture" of God. One becomes aware of personal finitude in contrast with a transcendent absolute: "I cannot reveal the depths of my being without including some sense of that God to whom I am somehow joined, and who, one might say, causally extends himself in me."²³

Man's task, writes Stefanini, is to be the primary vehicle of God's manifestation; yet to manifest God requires self-mastery first of all. That self-mastery includes coming to love both God and man; then all of the powers of the individual become instruments of religious elevation. Stefanini inveighs against hermeticism and existential nihilism. The God of faith is complemented by a God of reason, and divine transcendence hints at another (supernatural) order that human philosophy cannot penetrate.

For Stefanini, the human personality is both rational and moral. There is a sense of moral duty that arises from the ordinary problems of our existence: we feel that we ought to find good solutions. We then

²³ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 14.

find that we can will what we should not. Every individual is a free spirit who ". . . must conquer his place energetically and sometimes bloodily."²⁴

Stefanini contends that evil and error arise from a halt in the process of self-mastery. He takes issue with the Hegelian "dialectical" view of good and evil and says that living thought does not require a constant juxtaposition of the two forces: there is enough variety in positive thought to satisfy the active mind. To the dialectic of opposites, Stefanini counterposes a dialectic of diversity: not either/or, but also/and.

For Stefanini, values arise out of personal experience, and the very fact of being is true, good, and splendid insofar as the living being affirms itself, desires itself, and loves itself. Those acts confirm it as a person. The activity which brings value to light is the confrontation between the permanent (identical) self and the contingent variety of acts and situations. Truth is realized in those situations through disclosure and adequation.

Stefanini stresses the personal nature of acts and relationships in which value is realized. The relationship of man to God must be understood, he says, as the relationship of one person to another (divine) Person. The relationship of educator to educand exists as the gift of one person (a teacher) to another (a student) in the form of a solicitation to the student toward self-realization and self-mastery.²⁵

²⁴ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 17.

Stefanini emphasizes the importance of education, law, and morality in human society in raising it above the status of a herd or flock, leading it little by little to the recognition of personal dignity in individuals. He proposes a legal system based on personal rights and the counterposition of what is personally useful to what is personally wasteful.

Speaking of his own development as a philosopher, Stefanini insists that he underwent no dramatic changes or conversions: "I have always gone in the same direction, starting not from the pneumatic void but from an embryo."²⁶ He attacks the Cartesian fiction of "methodical doubts" and insists, instead, on a "method of integration" in which the philosophic embryo encounters experiences of thought and life which enrich it and test its resistance. In his own case, the germ of Stefanini's thought survived and he sought no other system. For that he gives thanks to his "knowledgeable and industrious" mother, and to his predecessors in philosophy from Plato to Blondel. He compares his reasoning process to that of Saint Augustine--a process of partial discovery open to an infinite perfectibility of knowledge. Stefanini condemns the "philosophic idolatry" of those who believe they have touched the core of being through concepts, leaving nothing to clarify. For Stefanini, the only philosophical dogma is that of the I validating all knowledge and revealing the perspective of all others who say "I" of themselves. Within that one dogma, change and innovation are always possible.

²⁵ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 19.

²⁶ Stefanini, Prospettiva, p. 20.

Applying Personalism to Education

Luigi Stefanini's most definitive statements on education appear in a book, Personalismo educativo (Personalism in Education), published in 1955 near the end of his life. It begins with encouraging words for those who would philosophize about education:

I am far from believing that pedagogy is a type of inferior philosophy. Rather, I hold that it (pedagogy) is the test which the philosopher must undergo to avoid losing contact with humanity at the point at which he tends to express human values ideally.²⁷

Stefanini states his desire to define a concept of personhood that is valid for the aims of human education, and to delineate some of the themes of Christian pedagogy. In the latter regard, however, ". . . it is not intended to confine the horizon within a confessional environment, but to indicate summarily how one might derive some features of educational knowledge from the teachings of Jesus, valid even outside the 'divine institutions' of humanity."²⁸

In the beginning of Personalismo educativo, Stefanini outlines the main points of his pedagogy in a few pages before going on to expand and elaborate upon his ideas. His introductory summary provides a succinct and convenient introduction to his pedagogy, and a translation of the entire chapter is provided below:

One may quickly state the reasons by which the concept of the person must become central in educational theory and praxis--a concept whose speculative value may be restored, providing an exact distinction between the empirical concept of individuality and the

²⁷ Luigi Stefanini, Personalismo educativo (Rome: Fratelli Bocca Editore, 1955), p. 5.

²⁸ Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 5.

psychospiritual concept of personality. The command "Personalize the schools!" does not exclude other efforts intended to spiritualize, idealize, humanize, socialize, or activize the schools; but in each of those terms something indeterminate and ambiguous would remain if the concepts of mind, humanity, sociality, and activity did not pass through the concept of personhood and find their bases and concreteness in the person.

For whoever takes the teacher's point of view, educational personalism has value for both its subjects and its objects: that is, on one hand it affects intentions turned to each of the students in the school community, and on the other hand it has to do with the qualities that the teacher must typify and the form of his instruction.

For the objects (educands), educational personalism can be summarized in the following statements:

(1) The object of the enterprise of education is not an "average student" to whom one may distribute knowledge in a schematic²⁹ and impersonal form, but a "truly individual being" (Eigensein) for whom knowledge must be appropriate and by whom knowledge must be expressed in an autonomous process. Knowledge is not communicated by transmission, but it is aroused by appeal. Heteroeducation has value only insofar as it promotes autoeducation.

(2) The "truly individual being" is an "end in itself" or an unalterable dignity, to be observed and nurtured with definite interest and religious care. A linkage of souls is the foundation of the intellectual relations of the school order.

(3) The psychological reduction of humanity into "types" or "categories" defined by common characterological impressions has value in removing us from the anonymity of the "genus" or the "species" and in bringing us closer to the true being of the person: it has no value in replacing that ultimate consideration.

(4) The lack of a social sense in the pupil (asociality) derives from an excess of individualism or from a defect of personality. The "inferiority complex" makes the child unsociable (Adler); nevertheless the proportion between personal self-examination and social circulation is not inverse but direct.

²⁹ The original word is nozionistica and has no exact English equivalent. It is an adjective used pejoratively to describe a form of instruction that is highly verbal and abstract, requiring students to learn summaries, outlines, charts and the like, but allowing little opportunity to relate information to lived experience.

(5) Personal value and internal regulation are not the results of the social group (or of the school group); on the contrary, they are its condition. Scholastic teams must not reduce personal responsibility to the product of collective reactions, nor should "moral will" be reduced to the "general will" of the social group, sacrificing what is more profound and divine in the individual.

(6) Personalized education demands a social conscience and organization favorable to the rise of the capable and worthy to the superior levels of society, denying that school destiny be decided only on the bases of privileges of blood and wealth.

(7) Differentiated schools that are specialized for the retarded, the learning disabled, and the emotionally disturbed must obey the law of the protection of the person and have the almost religious value of preserving the divine that is in every person, even one who is morally or physically debilitated.

With regard to the subjects (educators), the principles of personalist pedagogy can be summarily reduced to several expressions of the following tenor:

(1) The level that best contains the universality of instructional value is the most personal.

(2) To make the pupil active, the teacher's activity must be incremented to the maximum rather than suspended. To maximize the student, it is necessary to maximize the teacher. Human values are not mutually exclusive like physical bodies. In the realm of moral values, wills cannot be suppressed, nor are they neutralized, but they interpenetrate. Consequently, authority as a manifestation of moral eminence does not suppress liberty but supports it.

(3) The teacher is not a neutral transmitter of knowledge. It is didactically inefficient for ice-cold mentalities to convey knowledge as if it did not belong to them, or as if they feared contaminating it by adding a tone of excitement and personal emphasis to it. On the contrary, the universal has no educative efficacy if it does not pass through the individual and if it does not come to light through the effort of personal study and the joy of mastery.

(4) Human experience in the person of the teacher is the indispensable basis of the educational enterprise, and to it all other experience must be subordinated (that of nature, or in books, or of instructional and scientific apparatus). Recent psychoanalysis has ascertained that one of the principal causes of neurosis in the modern world is the depersonalization of the social environment.

(5) "Extroversion" does not characterize the educator's ideal type if it is not combined with "introversion." The transitive process is in direct proportion to the reflective process, dissemination with concentration. "Teacher, educate yourself, if you want to educate!" (Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice).

(6) "The divine Teacher is superior to doctrine" (Kierkegaard). This principle of evangelical teaching is the regulative term by which human instruction must be directed. In school, the teacher who is beloved is one who demonstrates that the knowledge, methods, and abilities of which he is the bearer and administrator do not constitute his entire personality. Rather, he is an instrument at the service of humanity, who knows how to manifest his own fullness of moral character without undergoing a "professional debilitation." The human being, in school, must be superior to the material that he teaches, as in life, to the profession that he exercises.³⁰

In the preceding material, Stefanini's pedagogical goal is clearly stated at the outset: to make ". . . the concept of the person . . . become central in educational theory and praxis." Moreover, he wants to establish a philosophical concept of the person, which is why he refers to the "speculative value" of the concept. To do so, he will distinguish between the empirical concept of individuality--roughly, the commonsense notion of each individual being somehow different from all others--and the concept of personality within a psychospiritual order. That claim recalls his dictum: "Being is personal . . . ", which suggests that personality is a transcendental concept coextensive with being itself.³¹

³⁰Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, pp. 9-12.

³¹Stefanini, Il personalismo sociale, p. 11.

Infusing schools with a personalist sense of being does not, in Stefanini's opinion, exclude other programs intended to reform and improve schooling. Rather, the personalist concept may provide a sound basis for such endeavors, and in any case it may complement those efforts.

Stefanini makes a distinction between the "objects" and "subjects" of education, meaning the students in the first case and the teachers in the second. The distinction suggests that both terms are complementary, and in this way Stefanini argues against the idealists' fatuous and insincere concept of self-education.

For Stefanini, the object of education is an individual being and not a statistic. Of course, this is a challenge to the "scientific" educators who rely on tests and measurements rather than personal judgments based on acquaintance. Stefanini makes a peculiar claim about knowledge that has echoes of Plato: knowledge is not transmitted but elicited; it is part of an autonomous learning process, and therefore self-education in this sense is a reality. Stefanini partly avoids contradicting himself by saying that the teacher's function is to promote self-education, encourage expressions of knowledge, and judge the appropriateness of what is attempted.

The child in the classroom is to be "observed and nurtured" with "interest and religious care." The valuing of students as persons, or as ends in themselves (as in Kant), leads to Stefanini's recommendation that teachers take a strong personal interest in their students.

This is more of a moral than an instructional necessity, but Stefanini does not cleanly separate the two.

