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CESARE BARBIERI COURIER

Perspectives on Italy

*Essays in Honor of
Michael R. Campo*

Trinity College
Hartford, Connecticut

Perspectives on Italy

Essays in Honor of Michael R. Campo

Borden W. Painter, Jr.
Editor

Special issue of *The Cesare Barbieri Courier*
Cesare Barbieri Endowment for Italian Culture
Trinity College Hartford, Connecticut
1992

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PREFACE

This volume is dedicated to Michael Campo to honor his career as a teacher at Trinity College from 1952 to 1989. The essays in it come from a small sample of Professor Campo's many friends, colleagues, collaborators and students here and in Italy. The memoir by his friend and colleague of many years, George Cooper, touches on his whole career and brings out his great love for every age and aspect of Italian life. We have chosen to concentrate attention on modern Italy with emphasis on American connections to Italy. Together these contributions represent a token of the profound appreciation shared by hundreds of us who have benefitted and learned from Michael Campo's untiring efforts to open Italy, its people, its history and its culture, to Americans. In this modest fashion we pay tribute to his life's work as an italianista beyond compare.

Recently I read again Michael Campo's report of the first Rome program in the summer of 1970. He had to deal with everything from plumbing problems to Roman males who "descended like a pack of wolves on the premises, swarming all over the Aventine Hill," but when it was over he rejoiced that "our program in Rome was like a return to Eden--a return that is, to a time when faculty and students enjoyed an enthusiasm in the experience of teaching and learning." His words and that whole report testify to his ability to cope with the nittiest and grittiest of problems while never losing sight of that noble goal of joining together teachers and students to experience the joy of learning about the riches of Italian life and culture.

I wish to thank Patricia De Martino of Rome for originally suggesting this volume. Pat, like Michael Campo, is a native of Connecticut who has come to know and love Italian history and culture. She is a long time resident of Rome and was a member of the staff of Trinity's Rome Campus in its early years. Andrea Bianchini of Trinity's Department of Modern Languages and Literature has served ably as a friend and advisor on all sorts of editorial issues. She and the other members of the Board of Trustees of the Cesare Barbieri Endowment for Italian Culture have enthusiastically supported the project from its inception over four years ago. During those four years no one has done more than Sandy Andrews to bring us to a successful conclusion, and I thank her for the patience and care she has shown in typing and assembling the manuscript.

Borden W. Painter, Jr.
October 1992

SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS CIRCUMSPICE
MICHAEL R. CAMPO: A PERSONAL MEMOIR

George B. Cooper

When one is invited to write about the career of a man of astonishingly diverse talents, indeed of aptitudes that seem to defeat one's search for a pattern, it is tempting to accumulate the material for a dossier and tie it together in a narrative based on one's recollections. I have known Michael Campo for almost half a century and an inventory, a raw file, would be an easy task. I have called this paper a memoir and am aware of the pretension suggested by that term; it does, after all, allow the unavoidable intrusion of my own opinions and sentiments. I find the idea of a memoir congenial because it permits one to ruminate and to propose some patterns that Mike himself might not see. If it appears to be sentimental, I will admit that it is based on a deep admiration for the man. I shall try, nonetheless, to moderate any suggestion of an eulogy by attempting to describe him, warts and all.

In the summer of 1989, Inez and Mike Campo and I were sitting on the rear patio of the Camoldolesi convent on the Aventino. We had just returned from a lively walk through the Circus Maximus -- the brisk pace set of course by Mike -- and the serenity and beauty of the rambling buildings of the convent sparked our memories of the summer nearly two decades earlier when Mike had the imaginative hardihood to establish the first session of the Trinity College Rome campus. We were relaxing in an area of the site that had been inaccessible back in June of 1970. It was then a rabbit-warren of ancient twists and turns that served the austere needs of the good suore who made up the strictly cloistered community. Occasionally giving accommodation to pilgrims, the convent comprised small cells, somber meeting rooms, and a refectory. So far as I know, the severely simple life of the nuns continues untouched by the changes that have taken place in the physical plant. In my sporadic visits to the convent over the years I have only seen one suora although one is aware that somewhere the others are looking after poultry and cultivating vegetable plots. Under the same roofs, nuns give

one the impression that Trinity has not changed their regimen; nor have the nuns interfered in the institutional life of the college campus. It is a felicitous modus operandi that would perhaps be impossible to attain in a strictly American college environment. There is something distinctly Italian about the arrangement, a lot of the Camoldolesi spirit in it, and a lot of Mike Campo in it as well.

Mike had gone to Rome in the summer of 1969, had been enchanted by the beautiful location, and had engaged the services of an agent to make plans for a Trinity summer session on the site. It was an ideal location: the Aventine Hill overlooks the Tiber on one side and the Circus Maximus on the other. Within walking distance of the Colosseum, the Forum, and other monuments of Roman antiquity, it has easy access to public transportation and to the fascinating facets of Roman daily life -- markets, sidewalk cafes, and gardens.

Nineteen seventy was a risky time to take a group of American undergraduates to Europe, or indeed, to take them anywhere. The antic behavior of students on some campuses had turned from legitimate debate about war and racism to an attack on the vulnerable colleges and universities and on the symbols and practices of discipline that had been the hallmark of the academy. The injection here of what might appear to be an obstinate and gratuitous opinion is pertinent to my memories of that first summer. We had an excellent and well-behaved student body drawn from Trinity and from several other institutions. Mike insisted from the start, in a firm and civil way, on strict adherence to reasonable rules, on a code that suggested to some a parietal system that was at the time being rejected in America. Rules were set up against excessive noise, the hiring of motorbikes and against unannounced absence for jaunts to other parts of Italy. His insistence on punctuality, attendance at class, and participation in excursions, ensured a decorum that made that pioneer summer such a grand success. In bluff good humor, but I fear that its connotation did not amuse Mike, he was referred to as il Duce. It was a jocular term; all of us, staff and students, were aware of the wide and heavy range of responsibilities he had to carry on his shoulders. Let me count some of the burdens Mike faced that summer.

In the first place, he was supervising two projects at the same time in different parts of Rome. In addition to launching the school at

the convent, Mike had ultimate responsibility for a Trinity archeological program that required daily visits to the Villa della Pineta Sacchetti, a pensione-style hotel on the other side of Rome. He was directing and teaching on the Aventine (his class in Italian soared from twenty to thirty-four after the first week); then at intervals Mike went by car -- it often took fifty minutes at peak traffic time -- to face the problems of the neophyte diggers who had to be transported to introductory lectures being offered by the Gruppo Archeologico located just behind Castel Sant'Angelo. The students made the not unreasonable complaint that the lectures were in Italian. This was contrary to the assurances that Mike had received before the sessions started. In the midst of taking the Aventine group on a tour of the catacombs, Mike finally produced an English interpreter for the archeologist. The catacombs come to mind because I have a dim and perhaps imprecise recollection that he found there an interpreter in the person of a Biafran studying at the University of Rome. Many of these problems today seem comic and their Waugh-like resolution, as in the case of the Biafran, even more so, were added to the tasks that daily faced Mike at the convent. Six double rooms never materialized; several small rooms were being completed the day we arrived. In the emergency, Mike found accommodation for several students in small hotels close by. Meanwhile, there were blown fuses, plumbing problems, bad lighting, and a complete absence of minimal storage space. Mike calmly and firmly -- this was no forum for uncertainty -- held convocations at which he dealt with questions and complaints ranging from bus schedules, textbooks, rescheduling of class times, broken slide projectors, and trivial collegiate complaints about food. One student complained that strawberries had been the dessert for three days in a row; and there was the usual unsophisticated advice that the Italians should stop serving pasta with every lunch.

Mike had designed a curriculum and assembled a staff that attested to his keen academic acumen. There were courses in art, music, classics, and sociology. Several students, under the tutelage of Paul Smith were reading The Marble Faun and other American and English novels concerned with Italy. Most of the teachers were from Trinity -- Mitchel Pappas, Alan Tull, Paul Smith -- and Mike had enlisted the services of Professor Arnaldo Franchetti in music and David Belmont

(Trinity '59), a brilliant young classicist from Washington University in St. Louis. Professor Len Moss of Wayne State taught courses in the sociology of contemporary Italy and he and Mike guided walks around Rome in their sparse free time during the day and at night when they explored the delights of Trastevere and the Capitol. The antiquities and the customs and traditions of Rome, and indeed this can be said of so many Italian cities, can be a lesson in taste and good manners. Several students adopted a kind of cosmopolitan persona. Some of them whom I see nowadays from time to time are quick to recall that the summer of 1970 was the most memorable summer of their salad days.

But to return to 1989 when the Campos and I sat on the tastefully arranged patio on the Aventine. The Trinity College Rome campus had been an established program since that pioneer summer session. In 1971 it became a semester program as well. Undergraduates from Trinity and other colleges enrolled for either the fall or the spring semester. It was staffed by Trinity faculty members representing several departments and by excellent teachers from Italian academic institutions. Mike's wide acquaintance in Roman intellectual circles brought guest lecturers to the school every term. Trinity undergraduates had an opportunity to hear and talk with Carlo Levi, Alberto Moravia, Antonio Barolini, and Luciano Guarnieri. Students were exposed to the artistic and musical life of the city. Served by an excellent administrative staff, the students could indulge their cultural appetites by attending sessions of the Italian parliament, visiting the museums and galleries, taking excursions to Florence and to Naples, and in many ways recapturing some of the breadth that one usually associates with the eighteenth-century Grand Tour. The Trinity faculty members who have had the opportunity to direct the semester programs or offer courses in them have stamped the Rome sessions with an academic validity that unites the Aventine campus and the Hartford campus into an institution that goes beyond the mere foreign program stage. Independent assessments agree that it is perhaps the strongest American campus in Rome. I suggested to Mike that autumn afternoon that he should indeed be proud of his achievement because he was, from the first summer session in 1970, the begetter of the whole project. He turned to me and answered with a slight and uncharacteristic tremor in his voice. Yes, he was proud to look around

and see the academic and physical growth of the place. In perfect candor, he suggested that he liked to think of the Rome campus as his monument. I was reminded then of the words Sir Christopher Wren's son wrote for the architect's plaque in St. Paul's. "If you seek a monument, look around you."

On reflection, I feel that it is not only at the Rome campus that one can see and feel a reminder of Mike's achievements. He has earned monuments in a number of activities, the most recent being his establishment of nine Elderhostel programs in Italy and his post as coordinator of all of them under the sponsorship of Trinity, the only American college that is responsible for an entire program in one foreign country. The story of Michael Campo's designing the first Italian Elderhostels in Rome in 1983 and the subsequent creation of eight more locations in subsequent years will be described in due time. I should like to suggest that all of his foreign ventures derived from the opportunity that came to him when the Barbieri Center was established in 1958 and he became its first director.

The Center, now called the Barbieri Endowment for Italian Culture, was established as the result of a generous grant from the Cesare Barbieri Foundation. The funds came from the imaginative liberality of Dr. Barbieri, a distinguished scientist and inventor, who wanted to repay his debt to his native Italian culture by raising an appreciation of that heritage in American academic life.

Michael Campo had been on the Trinity faculty for six years when he became director of the Center. He immediately set about the activity of making the Barbieri more than the sponsor of one or two annual lectures. The Barbieri presence was noticed as soon as he assumed his voluntary post. His ambition was to make the Center a Trinity institution that would reach the greater Hartford area and the national and international world of Italian studies as well. Mike worked with several department chairmen to co-sponsor a number of lectures, concerts, and exhibitions pertinent to Italian culture. H. Stuart Hughes spoke on the Risorgimento, G.E. Kidder-Smith on architecture, Mario Praz on nineteenth-century literature, Glauco Cambon on poetry, and Thomas Bergin on Dante. Giuseppe Prezzolini lectured on Florence and Luciano Guarnieri, the distinguished Florentine artist, exhibited a number

of his drawings and paintings. Indeed, those of us who served on the original board of the Center were amazed by the wide range of Michael's acquaintances and friendships among the eminent italianisti. There were piano concerts by Maria Luisa Faini and Noretta Conci and we had occasion to meet and hear Olga Ragusa and several other scholars of things Italian. I can recall Trinity's President Albert C. Jacobs saying at the time that he had rarely witnessed a special endowment, ostensibly to bring speakers to the campus, move so fast and in so many different directions to produce so many visible and concrete results. Visitors often made enquiries about the location of the Center. I know that it was President Jacobs who first suggested that the Center was perhaps in Mike Campo's head.

There was some amusing confusion in 1959 about the site of the Barbieri. A fortuitous combination of circumstances gave the Center a certain cachet as the result of a visit of the Rector of the University of Bologna, Dr. Gherardo Forni, to the Trinity campus. The Rector was a friend of Dr. Jerome P. Webster, a Trinity alumnus of the class of 1910, a distinguished surgeon, and a member of the board of trustees of the college. Dr. Webster was also a productive scholar who had written extensively on the pioneer work done in sixteenth-century Bologna in plastic surgery. The Rector brought as a gift to Trinity in honor of Jerome Webster, the marble shield of the Gelati, one of the illustrious literary academies of the ancient university. Dr. Webster was a great friend of the new Center and he successfully tied the visit of the Rector to the presence on campus of the recently established Barbieri. The Rector was met by several officers of the college and by the Barbieri board in the cloister of the college chapel. Some of us suspected, when we heard the translation of Dr. Forni's remarks, that he was possibly under the impression that he was in the Barbieri Center. There was a happy ambiguity about the occasion and I am under the impression that Dr. Webster, a man of infinite wit, and Mike Campo, were the congenial impressarios of it. The Gelati shield is attached to the wall of the cloister; I prefer to look upon it as the first international recognition of the Barbieri Center, and as a fitting tribute to the delightful Dr. Webster who became, shortly afterwards, a Fellow of the Barbieri.

We had an early example of Mike Campo's imaginative energy

a few months after the Center came into being. In November, 1959, the first issue of the Cesare Barbieri Courier was published. Professors Bergin, Prezzolini, and Pacifici hailed it as one of the most lively and stimulating little magazines in this country. It appeared twice a year and was the sole creation of its editor, Mike Campo. He solicited articles and book reviews, edited the material, read proof, carried the material to the printers, kept the subscription list, and supervised the final mailing. There are many possible explanations of this Campo habit of doing things alone. Some might see it as a form of witless bravery or egotism. Perhaps. Actually, I think it could spring from his energy and his willingness to take responsibility, full responsibility, if anything goes wrong. I hasten to add that it was also based on his frugality. He was reluctant to shift the burden of Barbieri business to the college secretarial staff and even more adverse to spending money for extra help. I have ample evidence of this craving to save money in his various enterprises. He never sacrifices quality but has a sense that the best does not have to cost the most. I can recall several walks with Mike in Italy after he undertook the task of running the Elderhostel programs there. One day, in Verona, we walked to some interesting parts of the city, partly for my edification but also to enable Mike to find a shop that would make photocopies of some hostel material for a saving of 100 lire a page. The dollar was then buying something in the range of 1300.

His enlarged responsibilities as coordinator of all Italian Elderhostel programs happily brought Susan Malzone as assistant to Michael Campo and to Professor Borden Painter in the latter's capacity as Director of Italian Programs. But for nearly three decades, Mike taught his courses, had his stint as department chairman, edited the Courier, and expanded the campus and Rome programs whilst literally, as his friendly critics observed, sharpening the pencils in his office.

After ten years of sustained publication, the Courier came to an end. Michael himself explained in candid terms the reasons for the unhappy end to a grand enterprise in a prolegomena to a special issue that appeared in 1980 under Borden W. Painter's editorship. Mike wrote: "It came to an end not because it had outlived its interest for subscribers... The problem was essentially that a single editor with no clerical staff could hardly cope with the burdens of maintaining

subscription lists and countless other complexities of the publishing world. The rising costs of paper, printing and postage also made continuance prohibitive."¹

Professor Bergin of Yale wrote a handsome tribute to the Courier on its tenth anniversary and before he knew that the Courier was about to close. Each issue of the Courier was to Bergin a "happy surprise." In an article in Italica he wrote that the Courier "ranges far and wide, choosing what it likes, and has succeeded in presenting, more or less on schedule and with unflinching good taste, some twenty numbers over the last ten years. A glance at the cumulative index suggests an antipasto -- but an antipasto di lusso..." Taking one issue at random, he noted that every article had substance, every poem grace and authenticity.²

Michael attracted contributors of the highest quality: Louis Tenenbaum, Giuseppe Prezzolini, Glauco Cambon, Olga Ragusa to name a few. Professor Bergin's opinion was that Mike was ready for anything provided only that it was acceptable to his own high standards.

Professor Bergin always looked forward to the covers and to the charming incidental illustrations that brightened the pages of the magazine. In many ways, the magazine was a family affair; a large number of the drawings were the work of Inez Campo, a talented artist whose impeccable taste had a great deal to do with the beauty of the format.

In 1965, in the midst of his single-handed editorship of the Courier, Mike joyously added to his busy life a new project: he proposed that the Barbieri Center produce a film on Dante, a documentary that would draw from the iconographical riches in museums here and abroad, from the Vatican, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the British Museum, the Yale Art Gallery and other public and private collections. He undertook the job of planning the film, tracking down the drawings, paintings, engravings and the topographical and imaginative material illustrative of Dante's work and times. He painstakingly obtained slides and other copies of rare items, solicited the necessary permissions, and enlisted the considerable talents of Professor John Dando to help assemble the material. John Dando provided the spoken narration for which Michael wrote the script. He invited Professor Arnaldo Franchetti to compose what turned out to be a brilliant score. The film was shown

in 1966 to record audiences in the Goodwin Theatre of the Austin Arts Center.

But this is a memoir and I must exercise the option to ruminate and tell the reader who Michael Campo is and perhaps discover how he got that way. I vowed to put in this paper things that would come as a surprise, at least one surprise for each reader.

Michael Campo was born in 1923 in Waterbury, Connecticut, the second child and only son of Italian-born parents. This articulate man of most excellent diction once told me that as a small boy he spoke a dialect and what he calls "poorly learned English." He claims that it was hard for him to understand what was going on in kindergarten. When he reached the sixth grade, his family moved to Hartford and Mike completed grammar school at Noah Webster School and four years later was graduated from Hartford Public High School. His interests in high school centered around the humanities and music. Hartford Public High School was one of the oldest and most distinguished high schools in New England, second in age, I believe, to the Boston Latin School, and a feeder to the best colleges in the Northeast. Its principal was also known by a title, Master of Hopkins, which was reminiscent of its early foundation.

Michael's father, whom I had the privilege to know, came from a skilled-artisan family in the Abruzzi; in Hartford he maintained his own custom tailoring establishment that was one of the busiest and most estimable in the city. John Campo was a man of wide cultural appreciation, an opera enthusiast, and a man effortlessly steeped in the traditions of his native land. A gifted storyteller, he competed for excellence in toasts and eulogies that were part of the transplanted customs of the Italian community. His shop was on Asylum Street close to the old Allyn House Hotel, now the site of the Civic Center. Michael's parents encouraged him to study the piano and to attend rehearsals at the Hartt School of Music. He had a patrician taste which I would define as a love of art and music and literature for their own sake and a sound appreciation of the seamless quality of these subjects. He made plans to apply for admission to Amherst College. A disastrous fire at his father's establishment made it impracticable, indeed impossible for Mike to go away to college. He took a job at the Hartford Machine

Screw Company after leaving Hartford Public High School in June and began working the night shift that ended at 7 a.m. In the late summer of 1941, some serendipitous encounters with some of his father's customers persuaded him to apply to Trinity and he was admitted in late August, 1941, long after the deadline for entrance, after a brief interview with Dean Thurman Hood and the director of admissions.

Mike matriculated at Trinity in September but continued to work the night shift at Hartford Machine Screw until the spring of his freshman year. He looked upon the start of his sophomore year in the fall of 1942 as the real beginning of his college career. He joined the debating society and began the serious study of French. The only Italian offered at the time was a non-credit informal course taught by the indefatigable Professor Louis Naylor who generously gave up several late afternoons a week to teach a beginning Italian class.

Mike's skills in diction and his love of language were nurtured by a course on the foundations of English given by a brilliant young polymath, Edward D. Myers, for whom Mike has always expressed profound respect. Professor Myers had devised a course in linguistics that included an intensive course in Latin and Greek and a brilliant and pertinent application of that material to the study of the English language. I believe that Mr. Myers' textbook is the only one that Mike kept from the sophomore courses.³

Mike joined the army at Fort Devens in June, 1943 and was sent to Fort Knox where he underwent training as a qualified armored tank driver. A few months later he was sent off to England and then to France where he was transferred to the medical corps and worked as a pathologist's assistant at a field hospital. I first learned about this side of Mike's career in 1991 at the Elderhostel in Riva on Lake Garda when I overheard him engaged in a highly technical discussion with an eminent American doctor. I learned, among other things, that Mike had assisted at thirty autopsies and had prepared slides of human tissue for histological examination. I believe that he thought seriously about pursuing a career in medicine after working for several months at a prisoner of war hospital near Soissons.

After three years of service, he returned for his junior year in the autumn of 1946. He decided to concentrate on Romance languages and

had his first serious exposure to Italian in a regular course given by Professor Naylor. He also began the study of Latin with Professor Notopoulos and Spanish with Professor Gustave Andrian.

Many members of the faculty and several of Mike's friends thought that he would pursue a career in the theater. And there was convincing evidence for this opinion. In the fall of 1946, Professor J. Bard McNulty revived the Jesters, a drama club that had its origins in the late nineteenth-century. It had been coached by several faculty members and often by their wives.⁴ McNulty was an able director and he quickly assembled a number of mature students; the student body that year and the next was made up largely of veterans. There was a mature vitality about the returning veterans that invigorated the college and happily influenced the younger students who inherited that appealing atmosphere. As older college activities were revived -- debate, drama, the political science club, even the stamp club -- there was a no-nonsense and almost joyous participation by young men who had been sharpened beyond their years by experiences in the war. I can vividly recall, when I returned to teach history, that my students had been to many of the places we were talking about in medieval history. I once asked a young man if he knew anything about the Benedictine foundation at Monte Cassino. Yes, he told me laconically, I helped blow it up!

The first play that Bard McNulty directed that first autumn was "Golden Boy." They rehearsed on the top floor of Seabury Hall. Mike Campo played the part of the old Italian father and Ken Wynne had the role of the young boxer. In the spring, McNulty presented "Jacobowsky and the Colonel" with Mike as Jacobowsky. For this production, Bard had arranged for the use of the Avery Memorial Theater. It was probably the most widely advertised run in the history of the Trinity Jesters; one member of the club, a veteran with a pilot's license, flew a plane over Hartford and literally showered the city with leaflets about the play. The performance had fine reviews from Hartford's two papers and many of us were persuaded that Michael Campo would doubtless go on to Broadway.

In June, 1947, a group of Jesters established their own summer stock company in a barn near the Sharon Inn in northwestern Connecticut. Again, nothing seemed to daunt the interest of mature

students. They transformed the old barn into a pleasant theater, appropriately called the "Pitchfork Playhouse." Donald Craig and George Dessart were the directors, Mike Campo was the main actor, and Otis Charles (later to be the Bishop of Utah) was publicity manager, ticket seller, and props manager. The group worked the entire summer and produced ten plays. The first was "The Male Animal" with Mike in the lead role. James Thurber, the author of the play, came to see it the first night and climbed the ladder to the dressing room to congratulate the cast on a great performance. Mike played the male lead in "Arms and the Man," "They Knew What They Wanted," and in "Dear Ruth." The Pitchfork Playhouse was continued by the Jesters in the summer of 1948 after Mike had been graduated from Trinity. The theater exists to this day; it is the Sharon Playhouse and has no Trinity association.⁵

In his senior year, Mike continued his work with the Jesters when Don Craig, their first student director, produced "Men in White" and "Masque of Kings." Mike had a commanding presence on stage and impressed his audience by his fine voice, an uncanny facial control, and a subtle use of his eyes. One faculty wife suggested that Mike should act in a movie because "the use of the camera close-up would turn attention away from his height which is not excessive."

Like most versatile young men, Mike regarded his talents as hobbies. His serious entrance into postgraduate study was the result of the encouragement of his several language teachers. It was Professor Gustave Andrian who assessed Mike's unusual and natural aptitude for language and literature and who convinced him to go to graduate school. Long past what would now be considered the deadline for applications, Gus Andrian invited Mike to go down to Baltimore in July, 1948, in order to meet some members of the department of Romance Languages at Johns Hopkins. Hopkins had one of the most distinguished departments in the United States what with Edward Williamson, Henry Carrington, Leo Spitzer, Don Pedro Salinas, and others who had created a kind of golden age environment at the university. Despite the late date (shades of 1941 and Dean Hood at Trinity), Mike was admitted and started a brilliant graduate career. He won the first Fulbright Scholarship awarded to a Johns Hopkins student. He married Inez in 1950 and went to Rome to do research for his doctorate. His thesis on

Pirandello was completed in 1954 after he had been an instructor at Trinity (four courses and laboratories in those days) for two years.

Italian language study had been kept alive before the war by Professor Naylor's informal classes and there had been only one course offered in the immediate post-war period. When Mike joined the department in 1952, Italian studies began an uninterrupted growth that was largely Mike's work. The integrity of the Italian courses was certainly the reason for the designation of Trinity as one of the recipients of the generous endowment from the Barbieri Foundation. The Foundation was not interested in starting Italian studies but in nurturing what was already underway and filled with promise. The growth of Italian in the department and its role as a magnet so far as the Barbieri grant was concerned is perhaps Mike's first monument in the field of Romance Languages at Trinity. The second would be, of course, his work as founder and director of the comparative literature program at the college.