Stefanini takes a middle ground on the application of the social sciences to education. According to him, psychological typology at least forces us to recognize human distinctions that are more subtle than the merely biological judgments of genus and species. That is, psychology deprives us of any pretext that human beings are all identical; but it does not go far enough for Stefanini. It brings us closer to understanding individual being, but it does not explain all human differences.

On the matter of personality development, Stefanini borrows from and reinterprets Adlerian psychology. If a child is introverted and asocial, it must be the result of excessive individualism (preoccupation with the self) or a failure to learn to value other persons. An inferiority complex makes the child withdrawn and asocial, but the proper relation of personal growth to sociability is directly proportional and complementary. Stefanini's remarks on this matter are telegraphic and cryptic at first glance, but in fact they refer to the Adlerian concept of neurosis and the compenetration of social interest and individual development.

In contrast to the social determinists, Stefanini argues that personal value and individual control are not matters that rest in the social group; rather, individuals constitute the social group, so they condition its values and controls. Importantly, "moral will" must not be attributed to the general (social) will, an error of the Fascists.

On the question of who shall be educated and for what, Stefanini takes a position reminiscent of Plato in The Republic, and perhaps of Thomas Jefferson as well. The "capable and worthy" must be helped to "superior levels" of study, regardless of wealth or rank. Clearly, Stefanini does not define worthiness along class lines, but he does not specify what is to be done for those who are less worthy, nor does he state how capabilities will be assessed and how distinctions will be made. Inasmuch as he is skeptical of psychometric procedures, capability and worthiness are probably to be assessed by teachers; and if they truly respect their students as individuals, they are morally obligated to assist all students maximally. One may object that Stefanini, while attacking social elitism, is really advocating an intellectual elite; yet even that runs counter to the sense of his teaching.

In his following statements, Stefanini is solicitous of the retarded and handicapped to the extent of desiring special schools for them, a reform badly needed in Italy in the 1950's, as schooling was inadequate for such persons when it was extended to them at all. The problem of "ghettoization" had not occurred to him at that time, but on the positive side his remarks are tempered by his injunction to educators to perceive the divinely given personhood in everyone, no matter how flawed the individual might be.

The "subjects" of education (the teachers, ones who educate) must realize first of all that the most general value of instruction

lies in its application to the personal. Here Stefanini amplifies his own principle that personality is the most general (universal) fact.

Stefanini attacks pseudo-Deweyan and "activist" educators who believe in curtailing teacher activity so that the children may do as they will. His countersuggestion is that a high level of teacher involvement is necessary to maximize student activity. In a social situation (a classroom), individuals must interact physically and morally, and failure to act on either side is detrimental to the exchange. One person's moral will does not neutralize another's, but rather interpenetrates with it. Stefanini makes another point: those who would exercise authority based on supposed moral preeminence (teachers, priests, rulers) cannot suppress individual liberty without suppressing the interactions of moral will. (This position can only be sustained by one who believes in the benignity of individual moral will; Stefanini makes no suggestion as to what authorities should do when individual will becomes immoral or amoral.)

The myth of "neutral" knowledge is assailed next. No teacher is a neutral transmitter of knowledge, Stefanini says, and the attempt to be one results in impoverished teaching. Whatever is general or universal in education must pass through the individual educator to the individual learner. Study and achievement are products of personal effort. All instruction, Stefanini asserts, ultimately depends on personal experience. It is the experience of the teacher that enables him or her to relate curricular material to the student. Furthermore, Stefanini adds, depersonalization can lead to neurosis.

Matters of mental health and personal style depend on a dynamic balance between the social and the individual, the outward and the inward, argues Stefanini. The ideal teacher is no more "extrovert" than "introvert," but is involved in both reflective and communicative processes. What the teacher understands affects what he or she teaches; hence (recalling a slogan of the elder Lombardo-Radice), the teacher is encouraged toward self-education.

Finally, Stefanini insists that the moral character and interpersonal efficacy of the teacher are uppermost. The "divine teacher" (quoted from Kierkegaard, probably an allusion to Christ) is genuinely concerned about serving humanity and in turn is "beloved" by the students. Such a teacher is morally above whatever material he or she happens to teach and the incidental features of the profession.

What emerges from Stefanini's set of statements is a highly individualized form of education that yet maintains a strong concern for healthy social interaction and is promulgated by teachers who are good, wise, well-adjusted, lovable individuals.

Development and Reflection

The remainder of Personalismo educativo is largely an elaboration on the themes that Stefanini has so far announced. A few points deserve further attention.

Reflecting on the aim of education, Stefanini says that it is the "Socratic midwifery" of the person, and that any other goals must be understood in the personalistic sense, to be reached by mediation

through individuals.³² He compares his concept of the person to that of other philosophers and affirms that personhood is a central principle in his philosophy; he cannot accept a "generically spiritual philosophy" that views the person as an empirical determination of a universal mind or spirit (as the idealists did, for example). Even the formal coincidence of human characteristics may be misleading, masking a substantial diversity of human intentions and orientations. This philosophy does not require a complex metaphysic of personality; any teacher knows that a student is neither a puppy nor a colt nor a determination of universal Mind nor a confluence of environmental influences nor an epiphenomenon of matter. Thus the concept of a personal Socratic midwifery, as Stefanini understands it, has more to recommend itself than the abstruse rationalizations of metaphysical philosophy.

Stefanini scrutinizes the positions of his philosophical opponents and questions each one. Is the person only a confluence of hereditary influences, or does a person also have the power to vary the direction of influences and deflect incidental forces in a way not predicted by physical, chemical, or biological laws? Is the person a function of instinct or the embodiment of a principle that illumines and governs instincts, imposing a moral structure upon them? Is the person a function of the economic bases of society, or an agent able to use the economic structure to satisfy essential needs before proceeding to higher activities? Is the person trapped in an existential situation,

³² Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 13.

or can the person change and qualify a situation through an exercise of will? Is the person a function of indiscriminate possibilities, or a realizer of possibilities? Is the person the expression of a social body, subject to its immutable laws, or the very principle of society which has a duty to promote and protect spiritual freedom? In this way, Stefanini challenges what he perceives as the various philosophical determinisms.

Wherever there is a determinism, Stefanini argues, the personalist style of education is impossible, and it may be pointless to speak of education at all. In that situation, the individual is a part being prepared for service in a machine. A realistic and scientific attitude may well be useful for educators, but they must realize that such an attitude defines only the starting point of education, not its place of ultimate arrival. An evil of modern times that Stefanini laments is the widespread loss of a sense of dignity and personal responsibility. Many of our contemporaries, he contends, have abandoned themselves to sensual pleasures and tawdry pursuits, having sold their souls, Faust-like, to a devil in the guise of functional determinism. The effect of functionalism is a shrunken soul, a cheapened sense of the self, ". . . and when the soul sells itself it can only sell itself to the devil."³³ One cannot sell oneself to God, Stefanini adds; rather, one gives oneself to Him.

³³Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 20.

Stefanini again points out the distinction between the "empirical individual" who is "forced to submit to outside influences" and the true person who must overcome the obstacle of that kind of individuality:

The person begins when the tendency experienced as a destiny is overturned and becomes a contained and correct direction, employed as an element of a vocation. When one passes from the first hillside to the second, one passes from animal training to the education of man."³⁴

For Stefanini, the characteristics of education are quite different from those of training; education is revealed as free, conscious, and purposive.

Continuing his philosophical debate, Stefanini attacks the vestiges of classical intellectualism in education, whereby man is seen as a function of ideas or values. Stefanini introjects Christianity, whose God does not search the heavens for ideals to contemplate, nor does He appear with transcendent ideals to vaporize the world; rather, His ideas are immanent in the Word, and by the Word He creates a world. Yet philosophers continue to hypostatize abstract universals, whether as Hegel's Logos, Husserl's Wesenschau, or the immutable principles of contemporary mathematical logicians.

Stefanini objects to that classical intellectualism, as it creates a dichotomy in which the person is contingent and little more than a spectator to a realm of universal ideals, values, and culture. For Stefanini, nothing can be universalized except through individual conscience and action. Even Aquinas, Stefanini points out, observes

³⁴Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 21.

that truth cannot be preserved in the absence of an individual intellect. A world of things and values is meaningless without the beholder and the valuer. (Here Stefanini digresses into esthetic theory, wherein he affirms art not as an encounter with an object, but as a meeting with the soul that produced it.) Whatever or whomever the person loves takes on a personal value; and God's superiority over man describes a relationship in which man is loved and therefore valued by God.

Modern value theory, Stefanini maintains, tends to become a form of ontology in which values are independently self-sustaining; but he observes that the person is the only entity for whom value has meaning. Without a clear sense of personal value, and through an uncritical belief in the givenness of values, a perverse set of values is easily accepted, warns Stefanini.

In another consideration of the matter of functionalism, Stefanini calls it a debate between being and having, and says that either position has considerable implications for education. A functional view of knowledge, he contends, has led to a corruption of humanism in the schools and to such evils as encyclopedism, formalism, and schematic rote learning. He accuses that form of schooling of being mechanistic, ponderous, obnoxious, and alienating to the young. Education must help the student toward self-knowledge: "When the person is alienated from himself in knowing and acting, belief becomes superstition, law becomes Phariseism, morality is conformity, labor is abasement, and study is

bondage."³⁵

Although Stefanini sees the Deweyan-activist reaction as an extreme response to the empty formalism of the schools, he concedes that the doctrine of interest has some merit and can be understood in a personalistic sense: "Interest is the bond of love that links the person to the object, inasmuch as in the object he realizes himself through his constructive powers, his productivity, or some other form of affinity."³⁶ Stefanini denies that interest is an impersonal force, as suggested in certain pronouncements of Herbart. In projecting the forces of attraction and repulsion in the world, one must not overlook the projector. Ideas, Stefanini contends, are not impersonal forces.

On axiological matters, Stefanini insists that values may not be alienated from the person without suffering discredit. Neither reason nor value may be separated from the person, as the person is incarnate reason and incarnate value. Stefanini finds it appropriate to say that the person does not have value, but is a value.³⁷ The crisis of values in the modern world, as Stefanini sees it, is really a problem of faltering rationality, a vendetta against reason as it was once hyposta-

³⁵Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 27.

³⁶Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 27.

³⁷Professor Flores D'Arcais understands this statement to mean that the person draws validity from others who affirm his value, and not that the person draws validity from himself; certainly the social dimension is important in Stefanini's thought, but the value generated by individual liberty and responsibility should not be overlooked. See Giuseppe Flores D'Arcais, "La pedagogia di Luigi Stefanini," in Studi in onore di Luigi Stefanini (Padua: Liviana Editrice, 1966), p. 158.

tized by the illuminists and intellectualists. There is really no conflict between rationality and the person: ". . . it is necessary to choose both, so that both may be something."³⁸

To save ourselves from irrationalism, Stefanini recommends that we personalize reason; from a position of personalized rationality, we may personalize values as well. Stefanini invokes the Christian concept of the rational soul that is quodammodo omnia (somehow everything). That concept undergirds Stefanini's assertion that the person does not possess reason but is reason; and by virtue of that rational nature, the person is bound to the self and to others.

Stefanini closes this discussion in Personalismo educativo with an appeal for a recovery of values through rational, human education:

The task of education at the present time is the recovery of values through the recovery of the person. Modern man asked not to betray himself in his choice. The interest of the person must be restored to a confluence with values, instead of letting values appear as inconsistent shams in an empyrean realm of abstractions, and thus as extrinsic and hostile.

Man will be educated when he clings to value as much as he clings to his dignity, his freedom, his integrity, and his salvation.³⁹

In another chapter of this book, Stefanini lists and elaborates upon eighteen themes that he perceives in Christian pedagogy. The discussion is thorough and thoughtful, but much of it is based on rather esoteric theology, and the chapter adds little major material to what has been brought out elsewhere. The second section of Personalismo

³⁸ Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 28.

³⁹ Stefanini, Personalismo educativo, p. 29.

educativo provides a critique of teaching methods, while the third returns to the theme of the individual in society.

Stefanini's death within a year of the publication of this book precluded the appearance of any revisions of his pronouncements on education.

Aldo Agazzi: A Modern Catholic Educator

The pedagogical thought that was first developed by Luigi Stefanini and a few of his contemporaries marked the beginning of a movement that grew and evolved during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Younger scholars, inspired by Stefanini or by his sources, added new dimensions to the "Christian spiritualist" and "personalist" (usually synonymous) traditions in philosophy and education.

One personalist scholar who came to be widely respected among secular educators as well as churchmen was Aldo Agazzi. He was born in the northern Italian city of Bergamo on September 12, 1906. There were educators in his family: his paternal aunts were Rosa and Carolina Agazzi, the originators of a system of early childhood education that is still the most popular in Italy.

Agazzi attended the Catholic University of Milan and the University of Turin; from the latter, he received a degree in pedagogy in 1938. He taught philosophy, pedagogy, and psychology in state training schools for elementary teachers until 1952, when he obtained a state university lecturer's permit. Agazzi began teaching at the University of Padua in 1953, first as a lecturer in education and then as a

professor of psychology and history of education. He accepted a position at the Catholic University of Milan in 1960, where he taught education courses in the Division of Letters and Philosophy until 1968; then he became a member of that university's Division of Teacher Training and director of an institute program as well.

Among the large number of professional organizations in which Agazzi has been active are the state Higher Council for Public Instruction; the National Instructional Center for Preschools; the National Instructional Center of the Italian National Academy (the "Lincei"); the National Council of the Italian Pedagogical Association; the Italian Catholic Union of Middle School Teachers; the Schole center of pedagogical studies for Catholic university professors; the Scientific Council of the National Center for Social Protection and Defense; the International Union for Health Education; the Council of Experts of the Institute of Comparative Education of the University of Barcelona, Spain; the Scientific Council of the A. Gemelli Institute for the experimental study of social problems; the Italian Commission for UNESCO; the council of experts on instructional issues for the teacher-training schools of Italy and the Swiss Canton of Ticino; and the World Organization for Preschool Education. In addition to his memberships,⁴⁰ Agazzi has served on the editorial review boards of several professional journals, including Scuola materna (The Preschool) and Scuola e didattica (Schooling and Instruction).

⁴⁰This list is drawn in part from Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979), pp. 919-920.

Agazzi's publications are numerous and varied, ranging from a study of St. Augustine (1941) to a commentary on the role of testing in contemporary European schools (1967). Not surprisingly, he has written the definitive work on the teaching methods of his illustrious aunts, Il metodo delle sorelle Agazzi per la scuola materna (The Agazzi Sisters' Method for the Preschool), published in 1950. Agazzi has produced two major studies of education: Problemi e maestri del pensiero e dell'educazione (Issues and Masters of Thought and Education), 1954, and a companion volume, Panorama della pedagogia d'oggi (Panorama of Today's Pedagogy), also published in 1954. These are encyclopedic works, historical and descriptive in nature, tracing the evolution of educational thought and outlining influences present in contemporary philosophy of education. Agazzi's scholarly post-1945 publications include Uomo, società, educazione, e scuola (Man, Society, Education, and Schooling), 1949; Problemi, strutture, e programmi della nostra scuola (Concerns, Structures, and Programs of Our Schools), 1949; Oltre la scuola attiva (Beyond Active Schooling), 1955; Psicologia del fanciullo e della scuola (Psychology of the Child and Schooling), 1957; Il lavoro nella pedagogia e nella scuola (Work in Pedagogy and in School), 1958; L'attivismo pedagogico dalla protesta all'autocritica (Pedagogical Progressivism from Protest to Self-Critique), 1963; La formazione degli insegnanti (The Preparation of Teachers), 1964; and Il discorso pedagogico, prospettive attuali del personalismo educativo (Pedagogical Dialogue: Real Perspectives of Personalism in Education), 1965.

Education as Science and Love

Among Agazzi's few writings of a purely reflective and philosophical nature, an early one stands out: Saggio sulla natura del fatto educativo (Essay on the Nature of the Fact of Education), published in 1951. Agazzi introduces this book by saying that it presents the opening statements of an argument that he intends to expand, explain, and complete subsequently (in other books, evidently).

At the outset, Agazzi sets up a dichotomy between old-fashioned "metaphysical" educators who start from given premises about human nature, and the newly appearing "systematic" educators who want to define education as an "act" or a "fact" and as a phenomenon that is either autonomous or relational. Both approaches have borne fruit, Agazzi says, but he proposes to determine which is better. Can inductive inquiry define and delimit education, he asks, and moreover, is it possible to resolve pedagogy into some other science? Agazzi states his hope that he can move from considerations of pedagogical doctrine to a true pedagogical science.

Comparing metaphysicians to scientific investigators, Agazzi finds the former limited by their own concepts; he prefers a science derived from determinate facts and assertions that may be investigated and meditated upon. He concludes that education must become an autonomous science, able to inform its own art and practice. Ultimately, Agazzi finds no metaphysical philosophy, axiology, or theology capable of fulfilling the role of pedagogy: "To educate, in fact, is not to philo-

sophize".⁴¹

Subsequently, Agazzi emphasizes the practical aspects of education. No matter what philosophical foundations education rests upon, it must begin where philosophy ends, he avers. Education has specific tasks to perform in the world of practical matters. Agazzi begins his examination of the givens of education with what he considers empirical propositions rather than metaphysical ones.

The first empirical proposition that he states is derived from a comparison of human beings and animals: "Education is only for man. Animals do not have education."⁴² Even that statement, he says, requires verification, especially in view of the debate between early twentieth-century behaviorist and humanist psychologists. Thus he calls on another fact: "The animal world has no culture, no history, and exhibits no themes, accomplishments, or civil progress."⁴³ The adaptations of plant and animal societies cannot compare to the social and technological progress of humanity, Agazzi insists. The basic difference between the two is that between nature and history. The animal exists in a state of nature, responding to forces of entropy, thermodynamics, and biology. Animal species change, but their slow evolution does not constitute historicity. "History," says Agazzi, "is civilization,

⁴¹ Aldo Agazzi, Saggio sulla natura del fatto educativo (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1951), p. 11. Agazzi's argument is obviously directed against the actual idealists of recent memory.

⁴² Agazzi, Saggio, p. 15.

⁴³ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 17.

novelty, and progress, and it is not deducible . . . from initial and preceding states."⁴⁴ Human history "breaks in upon stasis," he writes, and the world of Nature becomes the scene upon which the spectacle of human civilization is built. For Agazzi, history is not simply a given, but a fact of man's mind and spirit: ". . . man is history, civilization, and culture insofar as and because he is spirituality."⁴⁵ Education is also related to history, culture, and civilization, and is a fact of human spirituality.

Despite his earlier disclaimer of metaphysics, Agazzi proceeds in subsequent chapters of Saggio sulla natura del fatto educativo to delineate a vision of humanity that certainly has metaphysical aspects. If there is to be a science of education, he reasons, it must relate to an organic and systematic understanding of the nature of the human being; it should begin with a profile of the person, on the assumptions that one cannot educate an unknown creature and that nothing human is extraneous to education.

To draw his profile of man, Agazzi begins with the classical notion that man is both nature and spirit, and therefore an inseparable unity of necessity (body) and liberty (mind). The psychophysical unity that Agazzi perceives in humanity lifts it above the purely natural order; naturality remains, but it is transformed by the spirit in much

⁴⁴ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 19.

⁴⁵ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 20. The concept of the "rational soul" is implicit in this conclusion: spirit (or Mind) is rational, and reason or its works are spiritual.

the same way as physical matter, if brought to life, becomes "something living" and not merely matter-plus-life.⁴⁶

In man, Agazzi sees a creature that is suffused with the presence of two natures that are paradoxically united and also mutually intolerant. There is a contest between humanity's spirituality and its naturalness, and those forces tend to polarize human actions and mankind's very being. The irreducibility of the contraries persists in human activities, and an important task is to establish order between the two realms. The pure psychospiritual world is that of values, Agazzi insists, and by taking nature upon himself, man inherits the task of shaping the natural world according to those values. Through that effort, man is purified, made worthy, and brought close to the Absolute.

Eventually, Agazzi draws his scientific (some might say metaphysical) profile of humanity: naturalness of a biological and physiological sort joined to a spirituality that appears in the value-laden domains of theory, productive work, ethics, sociality, religion, esthetics, and education.⁴⁷

Agazzi allows a certain mental or psychic quality in the natural creature, but he insists that it not be confused with spirit. Beyond sense perceptions and the processes of affect, there must be a "higher order" of values and spiritual substance. Agazzi now lists human activities that he sees as categories of spirit. The "theoretical" category

⁴⁶ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 176.

⁴⁷ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 177.

is first: cognitive thought investigates the "why" of things, leading to philosophy, science, and a discovery of values. "Productivity," or human labor, is a controversial but necessary category; Agazzi specifies labor in a physical sense and not as thought, meditation, or study. Labor is the transformation of brute matter through effort and intelligence, hence it is an activity of spirit. These two categories, theoreticity and productivity, represent the operations of spirit on objective existence, but Agazzi adds five more whose function is to contribute to the development of the free spiritual being.

The first developmental category is ethics, wherein the moral law becomes immanent and imposes itself on knowledge; knowledge, transformed by one's perception of the moral law and a conscious choice to obey it, becomes wisdom and virtue. The category of sociality is based on ". . . feeling the other as another self."⁴⁸ For Agazzi, society provides more than an extension of the ethical attitude; it is an "immortal reality in time" that is the bearer of values and the milieu in which the person first perceives the law. From man's sense of inadequacy toward the Absolute comes the category of religion with its aspiration to eternity and its eagerness for communion with Being. Through religion, the individual comes to an awareness of the self as a participant in another, higher order of being. Agazzi next lists the category of esthetics, a translation into external images of what is first felt inwardly about the self and the universe. All human feelings are

⁴⁸ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 182.

mirrored in art and may be expressed in ways that lead to the beautiful and the sublime.