The Barbieri Center, as I stressed earlier, immediately took on the tasks that Mike Campo defined for it. Starting in 1958, every semester produced programs imaginative and rich in their diversity. There were concerts, exhibitions, films, poetry readings, and symposia. In 1961, the Center joined with the Wadsworth Atheneum and presented a special salute to Italian art of the previous hundred years. The same month he was starting the Courier, he organized a three-day symposium on contemporary Italian music, featuring an exhibition of original scores, scenic designs from several operas, and two concerts. Several composers and musicologists, including Riccardo Malipiero and Newell Jenkins, participated in sessions that had a wide appeal in Connecticut, indeed in New England; the symposium introduced to a wide educated audience the sound of Italian music beyond the familiar classical repertoire. One likes to think that these were the activities that Dr. Cesare Barbieri had in mind when he made the bequest that established the Foundation.

In the late 1960s, Mike began to talk at our board meetings about the possibility of a Rome campus to serve students who might wish to spend a summer of study abroad. He drew on his own Fulbright experience to stress the advantages of exposing young Americans to the

intellectual excitement of a structured stay in Rome. One suspects that in all of Mike's enterprises in Italy, and they are all educational in nature, there is a strong strain of gratitude for the experience afforded him when he studied in Rome in 1950-1951. He had literally been surprised by the joy of the experience and wanted to share it with others.

This may explain why Mike strikes some people as being rather possessive about his role as a cicerone. I recall several occasions in Rome and in other places after he had established Elderhostels when he would insist upon taking me on a walk to a hidden statue or to an arcane inscription. I enjoyed his look of triumph and the way he searched my countenance for interest and approval. Some of them struck me as being a trifle hazardous so far as the law was concerned. There are always his favorite views that require going to places clearly marked vietato l'ingresso. Not too long ago in Riva, he blithely walked through a construction site marked with severe warnings to point out a faded yellowish-brown plaster wall on which was commemorated a long-forgotten visit of the Emperor of Austria in 1854. How he first discovered these things baffles me. His antiquarian knowledge of Italy, be it on Capri or in the Umbrian hills or the Dolomites, is combined -- a rare intellectual achievement -- with a broad understanding of Italian history and the subtle links, now sadly missed in an age of specialization, with the social and cultural life of the country. This further defines the patrician mind that grasps the pertinence of materials and ideas that often defy the usual academic categories.

The reputation of the Barbieri Center was without doubt the reason for the conveyance in 1969 of an important historical archive to Trinity College. The donor who modestly referred to himself as "an American soldier" had been with an Allied intelligence unit on Lake Garda in late April, 1945. The young officer was part of a mission charged with the responsibility to raid Mussolini's villa which served as headquarters of his Republic of Salò, the last-ditch fascist republic. The story has been brilliantly told in Professor Painter's introduction to the special issues of the Barbieri Courier which he edited in 1980.⁶

The American officer and his British colleague arrived at the villa without suffering any casualties among the hundred and fifty men who had been tapped for the mission. The officers did not know that

Mussolini had been executed the day before by Italian partisans and encountered no obstacles to their occupation of Mussolini's office. After an English colonel had gone through the documents to remove material of immediate interest to intelligence headquarters, he invited the American to keep the remaining papers as "war trophies." This offer was important for future historiography; in the helter-skelter of events, it is likely that the papers would have been destroyed or at best scattered and never retrieved intact. After the war, the American returned to the Hartford area and kept his "trophies" in his attic. In the mid-1960s, he decided that they should be given to a college that already had a good track record in the area of Italian studies. A friend, Attorney Morris Apter, suggested that the papers be given to Trinity where the Barbieri had already earned a solid reputation for serious and innovative projects in things Italian. The "American soldier" and Mr. Apter visited Mike Campo and when Mike assessed the historical importance of the papers, the matter was taken up with the Trinity administration and particularly with the Trinity librarian, Donald B. Engley. Engley had a wide knowledge of archives and a realistic sense of the legal ramifications of storing papers that could become a diplomatic embarrassment. It was finally agreed, after meetings with representatives of the Italian government, that Trinity's library was to be the repository of the papers but that the Italian Republic would not surrender its claim to them. It was a modus vivendi that was a civilized tribute to all concerned and it remained in effect for fourteen years. The documents were made available to serious scholars who cited their source as the Trinity Papers. The papers, carefully guarded by Mr. Engley, were finally given wide publicity when Professor Painter edited the special issue of the Courier already mentioned. Five able historians of the fascist period contributed essays that relied heavily on material in the Trinity collection.

Two years after Mr. Painter's issue had acquainted the larger academic community with the contents of the archive the documents were formally returned to the Italian authorities. It was the occasion for a symposium on campus that drew participants from the United States and from Europe. It was a fitting tribute to the permanence of the Barbieri Center that Mike had directed since 1958.

I was privileged the following year to be invited by Mike to

accompany him and his family to New York when the Consul General, Dr. Giulio C. di Lorenzo, conferred on him the highest honor in the gift of the Italian Republic, the title of Commendatore of the Order of Merit. The title of nobility came as recognition of his efforts to spread appreciation of the Italian language and culture in the United States and for his diplomatic role in the return of important historical documents to the Italian archives. The title of Commendatore was continued by the Italian republic despite its royalist origins in early 19th-century Piedmont-Sardinia when it was first granted by King Carlo Alberto of the House of Savoy. The King specified that "this award will be bestowed on worthy people, not to pay them back but to stimulate others to compete for honors by performing more and more commendable deeds for the community." Mutatis mutandis (for Mike is not a Torinese of 1820) the citation is robustly apt. Mike is modestly proud of an honor that also recognizes the Barbieri Center and Trinity College as well.

Mike has enjoyed a cascade of honors and seems to be engaged in a conspiracy of silence about them. In 1978 on the occasion of his thirtieth reunion at Trinity, he received the Alumni Medal for Excellence. In 1987, St. Joseph College in West Hartford conferred on him its Humanities Laureate Award in recognition of his achievement in literary scholarship and humane studies. Mike has had an impressive scholarly dossier. His Pirandello, Moravia, and Italian Poetry was published by Macmillan in 1968. He had earlier collaborated on a concordance to the Divine Comedy published by the Dante Society of America. He has translated Italian poetry and also put into English Pope Paul VI's Homilies of Christmas and Epiphany.

There are several hundreds of older Americans who would perhaps regard the Elderhostel program in Italy as Michael's greatest monument. He has carefully selected several sites, there are nine programs in eleven cities at present, and with great skill has made them the most popular hostels in the European program. As pointed out earlier, the Italian ones are the only hostels run by one American educational institution and one coordinator. It baffles me to this day that one man could put together an enterprise that requires intricate negotiations with hotels, restaurants, bus companies, local agents, and guides. He has founded hostels in places that lend themselves to special

courses and appropriate excursions. The first hostels were established in Rome in 1983. The Elderhostel program gives older educated Americans an opportunity to stay in one place and avoid the discomforts and superficialities of ordinary tourism. Mike arranged leisurely walks and talks in Rome to acquaint his guests with classical architecture, history, and museums and introduced them to several facets of life in the city. The unforeseen problems that had come up in the first years of the Trinity Rome campus were stored in Mike's memory to supply him with the experience that was to make the Elderhostel such a grand success. In Perugia, he found a comfortable hotel and made arrangements with a nearby restaurant for meals. Buses turned up mysteriously on time to take the participants to Gubbio and Assisi where Mike had made arrangements for the requisite official guides. He often astonished the hostellers with his thespian talents.

I was reminded of his Pitchfork Playhouse days when he took a group on a bus excursion out of Perugia and we stopped at the lovely Fonti del Clitunno. Mike stood in the center of the little temple and recited from Byron's and Carducci's description of the place. When he takes a group from Desenzano to Sermione, they are treated to dramatic readings from Catullus. His running commentaries on the road bordering the west side of Garda to Riva is a delightful historical and literary medley that has been taped to be used when Mike is organizing or teaching in a program in another part of Italy.

There are now Elderhostels in Palermo, Sorrento, Rome, Assisi/Perugia, Montecatini/Florence, Padua, Verona, Venice, and Lake Garda. The programs are a mind-boggling victory of intelligent and complex planning. Mike has chosen sites that lend themselves to excursions and to trips, moreover, that are relevant to the curriculum of lectures set up at each hostel. This requires several dry-runs of preparation. He has, in addition, made himself a store house of information about everything from concerts and festivals to museum hours and the location of restaurants or cafes that will welcome Elderhostellers with cestini, box lunches. He has chosen able coordinators to supervise the several programs, persons who have informed themselves deeply in the myriad of questions and problems that might arise. Those who attend the Elderhostel in Sorrento, for example,



Michael Campo receives the title of Commendatore of the Order of Merit from Giulio C. di Lorenzo, Consul General, New York, 1984.



Pope John Paul II and Michael Campo on the occasion of the Pope's visit to the Rome Program, Ash Wednesday, 1978.

enjoy a day-long excursion to Paestum, a drive along the Amalfi coast, an opportunity to visit the museums in Naples, a visit to Pompei and Herculaneum and a tour to the cave of the Sybil at Cuma. There is a full-day trip to Capri and an opportunity to visit in a group or on one's own several delightful places on that island. All of these visits, unhurried and well-organized by Mike's able coordinator, are preceded by lectures on the architecture, history, and mythology pertinent to these places. In Padua, he has set up a program that takes advantage of the musical resources as well as the architectural monuments of the city and its neighborhood. The Lake Garda program enables hostellers to visit Mantua and Trent, to see the Dolomites and to follow Mike to Malcesine where he will quote at length from Goethe's experiences there. The program in Italy is a triumph of intelligent organization. Mike visits all of them and sometimes acts as coordinator and lecturer.

In 1987, Michael succeeded Gustave Andrian as J.J. McCook Professor of Modern Languages. The professorship was activated in 1979 and its first holder was Professor Andrian, Mike's teacher, who retired in 1987. I am sure that both Andrian and Campo appreciated the sentiment suggested by the linkage between the two of them in the professorship; Gus Andrian had played an important role in Mike's Trinity career and had introduced him to Johns Hopkins.

One cannot help but reflect on the saga that began when Mike first turned up at Trinity. The Barbieri was the first great challenge. Dr. Barbieri would perhaps be astonished to learn that the Endowment for Italian Culture holds a Lectura Dantis once a month in Hamlin Hall and intends to follow the narrative through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Scholars from Trinity and several universities have taken part in readings of the Divine Comedy that will be on the Trinity cultural calendar for many years to come; they have gone through Canto XXVII so far.

The Rome campus, now supervised by Professor Borden Painter and directed in Rome since Michael's retirement in 1989 by Dr. Livio Pestilli, is a thriving Trinity enterprise. It has had, over the years, some very important visitors including Pope John Paul II who dropped in after visiting the church of Santa Sabina nearby. The Pope had heard about an American campus on the Aventine and had instructed his driver to

stop at the Clivo dei Publicii. A photograph of the Pope and Mike having what looks like a confidential chat conveys the impression that Mike perhaps could find his way around the curia.

The Elderhostel network in Italy, obviously a Trinity enterprise because of the Barbieri Endowment, is a national monument to Mike Campo's intellectual and practical skills. There is still, perhaps, a bit of the commander about Mike's management methods. But then the custody of nine programs that spread from the Alto Adige to Palermo is a heavy responsibility that would tax the energies of a person involved in only one of them. He has the happy facility to anticipate malfunctions and, after sharpening his own pencils, makes sure that everything turns out right. I have seen Mike in Italy several times. I am sure that he has never been there on a junket.

ENDNOTES

1. Cesare Barbieri Courier, 1980 Special Issue: "Mussolini and Italian Fascism," ed. Borden W. Painter, Jr., p. 3.
2. Thomas G. Bergin: "An Anniversary--Cesare Barbieri Courier," in Italica, volume 47, number 1, 1970, pp. 119-20.
3. Edward D. Myers, The Foundation of English, MacMillan, New York, 1940.
4. The Trinity Jesters were coached from 1902 to 1930 by Olga Perkins, wife of Professor Henry A. Perkins. She trained, among others, the famous motion picture star, Richard Barthelmess, Trinity class of 1917.

5. Sue Weisselberg, "The Jesters' Own Dramatic Story," Trinity Reporter, volume 4, number 7, May, 1974.
6. Cesare Barbieri Courier, Special Issue, 1980, pp. 4-13.