The last category which Agazzi mentions is education, a function by which man ascends and helps others to ascend to a sense of humanity as historicity, endurance, and progress. Without education, humanity "would always remain at the beginning," and there would be no participation in the cultural heritage of the ages, no human civilization, and no possibility of conceptualizing new achievements. Agazzi claims that every person is born with a need to learn and an instinct to teach; thus education is a hereditary function. While education unites the other categories, it is more than their sum; it is really a category of spirit in its own right.

The task that education faces is not only that of unifying the forms of spirit, Agazzi suggests, but of unifying human life itself; for humanity is one, but often lives a partial or divided life. As a specific and unmistakable aspect of human life, education must develop its own body of knowledge, its own science, he repeats. That science, adds Agazzi, must be pedagogy, a body of thought related to the entire period of human development and not only to childhood (pedology). Moreover, it must build upon a system of subsidiary "pedagogical science" that makes useful and necessary (but not sufficient) contributions to its lore. The subsidiary sciences (e.g., biology, physiology, psychology, sociology) enable education to cultivate the various potentials of man; but while education relates to the whole person, it is also a

possession of the person (that is, of the spritual person). Education becomes an instrument of spiritual humanity in its temporal trials, proclaims Agazzi. Its truest function is to provide the individual with a universe of values and the principles of civilization.

For Agazzi, the role of the teacher is that of a transmitter of culture, a vehicle by which new generations are elevated into the world of civilization. The teacher is the minister of history and the minister of humanizing nature. Thanks to the work of education, the individual may enter the world of culture and civilization well-balanced, mature, knowledgeable, and active; and the civilization that he enters is to be conceived as an immortal community of persons, consciously linked by a universal bond of love.

Agazzi insists that education is purposive or teleological and its tasks are noble and essential. Practitioners of education must reflect on the humanity of the students before them and on the fact that, without education, there can be no history and no civilization. Education is the dynamic condition of civilization, Agazzi contends, and only through its work can civilization be born in the individual and celebrated in history; thus it fulfills the demands of an infinite nature in temporality, preordained for the inexorable development of eternity.⁴⁹ Some chapters in this book are concerned with attacking what Agazzi perceives as false or competing positions on education.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 189.

⁵⁰ He returns to the same task in Oltre la scuola attiva, 1955, an entire volume devoted to evaluating the positive points and criticizing

Aldo Agazzi has been a most prolific writer on education. His subsequent work, though extensive, does not contradict or substantially alter his vision of education as presented in Saggio sulla natura del fatto educativo.

The theme dwelt upon in the ninth chapter of the book is that of the eternal task of love. It is a most significant concept in Agazzi's philosophy. "Love," writes Agazzi, "is the essential principle of the universe," for it is the sole reason for the existence of the universe.⁵¹ It is clear in this essay that concern for the individual, a theme on which Agazzi writes in other chapters, results in a close bond between teacher and student: "There is no education that does not exist as an unseverable rapport between teacher and student."⁵² That rapport is really a form of love. When we educate a person for his or her good, Agazzi suggests, we perform an act of service and love toward that person. "The school in which education is integral actualizes the centrality of love,"⁵³ Agazzi concludes. At that point he closes what has been described as a ". . . Platonic circle of love in his pedagogical thought."⁵⁴

the inadequacies of the progressive-Deweyan-activist movement in education.

⁵¹ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 153.

⁵² Agazzi, Saggio, p. 172.

⁵³ Agazzi, Saggio, p. 172.

⁵⁴ Giovanni Giraldi, Storia della pedagogia (Rome: Armando Armando Editore, 1969), p. 503.

The Personalist Movement in Mid-Century

Several of the older generation of Italian personalists, born before 1900, lived through the Second World War and were active into the 1960's. Another group, born in the 1920's, came into maturity in the 1940's and inherited the guidance of the movement from older philosophers. There were important scholars in both groups.

A particular noteworthy member of the older generation was Giovanni Calò (1882-1970). A philosophy graduate of the University of Florence, Calò was selected for a chair in pedagogy at that university at the early age of twenty-four. While retaining his university post, he became a deputy in the pre-Fascist Italian parliament in the early 1920's. In that same decade, he organized an education museum in Florence that later became the National Center for Study and Documentation in Teaching. Calò was involved in international conferences of educators in the 1930's, and he continued that work into the 1950's. He was associated with numerous national and international education bodies, including UNESCO and the Italian Cultural Commission for the Brussels World's Fair. He also served on the presiding council of the Scholé center for Catholic studies in Brescia.

As a philosopher, Calò taught that one could not cultivate the mind without the systematic and scientific study of the human being in all of its complexity. He did not see the individual as solitary in a solipsistic or anarchic sense, but rather as a being who is socially open and responsible. Calò's view of history and education as cultural processes is reminiscent of that of the idealists.

Calò was the author of several historical studies of education, philosophy, and pedagogical thought. He published a three-volume Corso di pedagogia (Course in Pedagogy) for university students in the 1946-1949 period. His other activities in publishing included founding and editing journals in education and editing pedagogical reference works and sections of the Enciclopedia filosofica (Philosophical Encyclopedia) published by the neoscholastic Gallarate Center for Philosophy. He made few original contributions to the literature on Catholic philosophy and education; rather, his faith motivated him to action in the form of participation in organizations where education was discussed.⁵⁵ By the time of his death, Calò had received awards and honors from the Italian government, the French government, the Catholic church, and other bodies.

A Christian spiritualist who came out of the idealist tradition was Mario Casotti (1896-1975), who is considered a pioneer in neospiritualist pedagogy. Casotti, a former student of Gentile, had taught in Pisa and Turin; around 1923 or 1924 he underwent a religious conversion, and in 1924 Father Gemelli called him to the chair of pedagogy at the Catholic University of Milan. Casotti remained there for over four decades. He first produced critiques of idealism from a neoscholastic point of view. Eventually, he began a systematic study of pedagogy divided into three parts: teleology (aims of education); anthropology (study of the educand); and methodology. In his "anthropological" writ-

⁵⁵ Laeng, I contemporanei, p. 872.

ings Casotti defends Christian personalism against idealism and materialism. He was a contributor to and editor of the church-oriented education journal Scuola italiana moderna (Modern Italian Schooling). At the Catholic University of Milan, he encouraged systematic child study in a way that later became more widespread among Italian educators.

Certainly one of the most devout of the Catholic educators was Gesualdo Nosengo (1906-1968). A graduate of the Catholic University of Milan, Nosengo devoted his life to the building of Christian awareness in schools and among young people. Nosengo began his career as a teacher of religion in high schools, and in later years he taught pedagogy at the Pontificio Ateneo Urbaniano, a papal institute of higher learning. He was a promoter of Catholic scouting and of Catholic youth groups. He was one of the founders of the professional union of Catholic teachers, and he was also a key member of several Catholic study organizations. Nosengo's voice was even heard in postwar government circles as one of the professional educators who helped to publicize the 1962 plan to create a single middle school in Italy.

Nosengo studied and wrote extensively in the area of moral and religious education. Among his publications are Formazione cristocentrica (Christ-Centered Education), 1940; La vita religiosa dell'adolescente (The Religious Life of the Adolescent), 1944; La pedagogia di Gesù (The Pedagogy of Jesus), 1947; La morale professionale dell'insegnante (The Professional Morality of the Teacher), 1947; La persona

umana e l'educazione (The Human Person and Education), 1948; La spiritualita professionale (The Professional's Spirituality), 1954; L'educazione morale del giovane (The Moral Education of Youth), 1955; Il pastore buono e l'insegnante (The Good Shepherd and the Teacher), 1962; and L'educazione sociale dei giovani (The Social Education of Youth), 1964. In La pedagogia di Gesù, a unique work, Nosengo urges his readers to ". . . pay more attention to the Gospel, to the teaching activity of Jesus the Teacher."⁵⁶ Nosengo develops pedagogical principles based on the teaching activities of Jesus in the Gospels; he concludes that Christian education requires serene human relationships and cannot be based on coercion.

One of the more scholarly Catholic educators is Giuseppe Flores D'Arcais (b. 1908). He is a graduate of the University of Padua who was employed by that university through his teaching career. At various times, Flores D'Arcais was a professor of pedagogy, director of the university's Institute of Pedagogy, and head of the university's Division of Teaching. In his pedagogy, the fundamental principle of personal individuality is the source of values for civilization and culture, and it is also an ultimately spiritual fact and the basis of pedagogical discourse. Flores D'Arcais has turned much of his attention to analyzing modern social and cultural phenomena, and to engaging in pedagogical discussions with scholars of other persuasions. His publications include Lineamenti di storia della pedagogia (Outlines of the

⁵⁶ Gesualdo Nosengo, La pedagogia di Gesù (Rome: Anonima Veritas Editrice, 1947), p. 7.

History of Pedagogy), 1948; Introduzione ad una teoria della scuola (Introduction to a Theory of Schooling), 1951; La pedagogia nel pensiero classico, la pedagogia nel pensiero cristiano (Pedagogy in Classical Thought, Pedagogy in Christian Thought), 1954; La pedagogia oggi (Pedagogy Today), 1955-1957; La scuola per la persona (Schooling for the Person), 1960; and many journal articles and course materials in education.

An unusual position among the personalists is that taken by Giuseppe Catalfamo. Born in Sicily in 1921, Catalfamo obtained degrees in pedagogy and political science from the University of Messina. He became an instructor in pedagogy at that university in 1950, and in 1962 he attained the rank of professor. In 1963, he was given charge of the university's Institute of Pedagogy. He is a member of two scholarly academies and the presiding council of the Italian Pedagogical Association. In addition, Catalfamo is on the editorial boards of several collections of pedagogical studies, and he edits the journal Prospettive pedagogiche (Pedagogical Perspectives).

Catalfamo is considered a "critical personalist." His principal objectives are to synthesize a philosophically based pedagogy from the sciences auxiliary to education, and to use personalism to critique pedagogies of materialist, pragmatic, or experimentalist varieties while acknowledging their positive contributions. The basis of pedagogy, Catalfamo contends, cannot be an applied or social science, because each has a limited view of experience; a science can provide valuable infor-

mation, but it cannot pretend to have absolute solutions. Scientific knowledge must be synthesized in a philosophical pedagogy based on an adequate concept of experience, accounting for multiplicity and unity. The unifying center of the variety of real experiences is the person, Catalfamo argues; the person is the point of departure, the mediating term, and the point of arrival for education. Values are given, Catalfamo teaches, and reveal transcendent Being as their source; as the person becomes endowed with values through education, he or she becomes aware of the historical and cultural process through which those values are objectified. These arguments are elaborated upon in Catalfamo's writings, including L'educazione fondamentale (Fundamental Education), 1964, and I fondamenti del personalismo pedagogico (The Foundations of Pedagogical Personalism), 1966.