GIUSEPPE PREZZOLINI AND THE AMERICAN DISCOVERY OF ITALY

Helen Barolini

Foreshadowing by several decades Van Wyck Brooks' 1958 book, Dream of Arcadia: American Writers and Artists in Italy, 1760-1915, Giuseppe Prezzolini (1882-1982), Italian author and Professor Emeritus of Columbia University, published his innovative work on the American discovery of Italy, Come gli Americani scoprirono l'Italia, in 1933. Prezzolini's work was re-issued by Massimiliano Boni in Bologna in 1971 with additional material that extended the original beyond the focal period of 1750-1850. Prezzolini refers to his earlier book as Part One in an ongoing work. Part Two, which would have carried the account from 1850 to an unspecified concluding date was never completed for, as he says in the re-issue, "Van Wyck Brooks did his work so well that he took away my desire to go further with what I started."¹

Yet the tone of the two works remain quite different: Prezzolini was interested in the whole range of American visitors to Italy, not only the artists and writers whom Brooks studied, and Come gli americani... portrays them all: honeymooners, consuls and diplomats, historians, the rich and leisured tourist, physicians and lawyers, commodores and sailors, clergymen and scientists and, of course, the poets and painters. The other major difference in the point of view is that Prezzolini was supremely interested in what impression the Americans carried away of his native Italy and the Italian people, while Brooks was interested in what Italy contributed to the work of the American artist or writer.

But characteristically, Prezzolini who is generous in his praise of The Dream of Arcadia, also voices dissent - he thinks the very title revealing of a major distortion. "Macchè Arcadia!" scoffs Prezzolini, Italy was in no sense "Arcadia". For the majority of American travelers, he contends, it was a huge museum, a kind of attic to rummage in to discover the past; for the more sensitive it was the invitation to explore sin. And, for all, continues Prezzolini, the experience of Italy was the

occasion for Americans to ascertain their morally superior position as citizens of a new unblemished, enlightened republic of united states in contrast to the demoralized, fragmented, backward hodgepodge of principalities that made up the geographical expression, Italy.

Although Prezzolini takes exception, the title Dream of Arcadia is actually very apt with its layered, even ironic meanings. Arcadia, a term used by Vergil, is the idealization of ancient Greece's rugged Arcadia into a region of rustic contentment, and was absorbed as such into English literature through Sir Philip Sidney's prose romance Arcadia (1590). The Greeks themselves used the term "Arcadian" in a derogatory sense to signify a simpleton, a kind of happy fool since the people of that region were the least intellectual, the most backward and primitive of all Greeks.

So, one can be of the Vergilian persuasion that Arcadia represents a kind of golden age of bucolic simplicity and pastoral poetry, or one can go with the Greeks and lean to Lord Byron's satiric use of the term as when, in Don Juan, he says "Arcades Ambo - id est, blackguards both" -- a far cry from Vergil's original description of his shepherd-poets as Arcadians both, Arcades ambo.

Such a serious matron as Julia Ward Howe, a three-times 19th century traveler to Italy and indefatigable organizer, writer, lecturer (and author of our Battle Hymn of the Republic), could say contentedly in Rome in 1877, "Et ego in Arcadia vixi" with no sense of irony.² Brooks seems correct in identifying the American view of Italy as a dream land of classical connotation.

The notion of an ideal landscape, and a golden age of simplicity when war and laws were unknown and people lived happily in nature, has a strong hold on the imagination. Along with Vergil we ignore the Greek put-down and equate Arcadia not with bumpkins, blackguards, or fools, but with a state of happiness; we would like to believe that a simple, rustic life is idyllic, and somehow nobler than a tense urban existence. We have had Walden, after all. But to complicate the issue, though extolling the simple life, Thoreau was a man of complex intelligence and far from simple views.

All this, then, must be weighed in Van Wyck Brooks' title, The Dream of Arcadia. Is Arcadia visualized in the 1630 Poussin painting,

"Shepherds in Arcadia" (after a Guercino painting of 1623) which shows a group around a shepherd's tomb on which is inscribed "Et in Arcadia Ego", thus bringing in the somber reminder that death comes even to perfect contentment? Or is it better realized in the two centuries later painting of Thomas Cole, of the Hudson River School of American painters whose "Dream of Arcadia" (1838) shows no hint of death but only an idealized landscape filled with happy folk against a backdrop which combines unspoiled natural settings and a Grecian temple on a hillside? Life, we can see, is idyllic. People in harmony with each other and with their surroundings. The referent in Cole's painting is said to be Ovid's description of The Golden Age in his Metamorphoses.

Prezzolini, who had a sharp sense of irony, seems not to allow that Brooks himself had it, too, when he entitled his study of Americans in Italy.

The Arcadian ideal lived on in Italy in the Accademia dell'Arcadia, a literary society founded in Rome around 1690 at the suggestion of Swedish Queen Christina to return poetic language to simpler forms in imitation of the classics. Eighteenth and nineteenth century travelers to Italy would have been acquainted, therefore, with the nobler notion of Arcadia. But can we not also read into the American travelers' enthusiasm for Italian scenes of rustic shepherds and goatherds and picturesque peasant girls in costume, an underlying notion of the backward bumpkin? That seems to be the mixed view, part conscious part unconscious, that dominates American thinking: let them be picturesque, as long as we make progress and advance.

Though Prezzolini may have missed Brooks' irony, he is true to form when he takes issue. In his long life he continued to the end to be an active writer, his death, at age one hundred, occurring one day after his last piece appeared in a Bologna paper.³ He was always the provocative, outspoken, controversial, enormously prolific maverick of both Italian letters and the American scene, and was a veritable bridge between his native Italy and his adopted country, the United States. Come gli americani scoprirono l'Italia can be seen as a study of such connection.

Prezzolini's work had a precise scope: "... to examine the reaction of Americans coming into direct knowledge of Italy."⁴ In

addition to this declared one, there was the underlying, palpable desire on Prezzolini's part that the American understand and appreciate the Italian people. Like a marriage broker, he wanted the match to work. He wanted the good things of the Americans' discovery of Italy to outweigh the bad. He also looks for originality: he esteems Herman Melville's scant thirty days in Italy more than, for instance, the thirty and more years of William Wetmore Story's Rome sojourn because Melville was the more originally perceptive and did not simply repeat travelogue clichés. When this happens, Prezzolini becomes full of approbation and compliments; when it is lacking, he spares no remarks on the traveler's intelligence.

Prezzolini, who consulted almost two hundred diaries and travel accounts, includes (as Brooks did not) an annotated bibliography which lists his source material. Each entry is accompanied by Prezzolini's candid commentary, laudatory or dismissive. A certain Mary Louise Brooks, who wrote an account of her trip to Italy, October 1843 to February 1844, is "One of those ladies who travel for diversion without any serious intention and of whom one can ask, at most, how much was the hotel and was the bed-linen clean."⁵

James Fenimore Cooper, one of Prezzolini's heroes, is represented in the bibliography by an anecdote: many years after his Italian travels, Cooper is described by an acquaintance he ran into on Broadway as having a bunch of onions in hand and speaking fervently of Italy. One can feel Prezzolini's approval. Cooper had correctly understood the secret of Italy: it takes a long past to create a climate of present pleasure...Americans have still to learn certain arts and to form certain tastes.

Just as apparent is Prezzolini's disgust at a Protestant minister named George Cheever whom he characterizes as turbulent and violent and full of intransigent attacks on Catholic Italy. It would be fascinating to ascertain whether the fire and brimstone Cheever was ancestor to modern day author, John Cheever, who spent a year in Rome in the 1950s as recipient of a Guggenheim grant and whose journals reveal an uncanny replica of many of the same reactions recorded by those earlier New Englander travelers in Italy whom Prezzolini charges with failing to go below surface judgments in order, truly, to understand Italy.

On his first night in Rome, John Cheever walks to the Spanish steps and is a little disappointed...it rains in Rome, the weather is not classical; he has been short-changed everywhere; he notes, dispiritedly, the dash and sexuality of Roman men. Later he records lying sleepless in strange beds and wondering why he ever left his cozy home. In the kitchen of the Palazzo Doria where he and his family will spend the year, the gas stove leaks...the drains are clogged...As an American he observes the ruined paint and the filth..."the flowers on Raphael's tomb are straw". And he sees the Americans in Rome, at cafes, and "they are not pretty".⁶

He reminds himself that he, too, has a past -- houses and people and an old name -- and the Mediterranean is not a part of it. "And yet," he writes, "I have dreamed of the Mediterranean for ten years; it is in some way a part of our dreams."

Was it still, in our time, the Arcadian dream? That dream which so fatally involves paradox?

John Cheever's tone, though attenuated, is that of his Puritan forebears: he carries the same moral imperatives and sense of American superiority, the same old disdain for dirt. Yet Cheever, the writer, has withal, a growing, uneasy awareness of some deeper human truth to be found in Italy's ancient stores. It would be, perforce, a truth as profoundly different to his view of the world as it was in the previous two centuries to the Americans who preceded him. "This is not," he notes, "a difference of language, race, climate, or custom; it is a vastly different approach to the wellsprings of humanity."

And in a museum, shabby and unclean, and so bone-chilling his very marrow is frozen, some truth comes through despite the surroundings: he gets, despite the bad lighting, a glimpse of an honesty about human nature. Still, the civilization on a whole strikes him, the writer, as it did the long-ago minister: licentious. The writer still carries the minister's puritanical burden of sin, Prezzolini would doubtless have noted.

As John Cheever sails from Italy, before the coast has finally faded from view, he hears a woman petulantly say, "I'm never going back...I'm accustomed to conveniences..." It is an echo from long ago.

Prezzolini's vast reading of travelers' accounts provided him a

full range of personalities, from Stephen Decatur, the naval commander who went over to clean up the Barbary Coast pirates and then dropped in on Sicily, to the prototype of the rich American who would descend in force on Italy later in the 19th century. The first, apparently, was George Crowinshield who sailed to the Mediterranean in 1816-17 in a luxury vessel he called "Cleopatra's Barge". It drew crowds of astonished spectators in Genoa and Civitavecchia when he reached those ports and such was the marvel of his ship he was visited on board by Governors and Apostolic Delegates. He anticipated the fabulous Americans who would buy up Italian palaces, titles, and art works galore. He anticipated Mrs. Cutting who bought Villa Medici, once the residence of Lorenzo Il Magnifico, Mabel Dodge who installed herself in Villa Ausonia, and Peggy Guggenheim on the Grand Canal.

Prezzolini is amusing, curmudgeonly when he feels that travelers' remarks have been unfair, uninformed and he is a fierce apologist for Italy. He notes Emerson's distraction while in Italy and says his thoughts were only on getting to see Carlyle, his Mahomet -- somehow suggesting that poor Emerson, just recovering from a personal crisis, showed a certain lack of taste.

Yet Prezzolini is far from a blind apologist for Italy; it is not a question with him (as with that incidental 1804 visitor to Italy, Stephen Decatur, the coiner of "my country right of wrong") of stubborn patriotism, for Prezzolini in situ is a biting critic of Italy.

At age twenty-one, in 1903, Giuseppe Prezzolini was already working alongside Giovanni Papini to found the literary review "Leonardo" which was to be "the expression of a group of young men in Florence desirous of freedom...universality...a superior intellectual life." That review was followed from 1908-13 by "La Voce", an eclectic, energizing magazine with a zealous, disseminating interest in culture in its broadest manifestations -- a true mirror of its editor's temperament and a vehicle for his desire to de-provincialize the Italian literary scene by searching for truth outside the narrow range of Italian art and thoughts, and to present in translation the significant authors of other cultures.

In its Italian themes issue of October 31, 1975, the Times Literary Supplement of London noted the appearance of an anthology

culled from contributions to "la Voce", published by Rusconi in Milan with a wealth of photographs and additional commentary by Prezzolini. The sixties and seventies saw a continual re-issue in Italy of Prezzolini's earlier work.

Perhaps nowhere in his formidable list of publications (57 books, hundreds of articles) does the persistent dichotomy of Prezzolini's spirit show so keenly as in his book of early American travelers in Italy. Prezzolini loved both countries; yet he seemed always to be in the position of unrequited lover because his attentions -- intense, impatient, prodding, critical -- were often misunderstood by both: the truth can be disturbing to those who are the recipients of it.

Contradiction describes him best. Prezzolini's best known biography is of Machiavelli,⁷ a fellow Tuscan with whom he obviously shares many sentiments, and in his off-hand show of spregiudicatezza he rates it on the same level of cultural importance as his work in English, Spaghetti Dinner (Abelard-Schuman, 1955), a biography of pasta.

Prezzolini, a quintessential Italian, liked to define himself as a self-made, self-taught man in the American mode. In fact, without ever having formal training, but solely by his wits and self-education, he managed, as in World War I, to be a captain without having to go through the ranks. He became a professor without a university degree, and is noted for his bibliographical contributions to Italian literature. His autodidactic culture was diffuse and divulgatory and that may have earned him the enmity of those academics who prefer to write only for and among themselves.

In Prezzolini's long repertoire of published work, Come gli americani... is the first fruit of his American experience and owes its genesis to the enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity Prezzolini brought to the new world when he arrived in 1930 to be professor of Italian literature at Columbia University and first Director of its Casa Italiana. He undertook, both as an appreciative gesture to his host country and in the attempt to foster understanding between the two cultures, to write of those intrepid American travelers who first returned Columbus' visit: who they were, what they came for, what they found, what Italy gave them to take home, and what, in the case of artists and writers, Italy's influence was on their work.

Eugenio Montale recognized, but seemed almost to apologize for, the pragmatic tendency on Prezzolini's part to come to the point without useless elaboration of abstractions. When Montale reviewed the first edition of Come gli americani.... he was not yet Italy's foremost poet, a respected critic, holder of honorary degrees, Nobel laureate, and a Senator of the Republic for life. But all his gifts of discernment were intact when he wrote, "Prezzolini has a great capacity towards the new forms of life and culture and is less than others tied down to a precise spiritual position which he must defend...He had never sought the distinction of "writer" as such in an exclusive sense; he is a diffuser of ideas and culture, immersed in life not literature."⁸

Another reviewer of that early edition was the young Cesare Pavese, later to be acclaimed in the first wave of post World War II writers, but then unknown. Pavese found on Prezzolini's part, not only an impressive collection of material, but also "an excessive preoccupation for the good name of Italy" -- a kind of defensiveness on his part in reaction to the long-ago criticisms or judgments of the American travelers.⁹ That was Prezzolini's stance; on the other hand, he also chose to defend America against misunderstandings on the part of Italian critics. He was a perennial interpreter of the one country to the other, and perennially independent. But thirty-two years of life in the states made him "unfit", as he admits, "for Italian life" when he returned to Italy in 1962. He moved to Lugano, in Switzerland, in 1967.

It's natural that Prezzolini understood Americans as well as he did and set himself with such delight to describe their early contacts with his country. Prezzolini has the direct American approach, the American passion for digging up the facts with exactness and making them readable, the American valuation of life experience as opposed to theorizing in splendid isolation from reality, the American impatience with bureaucracy, empty verbosity, pedantry, inertia, and absurd obstacles against getting a job done. What Prezzolini has in più is a brilliant, aggressive intelligence of an exquisitely Italian stamp -- and his explanation for both his American and his Italian qualities would be his Tuscan heritage. And it was, of course, in his aerie on the roof-top of 119th Street, with all New York spread below him, that he became most fiercely nativist, warmed by that incredible love for an Italy whom he

claims has always treated him as a rejected suitor.

Prezzolini's assemblage of facts and personages concerning American travelers is still a source of rich interest for those fascinated by that primary exchange between Italy and the new United States; although Van Wyck Brooks did not acknowledge Prezzolini's work in his own Preface to The Dream of Arcadia, Paul Baker in his Introduction to The Fortunate Pilgrims: Americans in Italy, 1800-1860 (Harvard 1964), does credit Prezzolini's "pioneering work". It is at the "lesson" Prezzolini wants to draw that one might, today, take pause. For while he generally admires and understands Americans, where Prezzolini draws the line is at their moral self-righteousness and this is something the travelers whom he investigates (and, indeed, all Americans, until the crumbling of their self-confidence began in the 1960s) were rarely without.

Prezzolini admonishes the early American travelers for being puritanical (including even Jefferson under that heading) and for criticizing the Italy of then for being what it was without attempting, with rare exceptions, any historical evaluation with a goal towards understanding.

He finds that after the initial shock at discomforts, the adulation of the picturesque, and the disdain for political backwardness, what the American travelers had in common was a moralizing attitude best rendered as "Why can't they (i.e., the Italians) be more like us?" What the Americans lack, says Prezzolini, is any informed inquiry or the sensitivity to ask themselves what, in fact, was the miracle that bound Italians together in a common language, a sense of cultural heritage, and an ideal of unity despite the incursions and invasions that divided the Italian peninsula politically before unification in 1860. When he finds among them those like the sculptor Thomas Crawford, the historian George Ticknor, or James Fenimore Cooper who yielded to the charm of Italy, or who were, like Margaret Fuller, a participant in the Risorgimento, he credits them with higher sensibilities and lets pass their occasional moralizing.

As a corrective to Prezzolini's over-statement of American prudery in regard to Italy, consideration has to be made of the enormous influence which English art critic John Ruskin, with his own constrained

and puritanical views, had on the thought and taste of American tourists of his day. He, more than any other figure of the 19th century, told people what to see and value in Italian art, and in the Italian genius.

Taste is formed in various ways. As Brooks points out, there was the sudden popularity of Piranesi prints with their views of Roman ruins which gave rise to a cult of romanticism centering on decline, the evanescence of empire, the Sic transit gloria mundi syndrome. Mme. de Staël exalted Italy's classical heritage in her novel Corinne, or Italy (1807) in which Corinne represented the idealized qualities of Italy over and against the more pallid English ones of her sister. Margaret Fuller attests to the novel's importance in her own formation.

Englishman Samuel Rogers' poem Italy influenced Ruskin who in turn influenced succeeding generations of travelers. Irving, Emerson, and Cooper all came back with raving reports of Italy as a repository of ancient riches -- reports tempered by the actual condition of the Italy they saw so that, in a sense, they incorporated both views of Arcadia - beautiful but dumb. Melville's notes show a reaction to the excessive romanticizing of Italy. But it wasn't until Mark Twain's irreverent remarks about ruin-gazing in Innocents Abroad that some needed perspective was brought into purview of the culture hungry tourists. Then came Bernard Berenson to be, in turn, the corrective to Ruskin and to rehabilitate the art of the Renaissance which Ruskin shunned.

Prezzolini points out that the main lesson Italy has to teach the Americans who seek her out as a venerated mother of civilization is the precious art of living. This may have been true of the period Prezzolini's book covered, that is from 1750 to 1850, and it is perhaps even more true of the late 19th century, following Italian unification, and the early 20th century when so many Americans lived abroad. But it is a diminished message for the '30s of the Fascist era when Prezzolini himself left Italy for New York. Today the message is seen in reverse: it seems to be America imparting its values and lifestyles, food and fashions onto an all too receptive Italy.

Why did those early Americans make the trip? Prezzolini's travelers were predictable: art lovers, self-made successes intent on getting culture, ladies with weak lungs and strong inheritances, impecunious writers and poets like Bayard Taylor who could live for less

in Italy, Protestant clergy who hoped to wrench the Italians from the black night of their Catholicism, readers of the classics who were drawn to the source of their readings, those, like Emerson who saw the European scene as the last of the schoolrooms still to be passed through. And, Prezzolini insists, everyday citizens who came to observe blamelessly the sins of the old world in order to return to America safe in their feeling of superior morals and politics. American political liberalism equated itself with the liberating effects of the Reformation, and thus many Americans were persuaded that Italy's freedom was in thrall to Catholic dominion over the country.

Prezzolini somewhat unfairly chastises the Americans who at that time, without their own arts and culture, had, perforce, only the standard of their democratic institutions and puritan origins to unfurl in Italy.

Some, like Prezzolini, still see all Americans as puritans and all puritans as acidic, priggish icebergs untuned to the authentic passions of nature and humankind. It's not only inaccurate, but disconcerting in the case of Jefferson whose connection with Italy showed more pirate dash than pilgrim rectitude: Prezzolini recounts Jefferson's trip to the Piedmont region to observe the quality and cultivation of Italian rice as compared with that grown in South Carolina. Finding the Italian variety superior because of its larger grain, he wanted to try it in the states but was restricted by law from taking the seed out of Italy. So he made the practical decision and smuggled out a few pounds. And Prezzolini, rather than admiring the pragmatist, decries the puritan (sic) Jefferson turned smuggler. Other times, other ways. Kruschev, in the corn fields of Iowa, and coveting such a crop for his homeland, was given seed by his American host to take back to Russia.

Those who undertook the trip to Europe in the period with which Prezzolini deals must have been driven by authentic passion; something beyond mere smugness must have induced them to crossings of up to two months without the least comfort of table, lodging, or pastime. Then, having survived storms or pirate raiders, there was the further discomfort of a long quarantine, from fifteen to forty days, in port. After noting the discomforts, Washington Irving wrote in his diary: "They liberated us seeing that we were incorrigibly healthy."

And, on land, there was travel over tortuous roads and abuses endured in passing between one confine and another, subject to frontier inspection in the multiple principalities of a pre-unified Italy: Wilbur Fisk, an eminent clergyman, founder and first president of Wesleyan University in Connecticut, found he had accumulated twenty-four visas on his passport from Florence to Nice, each of which had to be negotiated, for a price, at customs. And then there were the vetturini, or post-chaises, which at times had to be pulled uphill by oxen commandeered from the fields as writer Catherine Maria Sedgwick described. The hotels were lurid places run by unscrupulous keepers who routinely added surprises to the bill, although Bayard Taylor found that the simple country inns which were all he could afford were decent and hospitable.

George Palmer Putnam, who was to start G.P. Putnam's, the publishing house, and who noted down prices and places wherever he went as he compiled the first travel guide book for his fellow Americans, strongly disapproved of the universal habit of importuning la buona mano, a tip, even by servants in private homes. Emerson detested the ciceroni who swarmed over the ruins and wouldn't let them be contemplated except at a price. All the Americans noted and were repelled by the begging, but few, if any, says Prezzolini posed themselves the question of why it existed.

So, in the face of Italy's dishonest coachmen, slovenly hotel-keepers, prying officials, swarms of beggars, self-appointed guides and companions who demanded hand-outs, pickpockets, highwaymen, priests in over-abundance, acid wine, mouldy bread, vermin and bugs, damp beds, and the cold of unheated rooms -- why, then, make the trip?

An intelligent young lawyer, George Stillman Hillard, wrote in his Six Months in Italy that no matter the discomforts he had encountered, the pleasures of Italy far out-weighed them. Summing up: "We leave each other as friends...As in calling to mind the dead, we think only of their virtues, thus, leaving a country in which we have been instructed and amused, let us remember only what we have learned and enjoyed."¹⁰ For Emerson Italy was "the golden ambience that illuminated his life". For Fuller it was the springtime of her life restored.

Considering what they had to put up with, and what the

psychological disadvantage was coming from a raw country to one of extremely long civilization and refinement, the early American visitors do not seem so culpable of banality, ignorance, and the habit of odious comparisons. Those innocents abroad are, in fact, paragons of candor in their sentiments and admirable for having undertaken the trip at all. That they had the added benefit, in the end, of being able to compare themselves advantageously with the Old World must have been supremely satisfying. They didn't come to judge and censor; but if, in addition to the spirit's uplift, they were also morally strengthened in being able to confirm the validity of their new country in contrast to the shambles of the old, why upbraid them?

It was not to be expected that those 18th and 19th century Americans would have had the graces, say, of John Milton who, puritanism notwithstanding, made a successful trip as a humanist to Italy at a time, in the 17th century, in which religious differences might have resulted in a great deal of unpleasantness, or even danger, for him. Milton, however, had led a life of leisured study which prepared him for humanist Italy over and above the papal Italy which was anathema to him. He impressed learned Italians wherever he met them, including Cardinal Barberini in Rome who arranged a theatrical evening in his palazzo for Milton.

Humanism is tolerant, accommodating. Nonetheless, there comes a point where it can err on the side of accommodation. Leslie Fiedler's End to Innocence, another chronicle of an American encounter with Italy in the 1950s, targeted "that generation of cultivated and tolerant humanists who managed to live at peace with Fascism."¹

Much reciprocal charity is required between those who visit the alien corn and those who endure the visit...but more, surely, on the part of those belonging to the older culture and with a longer experience of civility. And perhaps Prezzolini could have made allowances and tempered his bite.

And it isn't only Americans who travel and disapprove as they look around them. Is there any fiercer critic of the objects of her travels than Mrs. Trollope, Anthony's mother, who descended upon an unprepared America in 1827 like an avenging harpy, furious with everything she saw and heard and then reported all in her Domestic

Manners of the Americans? Actually, criticism of the New World people will become a genre in itself from Dickens down to the America Amara (1946) of Italian critic Emilio Cecchi, and then some. It seems universal sport to reproach the country one goes to the trouble to visit. And compared to others, the early Americans in Italy were quite circumspect and balanced for most of them never forgot, beneath the surface annoyances and difficulties, the rich substance of Italian life whose nourishment they sought.

Italy was a double-edged Arcadia to the early American travelers, they knew they could not linger there; they had work to return to, for themselves and for their country. They saw moral purpose in work and the commitment to progress. They were destined, as God's new chosen people, to carry out afresh, in the new world what had been left incomplete in the old.