A thorough study of the personalists would reveal other scholars whose contributions are worth noting. At the very least, such a list might include Armando Carlini (1878-1959), a philosopher of spiritual liberty and explorer of the various approaches to Catholic epistemology, morals, and religious teaching; Raffaele Resta (1876-1961), who had strong interests in philosophy of religion and philosophy as related to school legislation and administrative law; Michele Federico Sciacca (1908-1975), an encyclopedist of pedagogy, religion, and esthetics, author of textbooks, and organizer of conferences; Gaetano Santomauro (1923-1967), who sought a synthesis of religion and life through the establishment of teaching and cultural centers; Marcello Peretti (b.

1920), whose early interest in instructional methodologies gave way to intensive study of education and religion as related to family life; and Roberto Zavalloni (b. 1920), a Franciscan priest and psychologist with credentials from the universities of Louvain (Belgium) and Chicago, who has published in Italian and English and is considered a fine writer on moral and esthetic education.

The Place of Personalism

The personalist movement was and is a significant (but not dominant) force in Italian educational thought. After the demise of idealism, personalism remained as the most viable spiritualist philosophy to oppose the materialist philosophies of the laic schools. The developers and sustainers of personalism were Catholics, but it would be wrong to conclude that the personalist philosophers were heard only within institutions of the church. There were personalist philosophers teaching in state universities and serving in state education councils from the end of World War II through the 1960's. With an overwhelmingly Catholic population and a strong Christian Democrat party in power, Italy could not have afforded a separation of church and state to the degree of excluding such scholars from state organizations. Therefore, while commanding attention within the church, the personalists were like their opponents of Deweyan, Marxist, or problematicist tendencies in contributing to the debates on education and the mixture of approaches that characterized Italian schooling and Italian public life in that era.

CHAPTER IX

ADDENDA, REFLECTIONS, CONCLUSIONS

Any attempt to summarize educational thought or activity in a recent period of a given country's history is fated to be incomplete. Education, after all, is a major enterprise in modern countries. From its complexity emerges the likelihood that some educators or some educational activities will have escaped the investigator's attention. The constraints of time and space, moreover, will force the investigator to eliminate some available material, to condense it, or to focus on certain facts and persons while virtually ignoring others.

The purpose of this study has been to examine Italian philosophers of education and their work in a twenty-year period between 1945 and 1965. Its plan has been to devote one chapter to each of the major trends (the filoni, or "strands") that were influential in that period, focusing on the major efforts of two or three representatives of each group. The name of other important figures have been listed in the text for those who may wish to carry on the work of studying them. There is much more that could be done in Italy alone, and beyond Italy there are other countries whose contributions to contemporary education are under-researched and are not well represented on the library shelves of Ameri-

can universities.¹

Several tasks are reserved for this chapter. One is to outline the contributions of some of the prominent Italian educators of the post-1945 period who are not easily placed within the major schools or tendencies. Another is to demonstrate that Italian philosophy of education, while properly Italian in many aspects, has not been carried on in an environment of intellectual isolation; rather, Italian philosophers and educators have been well aware of the contributions of foreign scholars and have referred to them frequently in their writings. Clearly, Italian philosophy of education belongs to the general culture of the West.

After an examination of Italian scholars and their views on education, the reader may wish for a summary of the central concerns that unite the Italian pedagogisti and of the unique positions they take on many issues; both aspects of their work will receive further attention. Finally, it will be pointed out again that education as a social enterprise does not operate in a cultural or historical vacuum. Major historical movements and events of the 1945-1965 period created echoes within the schools and universities of Italy; in return, the philosophers and educators contributed in various ways to the history of their time. It is difficult to specify the role of academics in bringing

¹On a pleasure trip to Yugoslavia, the investigator discovered a fine pedagogical museum in downtown Belgrade. Obviously, a tradition and a literature of education exist in that country. What is now required is an American scholar, capable of reading Slavic languages, who would be interested in undertaking the research.

about the events that mark the close of the period; nevertheless, it is evident that those events led to major reassessments of education in Italy.

School Reformers and Utopians

The preceding chapters have been constructed to provide a useful "road map"² of Italian educational thought. The clearest roads led through the universities, where pedagogia is a philosophical subject provided in the coursework for teacher trainees (in the teacher training institutes) or for those aspiring to various positions in the school hierarchy. In the universities, pedagogy is systematically ordered and an accessible subject. Professors of various philosophical tendencies present their views in the lecture halls or in frequently held academic conferences, and they publish articles in scholarly journals. Because of the accessibility of information, the university is an excellent starting place for the investigation of educational thought.

All educational thinkers are not university professors, however, nor do all of them fall into a few neat conceptual categories. There are significant variations within the field of education, in Italy as elsewhere.

²Father Nanni of the Pontifical Salesian University suggested the term "road map" to describe a survey of this sort that deals in sketches and generalities and allows others to fill in detail as they are so inclined. Interview, April 1, 1982.

Some of Italy's important educators who have made theoretical as well as practical contributions to the science have been practitioners involved in teaching children. For example, if reasonably well-read Americans are asked to name an outstanding Italian educator, the name that will usually spring to their lips is that of Montessori, whose fame as a schoolmistress is international.

The facts of Maria Montessori's life are often repeated in education classes. She was born in Chiaravalle (Ancona province) in 1870, and was the first woman to obtain a medical degree from the University of Rome. Working in the psychiatric department of a Rome hospital, she became interested in educating retarded children. She searched the literature on educating the mentally handicapped and discovered the pioneering work of the French psychologists J. M. Itard and E. Séguin. In 1898, she expressed her interest to a pedagogical congress held in Turin; as a result, she was offered the directorship of an institute for training teachers of the retarded. Much of the training was laboratory oriented, and to further it the institute brought in retarded children who did not attend public schools; some had been committed to the Rome insane asylum. Montessori and her teacher trainees enjoyed remarkable success with these children.

Soon, Montessori reasoned that if her methods helped retarded children to attain a degree of normal functioning, they might have unlimited possibilities for normal children.³ She studied philosophy and

³Other Italian educators found this a highly insulting idea.

pedagogy at the University of Rome, and then, with the aid of certain supporters, she instituted the Case dei Bambini (Children's Houses) in Rome and Milan. A Montessori Committee for the dissemination of her methods was formed in Italy, and various Montessori groups were soon formed abroad. In 1909, she published her first major work: Il metodo della pedagogia scientifica (The Method of Scientific Pedagogy). It was followed by many other publications and a lifetime of study and travel on behalf of her system of instruction. Montessori found particularly fertile ground for her theories in England, Holland, and the United States, even as her success in Italy waned. She was not loved by the Mussolini regime, and she spent many years living abroad. Montessori died in Holland in 1951.

It is clear that Montessori's main interest was in the teaching of children. Her studies in philosophy and pedagogy allowed her to find some philosophical justification for her activities, but little of what she wrote was philosophical in nature. The basic principles of Montessorian education are these: pedagogy must be derived from the study of individual children; the educator must have the spirit of a scientist, not in the sense of regarding children as laboratory specimens, but in the sense of wanting to understand nature; if schools are to base their teaching on the individual, they must not stifle the child's individual expressions with authoritarianism.⁴

⁴ M. L. Lecesse, ed. Montessori: Educazione alla vita (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1975), pp. 27-38.

Montessori saw her form of teaching as more than a matter of "method"; she characterized it as ". . . an aid whereby the human personality may acquire its independence . . . a means of liberating it (personality) from the oppression of ancient prejudices about education. . . ." ⁵ Many Italian educators invoked "liberation" or "freedom" in their rhetoric, but Montessori's style of liberation found too few devoted supporters in Italy. The format of the Case dei Bambini was adopted by relatively few infant schools in Italy, but it fared better elsewhere. Because her teaching methods involved devising special materials and exercises for children and minimizing obstacles found in the adult world, Italian educators criticized Montessori's system as artificial and abstract; and because her methodology was clearly specified and graduated, she was accused of deterministic rigidity. Her dependence on science and natural observation earned her such epithets as "positivistic," "materialistic," "mechanistic," and "scientifically dogmatic." ⁶ There is also a suggestion in the critical literature that the opposition to Montessori was at least partly political. As a prominent scholar has written:

She tended to upset the relations of power. Education and children were no longer to be at the service of society, of power groups, of nationalism, of armies, of wealth, of adults; but society, economics, politics, culture, science, and reason were to be the concurrent forces in "experiencing and measuring the creative energies" of children. ⁷

⁵ Lecesse, Montessori, p. 5.

⁶ Ernesto Bignami, L'esame di storia della pedagogia (Milan: Edizioni Bignami, 1977) 3:237 et passim.

The system of early childhood education that enjoys the most popularity among the Italians is that of the Agazzi sisters, Rosa (1866-1951) and Carolina (1870-1945). Of the two, Rosa (the elder) was the originator of the approach, and she was aided by the unfailing efforts of her sister. Rosa began her career as an innovative preschool teacher whose work came to the attention of the director-general of education in Brescia province. Experimental schools were soon opened following her model, and Rosa turned her attention to clarifying her principles and trying to perfect her methods. She was interested in the Froebelian system of education but sought to reinterpret Froebel in an open manner, free of the rigidity of that approach. She avoided announcing philosophical principles of either a scientific or spiritualistic type. In her later years, Rosa Agazzi was an untiring organizer of conferences and in-service courses for teachers.

The premise of the Agazzi schools is simple: the school must follow the model of life in the (idealized) family. Agazzi schools are called scuole materne (maternal schools) because of their homelike atmosphere and emphasis on nurturing child care. Here no concessions are made to the small child in terms of special equipment or downsized furniture. The Agazzi schools have full-size furniture in order to teach children to cope with the adult world; and teaching materials for crafts, science, or arithmetic exercises are ordinary objects that children find or parents donate. Each child is encouraged to keep a collec-

⁷ Remo Fornaca, Pedagogia italiana del novecento (Rome: Armando Editore, 1978), p. 41.

tion of cianfrusaglie--literally "bits of junk," such as pebbles, match sticks, and bottle tops. What has probably endeared the Agazzi system to the conservative, family-loving Italians is its adherence to middle class values:

. . . the correct use of the Italian language; hygiene; tidiness; order and commitment to work; social conduct; correct nutrition; sensitivity to music, poetry, and theater; thrift; love for simple things; the habits of observation, reflection, and religiosity; love of country and respect for authority; and all of this in a social and cultural cohesiveness aimed at avoiding social class disruptions and confrontations."⁸

Still another approach to early childhood and elementary education was pioneered by Maria Boschetti Alberti (1884-1951). Boschetti Alberti was not a native Italian, despite her family origins. She was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, and spent most of her life in the Italian-speaking Swiss Canton of Ticino. She attended a teacher-training school in Locarno, Switzerland, and began teaching at the age of fourteen. In 1916, Boschetti Alberti went to Italy to meet educators and observe their activities; she discovered a Montessorian school in Muzzano and remained there for a year, keeping a diary which she later published. When she returned to Switzerland, she was assigned to a school in the town of Agno which she organized on modified Montessorian principles. The hallmark of Boschetti Alberti's school was an atmosphere of beauty, tranquility, and high moral ideals, which she summed up in the phrase scuola serena (the serene school). Although she began with third-grade children, her school eventually came to include older children through

⁸ Fornaca, Pedagogia italiana del novecento, p. 32.

the age of fifteen. Among those who admired her work and corresponded with her were Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice and Adolphe Ferrière. Maria Boschetti Alberti was an active teacher for thirty-one years; illness eventually forced her into retirement, but her notebooks and diaries served to inspire other teachers.