Other times, other travelers and aims. Who would think of Americans as puritans these days? They might still wrinkle noses at the seamier sights of Italy, but they'd do that in the Bronx if their package trip took them there rather than to Naples. What moves them these days is no longer the thrill of seeing sin and scandal -- they don't have to leave home for that anymore; but neither, on the other hand, can they have the old pleasure of returning home and feeling their moral triumph as citizens of God's own country. That God died and the world is one now. What moves late 20th century Americans is either the effortlessness of the group package, or their personal restlessness and rootlessness. There are no more morally superior countries; the mess is universal.

But once there was the conviction that either study was more profitable in Italy, or that dropping out to a more contented life (the dream of Arcadia) was possible there.

Today's American travelers see Italy as a place to shop and take pictures. The social category of travelers has changed and the change is for the worse, says the always pessimistic Prezzolini. Once Americans prepared for the great adventure by reading Dante; now they read phrase books to arm themselves for consumerism and heavy eating.

Other times, other inconvenience. If the beggars and gypsies are largely gone, they have only left the piazza to the drug addicts, punks

and scippatori (muggers). There is today the press of masses of people continually on the move and continually growing. There are no longer pirates in the Mediterranean or bandits along the roadways, but there have been terrorist bombs on trains, gunnings in airports, kidnappings from the streets, and hi-jacking in the sky.

Hotels and food are better these days than what they were a century and more ago -- just think of poor Keats come to restore his lungs in Rome and doomed to die in the little room next to the Spanish Steps from whose window, in despair, he hurled the abominable meals that were sent up to him. But the air, no, isn't better, nor what's left of the landscape. That famous chiaroscuro light of Rome is gone beneath a cloud of exhaust fumes; the heartbreakingly beautiful views over the Roman campagna are only to be seen in museum watercolors or read of in the personal accounts of such as Margaret Fuller who drove out at sunset to have a glass of wine at a roadside osteria and see the violet dusk come on with the dome of St. Peter's silhouetted in the distance. Who would hazard that outing today only to be locked in endless motor traffic and honking, condemned to contemplate squalid stretches of concrete slums instead of Arcadian countryside? That unique, tender landscape compounded of natural beauty and the remains of antiquity which was the nostalgic recall of a common classical past in the American dream of Arcadia, can no longer be seen for the vehicles and the urban sprawl. It's not Arcadia which informs the landscape but angustia, that narrowness and misery of spirit which is modern times.

Prezzolini saw Italy's supreme gift, the art of living well, in the sweetness of doing nothing - of having leisure for contemplation, for seeking beauty, for living fully. It is the Aristotelian ideal of the good life: that one should manage one's life to have time to think. This posits a base of economic independence and a team of servitors, which was no problem in Aristotle's day when women and slaves served men's needs. Today it's a problem and we are either too evolved or too cynical to believe in Arcadia.

Prezzolini wrote before the industrial miracle of the '60s changed Italy from an agricultural country to a frenetic modern one. And now? Now Italy is the focal point for appeals from all the world to safeguard her threatened natural and artistic beauty, to protect her

historic cities and monuments, to save the artistic treasure which she cannot stop from being desecrated, robbed, or ruined. Her new status as one of the world's top industrial nations has caught the Italian fantasia and all seem intent on material goals, the immediate easy pleasure, the quickest way to make it for himself or herself -- the protestant work ethic with a pagan twist.

The beauty and dignity of old urban centers conceived in full humanism in the measure of man's possibilities are being transformed. Cemented over, industrialized, mechanized, instrumentalized, commercialized, where is the art of living well today? The Italian boom of benessere in the '60s made the Americans, in contrast, look like innocents with their nostalgic return to simplicity and the flowering of reflective cults.

Before industrializing, Italy had already lost her cultural and artistic authority for Americans. Prezzolini recognized that the American artists most imbued with Italian life became imitative and second-rate despite the fame they achieved in their lifetimes. By the 20th century, American dependence on Europe is broken. The arts in America begin to be something just when they stop modeling themselves on Europe. American artists begin to seek inspiration in their own origins and experience. And Prezzolini recognizes that there was never the importance of Italy to American literature that there had been in the European literatures through, for example, Goethe, Stendahl, Byron. Longfellow had translated the Divine Comedy and Hawthorne had given an Italian background to The Marble Faun, but the giants of nascent American literature -- Melville, Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, Hawthorne himself in his major works, and down through Mark Twain -- felt no Italianism though Emily Dickinson could still, in a few lines, capture what it meant to the psyche:

Our lives are Swiss --
So Still--so Cool--
Till some odd afternoon
The Alps neglect their Curtains
and we look farther on!

Italy stands the other side!
While like a guard between--
The Solemn Alps--
The siren Alps
Forever intervene!

By 1959 in an article in the Italian Quarterly, Prezzolini conceded that the balance of influence was now with America. American literature was flourishing and owed almost nothing to Italy. Embittered by what seems to him a personal failure in his role as promoter of cultural exchange between the two countries he loves because he has brought no Italian fruit to bear in America, Prezzolini allows himself no comfort from the fact that the Italian influence was absorbed into English much earlier, much before there was an American literature. The great moment of Italian fertilization of English letters, begun with Chaucer, was in the first Elizabeth's reign when the Italian Renaissance was felt in full in England and produced her great age. When Prezzolini reports that Italian prestige in letters was greater in proportion to population and degree of schooling in the times of Jefferson and Franklin, what he says is true; but it is due to the course of history, not the failure of his own cultural mission.

The second World War brought Americans to Italy again and started the post-war boom of things Italian back in the states. Italian writers reached the American market in English translation although, except for a few, like Moravia, Calvino, Lampedusa, their staying power has not been great. Italian writers seem to be writing in terms of what has already been done over here, with a lag of about a decade -- minimalism arrives in Italy when it's waned over here. Or, though still producing excellent writers, as in the case of Leonardo Sciascia, they create on a canvas too small and local for a general American audience. Or, they are producing their versions of American models -- could Moravia's Io e Lui have existed if Portnoy's Complaint hadn't preceded it? Stefano Darrigo's Orca without Moby Dick?

There is a kind of hopeless schizophrenia in the greater part of American intellectuals and artists who are politically repelled by United States policy and yet drawn to her as a center of creative ferment, of

tensions which indicate growth and struggle not stasis. Italian writers begrudge the influence of those American models from Poe to Dreiser whom they idolized in the immediate post-war period, but still aspire to see their books translated into American best-sellers.

In his early idealistic period when he was directing La Voce, Prezzolini could consider Italy a historical hope that was turning into a reality. It is in that context that his book on the first American contacts with Italy can be considered - modern Italy would serve as counterbalance to the earlier view Americans had formed. And he could, in 1930, despite Fascism, still augur "that in comparison with the servile, divided Italy of the 1700s and 1800s, the Italy of today is reason for pride and faith."¹²

Because his was a free, inquiring spirit for whom Terence's words, Homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto, are exactly apt, Prezzolini has seemed contradictory, paradoxical to those who try to fit him within exact schema.

Not only in his role as matchmaker between Americans and Italians, but also in his cherished persona as an impresario di cultura and maestro della vita, Giuseppe Prezzolini served with distinction. He helped both in our continuing discovery of Italy and in knowing ourselves as Americans.

ENDNOTES

1. Prezzolini, Come gli americani ... (Boni, 1971): 304.
2. Richards, Laura. Julia Ward Howe (Houghton Mifflin, 1916) vol. 2: 3.
3. New York Times, obit. July 17, 1982: 7.

4. Prezzolini, Come gli americani, 27.
5. Ibid., 319-320.
6. Cheever, John. "Journal from the late Forties & the Fifties," New Yorker, August 13, 1990, 29-37 in pass.
7. Machiavelli by Giuseppe Prezzolini, trans. by Gioconda Savine (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1967). Originally published as Machiavelli anticristo, (Roma, 1954).
8. Prezzolini, Come gli Americani scoprirono l'Italia, 20-1.
9. Ibid., p. 23.
10. Ibid., 36.
11. Fiedler, An End to Innocence (Beacon, 1955): 101.
12. Prezzolini, Come gli Americani scoprirono l'Italia, 9.

**THE ACTRESS AND THE WRITER:
THE UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE OF
ELEONORA DUSE AND GIOVANNI PAPINI**

William Weaver

Eleonora Duse and Giovanni Papini met in the late autumn of 1915. It was surprising they had not met long before because the great actress and the brilliant younger writer had many friends or acquaintances in common (not least Gabriele D'Annunzio, who had notoriously been Duse's lover for the decade between 1894 and 1904). Apparently Duse and Papini were introduced by a close friend of both, Olga Signorelli, wife of Angelo Signorelli, Duse's physician. Also involved in this first meeting was the American-born Etta De Viti De Maroo, wife of a prominent liberal nobleman, and friend of many writers, intellectuals and political figures.

In 1915, though Duse's fame was undimmed--indeed, it was becoming legendary--six years had passed since her last stage appearance, and her retirement seemed definitive. Though in the course of her long career (which had begun at the age of four), she had often dreamed of peace and privacy, inactivity now made her bored and restless. At this time, she had an apartment in Florence, but she paid frequent visits to Rome and elsewhere, and was involved in various projects. All her life, she had been an unsystematic but greedy devourer of books and felt an awed admiration for writers. Obviously, Papini impressed her at their first meeting, and she made an equally deep impression on him.

He was thirty-four. He, too, was more or less settled in Florence, though he had also spent long periods in Paris, Milan, and Rome. Born poor, he had struggled to educate himself, and by now was well-known. His deliberately polemical, highly opinionated, often brilliant writings won him enemies and friends; celebrity had not brought him wealth, however. At this time, he was making a scant living by odd jobs for publishers, journalism, and the editorship of La Voce, a bold journal that also published a series of small volumes.

One of Duse's outstanding qualities was her generosity. She was a ready contributor to worthy causes, open-handed with friends, or even casual acquaintances. Very soon, perhaps immediately, after their first meeting, when he was back in Florence, Papini--married and the father of two girls--wrote a letter to Duse. It is dated 28 October 1915:

"Signora,

"think of me, after all, what you like. It will be yet another bitterness. But having dismissed this unworthy idea, time and again, I keep striking my head against it; for as the children's jingle goes, 'all doors are locked.'

"I would prefer--and you must forgive me for this cowardly idea--that you guess by yourself, without words of mine. You, who have understood so many of those souls that were worth the effort of understanding. You, who have been such a reader and shaper of thoughts. But my situation is so humiliating that it denies me even the freedom to tell you, properly what I feel.

"I come to you as a pauper, who asks something and does not--as in psychological novels--offer his heart to be consoled but actually extends his hand, his real hand, of flesh, as thin as that of Goya's beggars.

"Imagine--if, after this letter you still harbor a bit of respect for me--imagine what my state must be as I write for the first time to a woman (to a woman like you!), to a woman who I would want to consider me, from a distance, somewhat deserving of friendship and even--may I say it?--of affection; and now I have to write as a mendicant, a supplicant, with the risk of seeing a polite and expert swindler, a literary cutpurse.

"I really don't know how I have come to this. I lead a very simple life; I have no vices (except cigarettes and a few books); I hardly ever travel; I dress badly; I work. I work. I don't want to be another of those people who blame everything on the war, but it is a fact that for the last year I have not received one cent of royalties from my books and nothing for the publications I edit. The few articles I manage to publish here and there barely cover the household expenses. For two months I have been staying here in the Libreria from morning to evening, but

getting nothing because La Voce is poor as I am, and actually losing something because I cannot work as I would like.

"Now I have incurred some small debts that, added to other commitments, become a big sum, for me: a thousand lire, or slightly more. By the beginning of November (the 19th at the latest) I must find it. And I don't know how to. I am expecting a bit. A Milan publisher should be sending me 300 L. for the 2nd edition of L'altra metà; I should have another 100 from Perrella as the rest of the royalties from Parole e Sangue. But these are trifles and are not sure.

"I don't ask you to send me the sum. Perhaps it's too much also for you, and you spend so much for things and persons more important than I that I would feel a kind of remorse in accepting. But you could help me find it. You could give me advice, suggest a way.

"Excuse this display of wretchedness. But I write it to you because you are a great spirit of woman and artist--and because you have suffered and suffer.

"Does it seem just to you that a writer, not base, not an imbecile, not mediocre, must torture himself day after day with the worry of fifty or a hundred francs and wear himself out, if he wants to eat and provide food for his family, by writing cheap political articles, the only ones that pay?

"I have two or three works in me to be written. Newer, more important than all the others. They torment me and distress me. They would perhaps be new joy, new light for many. And I have not yet had those four or five months of calm, of peace, of security necessary to write at least one of them. Think of the grief of a poet who must try to dig in the more with his hands when he would like to stand up and climb and breathe the air on the heights, between cliff and sky, that air that alone in his--to speak, finally!

"Because I don't want to descend to writing the little article, or the gentle, kind essay for a friend of a friend, or the playlet, or the story or other easy reading or trevesate [reference to Treves, a popular publisher], payable on demand. Because I want to remain, I who am someone and have a strength of my own, a free and wild character as I was born and as I have developed myself. Everything has to be paid for, not only sins but even virtues, I believe you will be the sole person, or

virtually, to understand me; and trusting in this I have written to you and not to another. And even if nothing can be done for me a word of yours will be enough, saying that you feel my misfortune and indicating to me some possibility of rescue.

"Now that I've unburdened myself a bit I seem to feel better. Because you cannot despise me for having thus opened to you the depths of my heart--and my hard, concealed wretchedness. Love me. I ask you nothing else and it is already too much to ask. And however you may judge me, forgive me. Yours --"

Duse never dated her letters, but she must have answered by return mail, because Papini's second letter was written on 30 October, only two days after his first. Actually Duse was in bad shape financially herself. All of her savings were invested in Germany, and with the war, correspondence and transfers of funds were growing difficult. Still she sent Papini money, apparently a one-thousand lire note; and with it, a characteristic Duse letter. Duse's letters are not only hard to translate: they are hard to transcribe, because they have a visual as well as a textual significance. Words sprawl or march across the paper, or run down a margin; words are underlined, two and three times, written large or small, punctuation is erratic. The writing itself is not easy to decipher, also because Duse often wrote with soft pencil and whole phrases, by now, are only a gray smudge.

But the letters to Papini--thirty-seven survive--are neater than usual, though no more ordinary. The first (like all the others) begins without a salutation:

"I say thanks to you--and you must take my word, because proofs, for the world, real proofs of what we are and feel cannot be given!

"This also happened--the other evening Etta de Viti came to me and said: 'Papini asked me for your address.'--Now--let's try to understand each other--I had, suddenly, the sensation that my smart address [Duse was living in a hotel] might displease you--and it displeases me, too--but it is a matter of economy, my being here--Living in a hotel was for me, once, that "making do" that I repeated to myself

inwardly every moment, to keep going and not waste time. Today, when isolation is so beneficial for me--today, when we are all poor creatures on our own, today it seems to me a discord; especially as cutting a fine figure is odious and evil! - But so it is...Now - I was telling you all this only to say that the other evening, after Etta's words, I would have liked to write you, and I didn't dare--Pour gêne de l'adresse, and because I remembered some words of yours (I no longer know where), when you speak of hotel corridors etc etc -- alas -- I remembered, and no longer dared - C'est la Literature!

"So, so, I say thanks to you--and in this hour of anguish and anxiety, your having spoken, to me, is for me, for me, for my spirit, like a light that consoles me, that suddenly removes me from so much dark, dark shadow, which I have borne for such a long time. It is quite true that "the man cannot be hidden." And, I remember with a sense of peace and consolation, the hour when I spoke to you --

"Inside the Papini who flails so, speaks so, and yells, I glimpsed the other, the one who knows sorrow, who thirsts for tenderness, who has taken the measure of every eternal thing, and of all of us. I remember, because of the consolation it made me feel, the work, the silence, the anguish unsaid, and also something else, that has remained from childhood, the childhood of that boy you told of in your book --

"But let's proceed.

"If, then, I cannot send you bundles of paper, of that sort -- I send you, with trembling heart, that one, which at this moment can be useful to you -

Do not concern yourself, do not think, do not remember that you have written me - If I have saved your letter, it is to console one of these hours, of tears, and regret, that, still return. I am saving it, (for now), to keep it with me, beside me, in this solitude of mine, sad and yet so beautiful! -- To tell myself that I have not suffered in vain, and that something of the eternal soul must be in me, if you have spoken to me -

So we agree! -- Eleonora Duse."

Papini to Duse, 30 October [1915]:

"How it revolts me, on some days, to be clear! For transparency belongs to water and water is beautiful but also common and servile and ready for anything!

"If I were truly a poet. Disordered but with a rebound of miles. And able to say everything I feel, in detail, with the trace, more or less eternal, the paths of waterfalls.

"A word, a flower, a glance, a tear: and yet remaining silent because there would be too much to say.

"To be allowed to witness the discovery--this, for me, inconceivable discovery: a woman. A woman who is great precisely because she is a woman. And has a soul. A soul of her own, but capable of seeing others. So generous that she thanks one who receives from her. So delicate that she invents stratagems to conceal that which would do her most honor.

"I would never have believed it possible that I, harsh male, far removed from theaters and anything resembling them, a deliberately rough towards all that is woman and femininity, I would never have believed to be so understood -- and so persuaded,

"Because I found in no man what I have found now, I who so needed it. Perhaps, in men, more power. But that smile, in giving, that kind of innocence, simplicity that does not want to offend and doesn't offend, that affection that makes itself felt more because it presents itself less in the usual forms and words...

"This you have given me. And I do not thank you because such talk is useless by now. But now you know who I am, and I am no longer alone."

Duse's reply, in pencil, is long -- it covers seven pages -- too long to quote here in full. Her chief purpose was to reassure her new friend: It begins:

"This is an hour so full of anguish for everyone! --

"If it costs you bitterness to speak to me, don't do it any more, don't answer me -- Let this cyclone surrounding us go by.

"I well know that what I said to you yesterday, and what I could say further today would be badly said.

"But you know what a difficult thing it is to handle words -- and written words! -- To say the material sadnesses that clutter, while the anxious spirit is searching for its light, its freedom, which is, perhaps, saying, and the saying of art."

Having begun by talking about Papini and his situation, now Duse is talking about herself, for by the word "art" she often meant the theater.

"Hearing you speak of art and work, I remembered, also art and work. I recognized, hearing you talk of it, the old suffering, the kind that is not healed..." (...) "since the day I stopped working - - - I live - - - on nothing, I live in death, and I delude myself that I understand the suffering of others! -- "(.) "I beg you not to regret, ever, having written me -- forget it - as we forget good things. (...)

"I would like so much to speak to you, one day, later on. I would like to earn a little of the instinctive confidence that made you turn to me. I would like to tell you in what a grave moment I also find myself, and how tired I am -- and how only this little scrap of paper that so embarrasses you is, in its turn, now, for me, the -- material possibility, the greatest, that today, at his moment, I possess - and this I am happy to say, and I try to express to you (groping) because - - - he who does not have, deserves the welcome of the heart. (...) And so, accept the poor little offering, not with sad bitterness but let it beautify our hard lot, and tell yourself that someone, in the world, loves to extend a hand towards yours, extended (as you say) - the hand that holds the heart, and dissolves suffering, and makes good and sweet this good bread that life offers us (...)"

In a P.S., Duse regrets that she cannot offer him sufficient funds to free him from all obligations except his writing. And this he mentions in his reply, dated "Ognissanti 1915", All Saint's Day:

"(...) But on one thing I will not remain silent. Your final wish -- what you say at the end. To give me the means to work. For many years I have been living among the most horrible sacrifices it is possible

to conceive. To wear myself out on what is not mine -- not to be able to do what I was born for.

"Life is more horrible, in its natural racks, than any Chinese fantasy, For this is all I ask: to be me, pure. To achieve the greatness that belongs to me. Imagine a man who possesses the sense and genius of battles and is kept in the quartermaster's office to write out reports.

"All my best work I have done through strokes of luck, a bit today, a bit tomorrow, in pieces, at intervals, in haste. Many of my pages are sketches - or things written out of need, against a deadline, with the load of necessity.

"I have always had to do other things: correct proofs, work as an editor, tutor, bookseller journalist (journalist!). And not to earn, to become rich, but solely to live, barely to live, to stay in my house and pay the baker.

"A bit of freedom, finally! A bit of freedom to stay home and to travel, to dream and to suffer, to not write and to look, to think of myself, to live more with myself, in myself, to say what is inside me and needs calm and contentment to order to come out. And spiritual release, which cannot come about when you're waiting and counting out the pennies and the francs.

"It's not my fault if freedom (one of the conditions of freedom) is provided by money. But I no longer hope, at this point, to overcome the anonymous infamy I suffer. And I will die without having given what I could. Without having been what I would like to be.

"And forgive me once again if I write you to such matters. But the wound still stings too much. And I feel I can speak to you with purity and simplicity of heart, without fear of not being understood, and with the certainty of giving something that only you are worthy of receiving.

"I, too, would like to talk with you, and better than I could when you appeared to me, so suddenly and unexpectedly, in the office, with those eyes of yours so black with anxious and intense passion. But the day for this will also come, without being sought, and if we can truly tell each other our sorrow, we will have, on our road, one sorrow less for having met. (...)"

With the letter, Papini enclosed a photograph of himself. By now Duse had returned -- temporarily -- from Rome to Florence, and so their correspondence was also supplemented by visits, conversations. Papini continued to date his letters to her; but hers to him undated, become much harder to arrange in any kind of order. She would write as the spirit moved her, sometimes despatching her maid to deliver the letter by hand, sometimes even delivering it herself. She returned his confidences with confidences of her own. He wrote her twice more in that first month, November 1916.

On the 16th, he said: "Silence, too, has its strength. And the work does not always manage to say more. When I feel dumb -- and inferior to myself -- I don't want to undo that bit of my image that could be reflected in the crystal, the eye, the soul of others.

"This is only to explain my being silent -- if, with you, there were need to such excuses.

"When we know a person who is really someone, we love that person in life and death - even beyond what seems death. After ten years or ten centuries the heart beats in the same place because we are made of materials that do not spoil.

"Sometimes I believe I understand your anguish. Your leaving would not be towards the already-navigated sea - but towards life again and towards that life that solum is yours - and is creation (a sense, that is, of not-uselessness)." [Evidently, Duse had spoken to him of the possibility that she might resume her career in some way.]

"I cannot have, myself, the courage to say a word to you -- I, who do not know this world and do now even feel the desire to know it. But I believe that knowing how to renounce the most cherished things is strength, and strength to be put in other directions. The mere fact that you live -- even if no one, around you, knows it -- is enough to add something to the world, to those few who feel your presence (the presence of a soul: rare event!) with no need of lights and affiches.

"There is a physical limit even for the strong - you have reached this limit. Everything is not lost. Your very solitude, anxious, restless, bitter, is a greatness: who could bear with equal nobility the death of the first half of the true being?

"I hate paper. But I would like to speak with you another time.

Will you go to Viareggio?

"I thank you for La Voce, [E.D. had evidently made a contribution to the review Papini was now editing.] we must keep alive this last island of free art in Italy."

Duse visited Papini, and met his family. She became particularly fond of his two little daughters, Viola and Gioconda. Viola, the older child, recalled one of these visits in a little volume of memoirs addressed to her father: "One afternoon...I went to open the door: the person climbing the stairs took time appearing, but her laboured, asthmatic respiration arrived in waves where I was waiting, my curiosity aroused. That breathlessness was like a single gust of wind, rustling among the poplar's leaves. A lady, pale as a maple, arrived on the landing, small and plump in her humble coat: two locks of white hair escaped the crown of her hat."

Duse asked for Papini, and Viola showed her into the writer's study. When the child's continued curiosity drove her to intrude on the meeting, Papini told his guest that Viola aspired to be an actress. "La Duse took me tenderly in her arms, as if I were a bundle of just-mowed hay, then, promptly frowning, cross, almost outraged, she whispered into the hair over my ear: 'No, no, no, no, it's not true. You will not be an actress. You will not. You know? It's a terrible profession.' I felt her whole body vibrate with this conviction that I could neither understand nor judge..."

When Viola shyly confirmed her wish to act, Duse's tone changed, and she said: "In that case, read, read, child, and listen to yourself: LISTEN TO YOURSELF." Then, in a reminiscent vein, Duse went on: "The actress's greatest joy, my child, is not when she is playing on the stage filled with light, before a theater crammed with people listening to you in silence, but eager to clap and shout. Our greatest pleasure -- you know what it is? When towards evening, you arrive, all alone, at the little stage door and you cross half-dark corridors, climb the dimly-lighted stairs to meet your companions, who are waiting to rehearse. There are only a few lights on the stage, in the midst of the great, oblique shadows of the wings; the pit is murky and

deserted; the boxes are like so many empty cribs. There's no one but us artists, poor actresses, in our everyday clothes, with the sole companionship of the poet who wrote the work we must learn. We are among ourselves, with no outsiders, no intruders, and we think only of our work and not of the applause of all those strangers who, on other evenings, fill the theater. At those moments I feel as if I were among my family and at times I have the childish illusion that we are there in secret, amid those few lamps, as if for a conspiracy, a cabal, something clandestine and pleasantly dangerous. All the rest, my child, is only noise, racket, vanity, weariness, and a bitter after-taste.