The education of the poor was a special concern of Don Lorenzo Milani, who was born to a cultured Florentine family in 1923. He was educated at the University of Milan and seemed destined for an academic career, but the force of a religious conversion led him to prepare for the priesthood. Assigned to the parish of San Andrea in Barbiana, rural Tuscany, he opened a school for the peasant boys who had finished elementary school and had few prospects for further education. Don Milani's approach to teaching was unconventional and politically unorthodox. When he published a book about his teaching experiences in 1958, the book was quickly withdrawn by the Holy Office because of the controversial nature of its contents. In 1965, Don Milani became embroiled in a controversy over conscientious objection to the Italian draft laws. There was a court hearing that provided much indirect publicity for the school at Barbiana, but it did not endear Don Milani to the conservative clergy. He died prematurely in 1967. A book of letters by Don Milani's students has been translated into several languages and distributed widely.

A particular concern of some Italian educators has been for the extension of educational facilities and opportunities in impoverished

areas, particularly the South. In the cause of schooling for the Mezzogiorno (the entire area south of Rome), no name stands out more than that of Gaetano Salvemini (1873-1957), a native of Bari province. Educated as a historian, Salvemini became a professor of history at the University of Messina in 1901. He was a radical democrat in politics, an admirer of Mazzini, and an opponent of the conservative clerics who influenced Italian schooling in the South. Salvemini was one of the founders of the National Federation of Middle School Teachers, a group with a laic orientation. He was a frequent contributor to socialist journals and a colleague of Rodolfo Mondolfo, the radical academic. In 1925, after the Fascist takeover, Salvemini founded a clandestine political journal; in 1929, he and other opponents of Mussolini formed an underground group. Between 1934 and 1946, Salvemini was in exile in the United States, holding the chair of History of Italian Civilization at Harvard University. He returned to Italy after World War II and accepted a teaching position at the University of Florence in 1949. Throughout his career, Salvemini devoted much attention to the social, political, and economic problems of southern Italy. A posthumous book of writings on education, Scritti sulla scuola (Writings About School), was edited by Lamberto Borghi and published in 1966.

Up to this point, the educators mentioned as being outside of conventional academic groupings have been those with specific practical or political concerns. Among the university professors of education, however, two stand out because of their unorthodox thought about the

nature and purposes of education: they are Aldo Capitini and Carmela Metelli di Lallo, sometimes regarded as the "new utopians."⁹

Aldo Capitini was born in Perugia in 1899. As an instructor in a teacher-training school in 1933, he refused to join the Fascist party and was dismissed for his obvious disloyalty. He associated himself with the liberal-socialist movement and the major underground group of the anti-Mussolini Partito d'Azione (Action party). After World War II, Capitini helped to found the Centri di Orientamento Sociale (Centers for Social Orientation), an organization dedicated to peaceful revolution, local autonomy, self-management and nonviolence. Increasingly, he became attracted to the cause of peace and nonviolence; he developed an admiration for Mahatma Gandhi and, in later years, for Martin Luther King. From his postwar chair in pedagogy at the University of Perugia, he advocated social and educational renewal based on principles of civil and religious liberty and a strong but nonconfessional moral code. Among his more important publications are Nuova socialità e riforma religiosa (The New Sociality and Religious Reform), 1950; Il fanciullo nella liberazione dell'uomo (The Child in the Liberation of Humanity), 1953; La non violenza oggi (Nonviolence Today), 1962; In cammino per la pace (On the Road to Peace), 1962; and Democrazia e autonomia nella scuola e nella vita sociale (Democracy and Autonomy in School and in Social Life), 1964. Capitini died in 1968.

⁹Mauro Laeng, I contemporanei (Florence: Giunti Barbera, 1979) pp. 749-750 et passim.

A somewhat more unusual personality was that of Carmela Metelli di Lallo (1914-1978?). She received a degree in philosophy at the University of Florence in 1936 and was soon employed as a teacher of philosophy in state teacher-training institutions. In 1959, she became an instructor at the University of Padua; between 1965 and 1971 she taught at the universities of Milan and Trieste, and in 1971 she returned to Padua where she remained until her death. A careful study of the language of education led Metelli di Lallo to the conclusion that most educators intend to modify human conduct for some future social purpose, according to an ideal of a future society; hence they are implicit utopians. This discovery led her to study explicit utopian thinkers from Rousseau and Tolstoy to B. F. Skinner and Aldous Huxley. She analyzed their premises and presuppositions, and she subjected them to a philosophical critique, pointing out their strengths and faults and the common values they express. Metelli di Lallo came to believe that the common aspirations of utopian thinkers could be evaluated and distilled into a better formulation, and she suggested that the true utopia might be a type of anarchy (intended in a nonvulgar sense), a society neither punitive nor libertine in practice. Her development of pedagogical anarchism was cut short by her death.

The individuals referred to in the preceding pages are but a few of the many who have contributed to the body of Italian educational thought, either as philosophers of education or as innovative educators. Only a few are known at all outside of Italy, and their existence and variety presents opportunities for further scholarship.

Voices from Abroad

In the earlier chapters of this study, there is abundant evidence that neither Italian philosophy nor Italian educational thought developed without reference to the work of foreign scholars. Italian philosophers of education, while aware of the unique concerns of Italian history, culture, and education, have been eager to place their thought within the larger cultural context of Western European civilization; and in their research, they have found sources of inspiration among the philosophers and educators of Europe and America.

Some obvious presences in Italian philosophy and pedagogy are those of the classical Greco-Roman philosophers and of European philosophers of the Renaissance, enlightenment, and romantic periods; the names of Kant and Hegel frequently appear. The "classical" European educators are also invoked, particularly Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart.

Within the well-defined movements in Italian pedagogy, there are tendencies to refer to particular foreign educators and philosophers. There is a naturally strong international cast to the Deweyan "active education" movement, wherein the principal foreign influence, of course, is Dewey himself.¹⁰ The Deweyan activists point out their close ties to the New Education Fellowship and often refer to northern Europeans who

¹⁰According to Jo Ann Boydston and Robert L. Andresen, John Dewey: A Checklist of Translations (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), there have been nineteen Italian translations of books or major articles by Dewey. Many are still in print and are available in the bookshops that serve university students.

were involved in that movement or admired by its partisans. Among the most prominent are Claparède, Decroly, Demolins, Ferrière, Freinet, Cousinet, Lietz, Geheeb, Kerschensteiner, Reddie, and Badley. Some translations of their works are available in Italian libraries and bookshops. The Deweyans also recognize (and translate) the contributions of Americans whose work is close to that of Dewey, particularly W. H. Kilpatrick, Ellen Parkhurst, and Carleton Washburne. In recent years, there has been increasing interest in Jerome Bruner, whose structuralism is sometimes seen as a corrective for the overnaturalistic emphases of the Deweyans.¹¹

Marxist educators have been sufficiently interested in the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin to translate selections from those writers and prepare commentaries on their writings. In the field of education, works by Krupskaya, Makarenko, and other Soviet educators have attracted the attention of Italian Marxists, and they have become widely known among scholars in education. Among the Eastern European educators whose views were heard after 1965 were Bogdan Suchodolski, a Polish scholar whose Socialist Pedagogy appeared in Italy in 1967, and Stanko Gogola, a Yugoslav philosopher who participated in educators' conferences in Italy.

The Italian personalists have derived considerable inspiration from French personalists (Renouvier, Mounier, Maritain) and from other religiously-oriented French philosophers (Pascal, Bergson, Blondel). Not

¹¹Mario Santagata, Storia della pedagogia, 3 vols. (Seregno, Milan: Editrice Ciranna e Ferrara, 1979), 3:191.

all of their sources are French, however; in their publications they allude to a wide variety of foreign educators and philosophers: Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Husserl, Marx, and Dewey are a few of the names that appear, as well as the psychologists Thorndike, Pavlov, Watson, Adler, and Köhler.

The point of the preceding discussion is that Italian pedagogy is not, and has never been, monolithically Italian. From Galluppi's discovery of Kant to contemporary translations of British, American, and Soviet educators, the Italians have sought to learn from foreign thinkers and to integrate their work into the international body of literature on philosophy and education.

Common Themes and Differences

The attempt to designate thinkers as members of certain "schools" or traditions is useful but may inadvertently obscure basic similarities of concern even while carefully delineating positional differences. In order to understand the pedagogy of a nation it is well to acknowledge unifying commonalities as well as the individual and ideological peculiarities that have arisen in actual historical circumstances.

Obviously, all Italian philosophers of education are educated Italians in spite of differences in preparation. What the foreigner first notices among them is a conventional style of academic writing that is the earmark of Italian scholars. Respectability virtually demands such rhetorical features as lengthy sentences, a vocabulary of rare and elevated words, syntactic complexity that sometimes approaches

opacity, a penchant for extravagant figures of speech, and frequent allusions to classical, Renaissance, and enlightenment personalities. Only the more iconoclastic (Ugo Spirito, for example, or Lucio Lombardo-Radice) may dare to write in a more direct, journalistic style, but even they sometimes reveal their academic origins. A cynical foreigner might be tempted to dismiss Italian scholarship as a body of merely pompous rhetoric were it not for the suspicion that there is something involved in the enterprise that is not immediately apparent; probably, it is the force of tradition in the Italian mind.

In Italy, schools and teachers do an active job of convincing the young that they are part of a cultural and intellectual tradition. The emphasis was probably strongest in the Mussolini era during which most of the postwar philosophers of education were youths or young adults, but it has never been entirely absent from the schools since the time of national unity and the first true state schools. It is likely, then, that Italian scholars have internalized the ideal of a cultural and intellectual tradition to uphold, and to do any less would be unseemly. A less charitable view of Italian intellectuals is that presented by the historian and social critic, Giorgio Bocca:

For the Italian, the true intellectual is one who occupies himself with ideologies, transcendence, systems, grand hypotheses, and utopias; and who meanwhile spends his life begging powerful barons for endowed chairs or seeking cooperative projects, commissions, literary prizes, and fellowships with the meanness and shrewdness of a famished servant.¹²

¹²Giorgio Bocca, In che cosa credono gli italiani? (Milan: Longanesi & C., 1982), p. 27.

However one wishes to interpret the phenomenon, the Italian scholar is wedded to a style that may sometimes stand in the way of lucid exposition. Occasionally the scholar fails to notice some of the possible interpretations of his rhetoric, as may have been the case with Giovanni Gentile, who seemed to understand neither the political uses made of his pronouncements nor the actual intentions of the regime that he so avidly supported. As pointed out in the introduction to the present study, one of the hazards of working in the Italian language is that of dealing with frequent and deliberate ambiguities.

Closely allied to Italian scholarship's respect for tradition is its emphasis on sustaining and improving a living Italian culture and integrating new facts and ideas within the boundaries of that culture.¹³ The business of paying homage to the collective entities of culture and society is engaged in by all educators and philosophers. It is particularly noticeable among the historicists and idealists, but others are required to acknowledge the power of collective society. Borghi, for example, must argue vigorously for the social nature of morality in Dewey's system;¹⁴ the Marxist Lombardo-Radice asserts that ". . . individual destiny is also always collective destiny . . .";¹⁵

¹³Even the most outspoken social reformers find much that is worthwhile in Italian culture; the Marxists and Deweyans, for example, have sought to find points of social resonance for their essentially foreign ideologies.

¹⁴Lamberto Borghi, L'ideale educativo di John Dewey (Florence: La Nuova Italia Editrice, 1955), pp. 23-29.

¹⁵Lucio Lombardo-Radice, L'educazione della mente (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1961;1977), p. 168. This is not an unusual position for a

Agazzi, a Christian philosopher, posits sociality as a category of spiritual activity.¹⁶ Clearly, radical individualism is not an option for these thinkers. For the Italian, the individual is an entity of less importance than society (and its primary unit, the family). The words "individual" and "individualism" tend to be used in pejorative contexts, or with apologetic or explanatory phrases attached. In no case does the Italian philosopher or educator see the individual as having potentialities equal to or surpassing those of the collective; rather, the individual must be educated for the sake of society.

Despite their admiration for collective phenomena, however, Italian philosophers of education of the 1945-1965 period agree that society and its schools are in a deplorable state. To a large extent, they point to the schools' formalism, aridity, and lack of pupil engagement as evidence of a variety of social and pedagogical ills. Their diagnoses and recommended cures differ considerably. It is interesting, but not surprising, that most of the educators' remedies are directed at schooling; for while no philosopher defines education as exactly equivalent to schooling, the only formal structure that performs educative functions and can be analyzed and reconstructed in a deliberate way is the school. They perceive that in any institution there is room for improvement; and the offered improvements range from better concepts of

Marxist to take; but it illustrates a concern shared with more conservative philosophers.

¹⁶ Aldo Agazzi, Saggio sulla natura del fatto educativo (Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1951), p. 182.

history or morality or freedom to entire systems of instruction based upon social, political, or ideological concerns. Metelli di Lallo may be correct when she intuits that there is something utopian in every social philosopher, that each has his or her own vision of the ideal society. The contending schools and variety of opinions may also illustrate the spirit of free expression that pervaded Italy in the post-Fascist era, or even the discontent of scholars of particular convictions with the often unsatisfying compromises that were necessary (and are still necessary) to keep Italian institutions functioning.

Some Common Premises

Similarities among Italian philosophers of education go beyond mere matters of style and favorite targets of rhetorical attack. It would be shallow to suggest that the tendency of various scholars to discuss the same or similar issues is only the result of a certain fashionability of those issues. There is a loose but discernible structure in the pedagogical arguments presented by most of these thinkers, and it is based on common assumptions and on questions that almost inevitably arise from the nature of the material being discussed.

Most Italian educators agree, for example, that in order to develop a pedagogy one must have a general view of humanity and human society. Education is first of all a human activity (and one may recall Agazzi's insistence that only human beings are educated). It is also a particularly social activity, no matter how much autonomy is imputed to the educand; the presence of others (including teachers) is understood

as a necessary feature of the educational process. Accepting these points, the philosopher of education must deal with questions about the nature of the individual human being and his or her actual or ideal relationship to general human society. At the human level, all must deal with the ancient problem of the one and the many. Having rejected the idealists' identification of the individual with society, the thinker must find new and more adequate social formulations. The effort to understand education in a social context leads to questions of morality that are likely to arise whenever two or more people (actually or hypothetically) interact. Other questions that arise involve definitions of freedom and authority. Such considerations often lead to a vision of the ideal society. For the Italians, philosophy of education is and has always been inseparable from social and moral philosophy.

The concept of education implies a learning process, and to a limited extent, Italian philosophers of education have considered the meaning and implications of human learning. Those lines of investigation, however, are usually tangential to examinations of the social functions of education; the mechanisms of learning are left to psychologists, who (as De Bartolomeis argues vigorously in La pedagogia come scienza) are best equipped to develop those more scientific aspects of education. The philosopher, in fact, is more interested in what is learned than in how it is learned. The content of learning is of especial importance when it is seen as a body of knowledge mediated through the social milieu; then the philosopher defines it as "culture." The

education process, for most Italian scholars, is one of enculturation-- of coming into a culture. How the cultural material is to be understood or whether the culture itself is in need of transformation is a matter for scholarly debate. Beyond that point, questions of content learning resolve into matters of curriculum and methodology on which the philosophers of education offer only broad observations. That final area is no longer the proper province of pedagogia. Its concerns are best dealt with by those in the allied field of didattica (which nevertheless should be firmly based on pedagogical principles.)

Variations in Formulation

On every essential point in education there are differences not only from philosopher to philosopher, but especially among the larger groupings of philosophers. If these differences (in the Italian context) have not yet become obvious, a few examples may help to illustrate them.

For the idealist, man and society are properly determinations of culture, which is the process of transcendent universal Mind in history; society is the present historical reality that embodies culture, and it is that in which man must exist. In such a worldview, the individual becomes a function of society, worthy and meaningful only in the pursuit of social goals. (The term "individual," in fact, has little meaning for the idealist, for in that system it is impossible to separate the individual from society.) Thus, what the individual learns must be "cultural" in nature and must socialize the learner; any other program

is unthinkable. Morality is the will of society toward its own good, and it is a morality that the individual must internalize completely. Under such a concept of morality, freedom can be little other than doing one's duty gladly and voluntarily; this means willingly obeying the authority of the state and striving to overcome one's individualistic tendencies. Idealists favor a humanistic curriculum (as the most historically valid), and they are tolerant but skeptical of methodological innovations, accepting only those that contribute to social learning as they understand it.

The problematicist rejects transcendental entities and sees society as an ever-present reality, always in the process of change and usually in need of reform. The principal philosophical function of the individual is to criticize the social organism (to say "but," as Ugo Spirito remarks). Education, in order to contribute to the reform of society, must be critical in nature and free of dogmas. Of course, all "metaphysical" views of humanity and society are rejected as dogmatic. Banfi's description of the social origins of education is naturalistic and similar to Dewey's. Morality, for the problematicist, is in a state of flux and evolution, and is a matter for constant reexamination. While the outcomes of education are necessarily social, society is not a monolithic authority external to the individual. The freedom to criticize allows individuals, groups, and social classes to challenge authorities and old doctrines and to reconstruct society as contemporary conditions require. For the problematicist, the curriculum must be

modernized and as broad as possible. Science and the social sciences are favored, but the humanities are allowed in modified forms for reasons having to do with social and historical perspectives (without the tedious and anachronistic recitation of Greek verbs). Methodology is subject to criticism and change, but it must never become captive to dogmas, old or new.

Deweyans are even more inclined than problematicists to accept science and naturalistic explanations. They are also more tolerant of system building. They accept that education is social, but the doctrine of interests also allows a considerable degree of individual learning within the social (e.g., classroom) context. One of the basic Deweyan doctrines is that all learning is essentially self-teaching (a doctrine that was strangely perverted by the idealists), but the notion of self-teaching never excludes the possibilities of benign influences being exercised by others (teachers and schoolmates). The presence of others is especially important in the development of an adequate morality, as Lamberto Borghi argues. Freedom, as understood by Laporta, is the possibility of expending energy without unnecessary societal constraints. Morality, however, dictates that free energy is not to be used irresponsibly; the Deweyans tend to posit freedom as a condition of social undertakings. For Deweyan educators, the curriculum is heavily scientific in emphasis, and they encourage experimental methods of teaching according to scientific precepts.

The Marxists, like the problematicists and Deweyans, are social reconstructionists, but with a very particular vision of the ideal society. While attacking the dogmas of religions and right-wing philosophies, Marxists generally fail to notice the dogmatic nature of their own doctrines. Their view of man and society is obviously that provided by dialectical materialism (more accurately characterized as dialectical historicism); similarly, there are definite doctrines of Marxist morality that stress social responsibility and economic and class equality. The Marxist position on authority is ambiguous because it is revolutionary; the Marxist student must resist the ethos of the (evil) bourgeois authority, while seeking to implement a social ethos that is cooperative, communitarian, and egalitarian. That ethos describes the "good" society, if it were to exist, and such a society would be the benign authority whose dictates it would be foolish and backward to resist. Freedom is a social and economic goal (freedom from poverty, unemployment, class oppression), but hardly an individual goal (freedom to do as one pleases or to disregard the demands of others). What is to be learned in school is first of all ideological and then overwhelmingly scientific and technological, for science and technology must be used to serve humanity and the revolution. Probably as a result of the disastrous methodological experiments conducted in the U.S.S.R. in the 1920's, Marxists tend to advocate traditional methodologies and a strict, authoritarian classroom atmosphere.

The Catholic personalists' view of humanity is dependent upon theological understandings: human beings are the erring but beloved creatures of a transcendent God. Human destiny is eternal, and humanity's goal is not merely an improved version of human society; social life must be a preparation for the heavenly life to come. For the personalists, the concept of "individual" is replaced by that of the person who exists within society but is not totally identical with it. Each human being is a value in his or her own right; social relationships (including those in the classroom) must be based on a profound respect for the worth and dignity of the person as a creature of God. Morality is derived from religious principles laid down for the preservation and protection of persons and for the maintenance of the special relationship of man and God. That ethos must permeate Christian education. Freedom is primarily a spiritual concept for the personalists. It is in the mind (equivalent to spirit) that persons are free to seek their own dignity, integrity, and salvation, or even their liberty from earthly impediments. The enculturating function of the school is important (as Agazzi suggests), but the absorption of human culture by the young has an ulterior purpose: it is a step in the development of spiritual beings. While authority may be given to some, it is unjust for them to abuse it; educators must not oppress the young. In curriculum, neither science nor the humanities are to be despised, but all learning activities must be pursued within a larger context of human culture, history, and civilization. Teachers, out of concern for the mental and

spiritual growth of their charges, must abandon arid and authoritarian methodologies and adopt those that are more humane and experiential.

A Matter of Influence

Whatever philosophies and ideologies may have motivated the pedagogisti to offer solutions for the problems of Italian schooling (and by extension, of Italian society), it is important to realize that these were the schemae and systems offered from the lecterns of Italian universities and teacher-training institutions. The opportunity to influence young philosophers and future teachers was not missed; it is especially evident, for example, in the activities of the Dewey-inspired School of Florence. Nevertheless, any philosophy or ideology that moves into the schoolroom must confront the moderating factors of legislation and (political) administration. Important decisions regarding what is taught, who teaches it, and by what method, are made at the legislative and administrative levels; they are political decisions, especially in a nation with a centralized system of public schooling. Ironically, while those decisions reflect the ideological or philosophical viewpoints of legislators and administrators, there is never a clear pipeline from the university professor through the teacher to the child. If one raises the question of "influence," then, it appears to be just that: a matter of relative influence rather than of absolute control, to degrees that are difficult to measure because of the peculiar dynamics of the state political and educational machinery. All that can be safely concluded is that philosophers of education intended to influence their students,

and through them the schools.¹⁷ At the very least, it is evident that some pedagogical tendencies (e.g. Deweyan and Marxist) enjoyed greater popularity than others (e.g. historicist and idealist) in the post-World War II era.

The Historical Dimension

The period between the end of World War II and the mid-1960's was a time of great cultural and political adjustments for Italy. The Mussolini regime, for all its shortcomings, had lasted for twenty-three years, and, thanks to its totalitarian fervor, it had created a stable frame of reference for a generation of Italians. Whether they were active Fascists or not, Italians of the 1920's, 1930's, and early 1940's knew the ideology and the peculiar dynamics of their society. At the end of the war, the Fascist establishment was swept away: the Duce was gone, the Fascist party was dissolved, and the former German allies were now called war criminals.

The postwar political changes certainly affected Italian intellectuals in general: artists and academics of all sorts, including philosophers and educators. Fortunately, few philosophers had been wholehearted supporters of Mussolini. Even Gentile, martyred for the Fascist cause, had sometimes harbored doubts. The academics' participation in

¹⁷The possibility of applying philosophical concepts to education is always more easily pursued within the context of private or confessional schools, where experimentation is less hampered by bureaucratic interference than in state schools. Whether church schools in Italy have been eager to implement the suggestions of the personalists is a matter not investigated in the course of this study, but it offers an intriguing avenue of research.

Fascist "cultural" activities seems, in retrospect, to have been a sham endured for the purpose of retaining academic appointments. To such persons one might impute selfish motivations or moral cowardice, but not a will to do evil. There were some complicitous Italians as well as complicitous Germans, but Italian professors were not Fascist thugs. Professor Bottai, for example, Mussolini's last peacetime minister of education, refrained from indulging in the propagandistic bullying and zealous excesses typical of Party Secretary Starace; after the war, Bottai enjoyed a quiet retirement. Philosophers such as Ernesto Codignola and Ugo Spirito who had supported the regime up to the eve of the war energetically repudiated their former political sympathies, perhaps only to maintain their academic credibility.

For Italians, the result of the Allied victory was a political and ideological pluralism for which many were ill prepared. The need of those who abandoned Fascism and actual idealism was to find suitable new systems of belief; most intellectuals succeeded.¹⁸ The practical effect of the abandonment of actual idealism, which for many had been a reaction to positivism, was to put idealism in the analogous position of being reacted against. Aldo Agazzi therefore characterizes the post-World War II period as the "double reaction" against both positivism and idealism.¹⁹

¹⁸It should be recalled that the actual idealists retained some academic importance into the 1960's (about the time of Codignola's death), but they enjoyed much less prestige than before the war, and representatives of other schools had been gaining favor since the end of the hostilities.

The options available in the fields of philosophy and education in the immediate postwar era mirrored those in the political field. (Italians instinctively recognize the political character of education.) Of Italian politics, it is commonly said that there are three camps to which one might belong: Catholic, Marxist, or laic. While that is true in general terms, it fails to account for the subtle differences that exist within those groups, and it incompletely describes the politics associated with the academic world. There were complex considerations that affected the group identifications of scholars in the postwar years.

The Catholics, for example, represented an established force that had been present in the Fascist era, although in those days it had been subjected to much state interference. Indeed, one of the political upheavals of the post-1945 period was the changed role of Catholics from social critics to the dominant political group (through the Christian Democrats). In intellectual matters, however, their influence fell short. Many of the younger scholars, disillusioned by the realities of the war, found it unfashionable to be "dogmatic" and "metaphysical." If Fascist dogma had been responsible for Italy's recent woes, then all dogma was suspect. Was there much difference, some asked, between obedience to a Pope and a monolithic church and obedience to the Duce and a monolithic Fascist party? Moreover, the Christian Democrats in power behaved as a disappointingly conservative group. For the reform-

¹⁹Aldo Agazzi, Panorama della pedagogia oggi (Brescia: La Scuola Editrice, 1953), p. 166 ff.

minded intellectual, they were unappealing, especially as they proposed no sweeping social changes. Their philosophy was essentially of two closely allied varieties, Neothomism and personalism, and no other choice was readily offered. Christian radicalism was not a noticeable force until the 1960's, when Don Milani publicized his fight against critics. In brief, the Italian intellectual who might be baptized, married, or eventually buried by the church was not always likely to seek its guidance in political or philosophical matters.

For those who had been inspired by the wartime anti-Fascist underground and by the examples of such leaders as Gramsci and Togliatti, Marxism was an attractive option. Marxism had always drawn a following of socially alienated intellectuals, and it continued to do so in the postwar years. What the Marxist academics lacked was a tradition of sound Marxist-oriented scholarship. They were mathematicians or historians or philosophers, trained in their disciplines by older, more conservative scholars. The Marxists' ideological fervor motivated them to engage in political activities, but not until the 1960's did they seriously begin to employ their scholarly expertise upon academic questions of some political import.²⁰ The Marxists' turn to "committed" scholarship contributed to their visibility in the universities during the volatile times of the late 1960's.

²⁰See, for example, the debate over the existence of Marxist pedagogy occasioned by Manacorda's historical investigations. Further discussion is provided in Chapter VII of the present study.

For those academics who wished to express radical or reformist opinions without labeling themselves as orthodox Marxists, there were other options in the postwar era. Within the "problematicist" group, two curiously leftist figures served as examples: Antonio Banfi, who was a staunch member of the Communist party but not a doctrinaire dialectical materialist; and Ugo Spirito, an ex-Fascist who professed admiration for the U.S.S.R. and the People's Republic of China while claiming to loathe dogma of any kind. Some of the Deweyans (e.g., De Bartolomeis, Broccoli, and Rugiu) chose to criticize Italian society and education from a leftist standpoint, but at the same time they sought to retain "new" or "activist" education in their formulations.

The peculiarities of the third group, the laics, are many. Although nominal supporters of the anticlerical and non-Communist left (socialists and social democrats), their philosophical directions must be described in a more diverse manner. For many, especially those attracted by the early postwar vitality of the New Education Fellowship, a Deweyan or activist philosophy of education seemed promising, although it was always more palatable if synthesized with some of the essential features of the Italian cultural tradition. So Borghi, Laporta, and Visalberghi, for example, worked on integrating Dewey with Italian views on morality, law, and psychology.²¹ Despite the vigor of the Deweyans,

²¹To every proposed innovation in technology or the social sciences, some conservative Italian pundit is likely to intone "Questo per noi e assurdo"--"This is absurd for us," implying that it might be well enough for lesser peoples. Surely the Italian Deweyans had to labor under the dread of hearing that charge.

other kinds of laics have existed in Italian university circles. One might name problematicists, utopians, and in recent years, language analysts. There was even an Italian attempt at existentialism, represented boldly by Abbagnano, but that essentially Franco-German movement had little resonance in Italy; Abbagnano found his closest allies among the laic pragmatist Deweyans.

There is probably considerable merit to the notion that the Italians, having first abandoned positivism and then idealism, were compelled to react publicly against both; it is evident in their publications. Every school of pedagogical thought presents its particular arguments against actual idealism. The salvos fired at the idealists are particularly loud in the early postwar years; by the 1960's, idealism had become something of a straw man, but it was still permissible for Deweyans, Marxists, and others to attack the idealists' errors. Yet the characterization given by Agazzi, while insightful, provides only a broad generalization about the philosophical and pedagogical activities of the 1950's and 1960's in Italy.

The philosophers and educators of that period were acutely aware of, and therefore in reaction to, one another. The postwar removal of Fascist personnel from the universities and the gradual retirement of the idealists left positions open in academia. It was a time of opportunity, but also of uncertainties. Who would predominate in the university chairs? It behooved scholars struggling to establish their credentials to read what the others were writing, and to present their own

positions in the strongest possible light. The political struggles in the Italian parliament were to some degree repeated in the universities. Every book and most articles published in that period contain references to mistaken positions taken by philosophical opponents. The Deweyans and problematicists, for example, lost no opportunities to criticize those of a more dogmatic nature, a criticism that might apply to idealists, but also to Catholics and Marxists if not indicated by name. On their own part, the historicists, Marxists, and Catholics were quick to point out the shortcomings of "naturalistic" and "active" education, referring to the Deweyans.

There were no clear-cut victors in the struggle for academic eminence, but a combination of favorable historical and political factors created opportunities for the Deweyans to predominate in a number of major universities. There were other universities that were bulwarks of Catholicism (especially in the far Northeast and the South) or occasionally of other tendencies. By and large, the Marxists were the latecomers, having entered other fields before they ventured into pedagogy. Whether the rhetoric was strident or refined, the process of scholarly dialectic was basically genteel and conducted according to the time-honored principles of academic debate. Professors of opposing tendencies attended conferences, presented papers on issues of common concern, and sometimes served on committees together. It seems as though few were prepared for the disturbances that swept through the universities in 1967 and 1968, and for the demands made upon educators and politicians to reform or revolutionize Italian society.

After the New Left

The upheavals of the late 1960's changed the balance of academic and intellectual power more than they changed the political structure of Italy. The protests, occupations, and riots took place in universities and secondary schools for the most part. Marxists and persons with allied opinions were catapulted into national prominence, and even conservatively-oriented journals in education entered into the intricate and tiresome debates on educational reform. Some of the laic academics, sensing the changing tide of public (or student) opinion, expressed increasingly radical ideas. The old idealists virtually vanished; and the more conservative of the Catholics engaged in defending church tradition were less audible than newcomers such as Don Milani who advocated "liberation" theologies. Traditionalists who faced the new world bravely sometimes found themselves speaking to small audiences.

How the actions of Italian educators after the 1960's will be interpreted by scholars is so far a matter for speculation. The attempts of those scholars to cope with newer political realities is outside the scope of this study. It is subject matter worthy of another research effort. The possibility of such an investigation is attractive, however, and its outcomes could be interesting in their own right. Whatever has to do with Italy cannot be uninteresting.

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