Duse was in retirement, but -- for all her mixed feelings -- she missed the stage, she missed working. She discussed it in another long, undated letter:

"Now then," she begins abruptly, "let's get at least this much clear - : I don't know how to write letters, and it wasn't a letter I meant to write you - I just went on chatting, to myself, though I was writing with my pencil - anyone who lives many hours in solitude, gets into the habit of monologuing, like this - - - to relieve the head and the heart, when they ache, and, all around, nobody understands anything - So, a few days ago, (I don't know how many) if you received -- and I don't know any more how many -- little pages, disjointed and numbered -- pay no attention.

"At my ripe age, I still haven't managed to get very far, and I am unable to stay away from certain great illusions. - A great mistake, I well know, in the diary of daily life: but what can be done? This is how I am made! Correct myself, now! - Furthermore, I say this not to excuse my having spoken to you like that, unasked, but rather -- this way of speaking, with the pencil that runs on, or my thoughts that do. This, too, is an old wealth (for me!) bequeathed me by my mother, who found in me who knows what magic gifts, poor dear, and... she was in ecstasy when she saw me as a child, so self-sufficient, and how I talked with the chair, or with other household objects, which for me, in their silence, held a great enchantment - - and they seemed to listen, patiently, to me, who asked no reply - and my Mamma found it right and dream-like, this speaking to those who haven't the possibility of replying - And so, since then, if a spirit attracts and persuades me, - if the exchange of a word,

spoken or written, has given me a glimpse, a flash, of what light the soul is - - - what does it matter then to me, if I do speak disjointedly? - I know and feel only one certitude: this: that soul -- at one moment or another -- will exchange with me the world of recognition, of compassion, for this a-tro-cious thing (atrocious) that is called life -- And so I try to make it clear to you how irrational and improper and unconventional this stirring of the soul is in me, but I mark it down, because I receive only Light from it..."

Then she began to talk of the past and the future: "It was a matter of working - going far away, resuming that thing, so deep and rootless, so beautiful, that is, in my spirit this word: w-o-r-k -- The woman speaking to you today is a limp rag, but once, the hand was steady, and the possibility of dreaming without end, and the ability to weep only inside, and to leave beloved streets and places and persons - and go off, as if it were the most fascinating thing that life grants us - So then - :

"In 1915 it so happened (shall we say it in fine style!) It so happened that -- from overseas -- an offer of work came, a serious and important offer, hateful in one way, but considerable from the point of view of earning - and what matters most, it has just arrived -- in the midst of this massacre of the world -- borne by "necessity", which for me is equivalent to "harmony", which, always, is composed around us (...) The war disorients us all - and who can prevent it? Everything that will be ruined and destroyed on the one hand will have to be reconstructed, by each one of us, on the other. This is why the overseas offer to work seemed propitious to me - a propitious return, in many, various ways, and relations and coincidences (...) I saw in my being able to work, a shifting of the enormous weights of some sorrow, the odious, immobile weights - And perhaps, something which had to be obeyed, as a necessity, because life proceeds through little links. - But how to find the material strength, to arrive in California, on the job, a woman, who has her soul in the light, but has troubled respiration, like someone suffering from asthma?"

Finally, in a P.S. in the margin, Duse told more specifically about the offer: "The contract would be for Los Angeles [sic] in California -- a mere stone's throw!"

The offer had come from David Wark Griffith, a name not unfamiliar to Duse, who was an alert movie-goer, curious about the new art form still in its infancy. In another letter, she gave Papini more details:

"...There is, it seems at Los Angeles, an area of land so magnificently illuminated by light that, they say, cinematographies come out better there than any place in the world -- How, I've said it -- The fact is that those good folk out there, sure of themselves, wrote me, offering the earth, only, those people were addressing me, remembering another person, believing -- I don't know why -- that they would find again, through me, E. Duse -- But neither I, who speak to you, nor any of my friends, have any trace of her, and so not knowing or wanting to know of her any more, I answered, myself, that there was no point in finding again E.D., but - (and here is the thing that now charms me), but, I said to them, I was trying to reconstruct some of our images - old walls and churches of Italy - in short -, our stuff, that no one can take from us -

"They exist - and are beautiful - and not only those of Michelangelo - They have a calm - steady - and a beautiful sadness, which is no longer suffering - and they don't speak - Since I have been looking at them, to realize, to understand how they are made, it is like an enchantment for me - These are the ones - 6 or seven images, which I would like to recompose - Of course, of course, naturally there has to be a transformation, a transfiguration, not only of the dress, but a liberation of the spirit that would make it possible to arrive at them!--

"To recompose them -

I think about it day and night -
living - still - silent

"no longer to be awed by the Sistine Chapel, and stay there - and understand - Choose some of those, and then others - there is a choice in time. There are days when I succeed, and I do a good day's work -

some have already been found and set, but this stupid health of mine doesn't always help me.

"Still, the idea, to me, seems feasible, and if I really haven't lost my reason, it seems to me like when we reflect, silent, eyes closed, to seek within ourselves a piece of music, once known then forgotten, but so far I have only some fragments, no more - And so I move around this scaffolding of work, and seek in the reality of today what the art of today doesn't know -- We shall see! --"

In other words, Duse's bold plan was to exploit the very silence of silent films, not consider it a defect but an advantage. The filming of the Sistine Chapel was only one of her ideas. There is another mysterious project which she discusses with Papini in a later letter, and then -- in 1916 -- came her only achieved film, Cenere, in which she appeared as actress, with time-worn face and silver hair, not La Duse (as she ironically referred to her past, celebrity-self), not the E. Duse the people of Los Angeles wanted; but the woman she was. Meanwhile she was educating herself for her new craft. The letter to Papini continues:

"The other evening, to get an idea of what this word, cinema, is - I went to see Sardou's Odette. I knew in what shallow water that Sardou navigates, and I went to see how Odette could be ferried from spoken word to cinema. And I saw this: - Oh, I don't know how to tell it. -- For example, this: in the last act of that Sardou melodrama, there is the usual faithful family friend, who always arrives at the right moment, and, in the theater, the Sardou piece says: more or less, this: 'The sailors that found her asked me where they could take the poor dead woman - and I said: here - Receive her in your house, I beg you.'

"These few and clear words, can be said in a simple tone, close to the truth -- in short! I have heard them said various times, and they were heard in silence, and also (theatrical weapon) with emotion. -- to say them, one minute is enough -- but here! -- Saprستي! -- an hour or more of cinema, to illustrate all this. -- here, it is seen; here there are actions and not words. - There is everything- the sea, the wind, the boat, the sail, and the woman - The woman with her hat and veil, then

without hat or veil, but 'with despair' (as a sign says, explaining). You see everything. The hesitation, the terror, the dive, and away! -- and the sailors arriving, and the woman floating and hauled on board, soaked, to the shore - - - and all the wake that follows, the whimpering of all the relatives, who always cry, afterwards. There's everything: everything is seen, proved, documented, with evidence displayed -- a yellow press story - The exterior of a poor life, mechanically shown, every evening in the same way - what wretchedness - shame!

"And nothing that makes the soul reflect - that, after the word, leaves the imagination free! - Nothing of what is not seen, what weaves life, none of the inevitabilities that shape it, press it in a vise -- In short, what I saw is not art - I was tired and terribly fed up by it! - And who is right. Them or me? (...)"

Movie producers wanted Duse to make films of her old repertory, Sardou, Dumas fils, which she had abandoned even before she had left the stage. She described, elliptically, another idea to Papini, about "un voyageur", inspired by a verse of Mallarmé, which she quotes in her letter: "Mon coeur entend le chant des matelots". Papini had been one of the first Italian writers to publish a serious article about cinema, but now he had other concerns. Duse -- completely caught up in her study of the new medium -- begged him, in a P.S. to this letter: "Please, tell me that you do not despise the cinema."

During one of her visits to Papini, he showed her an article in a theatrical magazine, which quoted a letter of hers and referred to a passion in her past life (probably to her much-publicized romance with Gabriele D'Annunzio, a writer Papini disliked). The next day she wrote him, again referring to the article, which sparked some bitter reflections on the life of an actress:

"If I had the strength to climb the stairs of my house again afterwards, how I would like to come, this evening, and knock at your door, Papini! since you gave me permission yesterday - Every time I speak with you something is set free in my soul, and I can't tell you how much good I owe you, and what comfort a word of yours is."

After regretting the indiscreet article (of which she had also received a copy), she admitted the authenticity of the quoted letter: "yes, that is genuine, truly; and I have only to close my eyes and I can see the hotel room where I wrote it. I can still find, within my silence, the physical and spiritual incapacity that prevented me, then, from dragging daily a chain, my work that then bound me hand and foot -- Because... - - after all, now -- let's see -- now I can ask why an actress, merely because she's an actress, must seem eccentric or demanding or vulgar -- why? -- nothing and no one will ever absolve this wretched transposition of values that allows every woman (unless she belongs to the theater) to hide in her own home when she suffers, but us, no; on such and such a day, at such and such an hour! pilloried -- This is a severe sentence for one who lives life, who wants it 'au premier plan', and not as a residue of art, whatever that art may be -- To give up solitude for months and months, to live in contact with the crowd -- To leave a country one loves, and a home, and to live, lose every reason for existing -- No friend near, but gossip, the only nourishment -- If Spring comes and finds you traveling, while the so-called tournée is not over, and if winter is lived through as a vagabond, it is hard, also physically, in lands of snow and fog: that counts for nothing. The only thing is to remain faithful to "the repertory", established months and months before, by a common speculator, who leads the flock, aussi bête que possible. -

"Solitude, never - private meditation, never, unless it can be achieved, almost miraculously (to the alien eye) in the moment of appearing at the footlights -- as when a bandage is torn from a wound, and it opens again beneath the hand, that finally trembles no longer - - - to be sure - going on to the stage, true, is the forgetting of one's own personality - but at what a price! -- I know a poor devil of a woman, who on coming back from the theater, in the rooms of the grand Hotels, of the beautiful cities, which today, Bolshevism is burning and destroying, coming down a long corridor, decorated by shoes and boots and slippers, lined up on the ground, at every care -- fully-closed door, - - - she (the poor devil) could do nothing but weep, and remember a distant house, an old convent hidden on the hill amid the summer's green - - - a Lamp burning, perhaps at the same hour, and - - - a dear face, unique in the world, bowed beneath the Lamp, searching, there, too, his

lot and his destiny! [The reference is to Arrigo Boito, the great -- and secret -- love of Duse's young womanhood; she often referred to him as "the Saint".] - no, it is not sure that a heart must not break under such fierce discipline! - And yet I lived it, I did, in those days, the agony - and God knows I did not seek it out, then, my fate then, and I was not deceived (never deceived) by the work of waste paper that the theater offers its devotee, saying: "here are success and glory for you!" The cursed words! -- How many times did my youth fling itself against them to drive them away from me like leprosy - If from the anguish of the heart, in which I lived (then), if in the very first days of my taking refuge abroad, something in me pieced the surface and the substance of the stupid dramas that I played then - - - - to be sure, if some mysterious strength appeared (unsaid) from the depths of me, it was not, then a projection of art, but, something far stronger: passion for life. It was life that I sought, that I wanted: life; it illuminated me and slipped from my hands every evening, every evening, when I thought to grasp something of the secret of life, of the reason of our life, this at least; then art took possession of it (with me as medium) and stole the answer from me -- and I remained, afterwards as if emerging from a hallucination, exhausted and alone, and with an irrepressible strength that the next day made me resume my war, and my defeat -! Ah! who will give me back that grief of those days! - who will give me back that "fixed term of eternal counsel" that I felt, so luminous and pure within me! -

"When that strength seemed to me (and I was deceived -), when I seemed to be no longer for myself... - when love said, inside me, that not even he would lead to the truth of our life - - - - that not only for such anguish was I also in the world, - - - when I had the illusion of ennobling that wretched life, asking no more of it, when in the tinsel of the theatrical word, I seemed to perceive - (all of a sudden!) a voice, alone, remote, incapable of being seized, but yet sweet and sadder than love itself, [now the reference is to D'Annunzio] - - - when I understood that all of us are shipwrecked - - I no longer possessed the strength that would support me, I no longer felt that haven that love had been - - - I did not see its absolute or its greatness - - and then my soul was lost - and still I haven't found it again! - I no longer know how to live on the

past or on the fidelity that I dissolved - or on the hoped-for peace that had, one day, seemed to me the sole reason for my life.

"-Something sainted had touched, illuminated my spirit - - - and it was the compassion, it was the greatness of the spirit I had encountered - it was the saintly word I had heard, from the person I loved ---- alas! too great for me! - it seemed to me that life should have ended, and no more searching - - and instead! - - then two years passed, of lassitude, of starvation of disheartenment and uncertainty - - - - it was believing love dead - (and it wasn't!) (and it isn't!) that made me a stranger to myself, with no harbor to repose in - rushing to my fate: only this was clear to me, in the terrestrial illusion - - (because we're not angels!) and I tried to live the earthly life since the other was not allowed me - First the illusion of error, Work appeared to me - difficult and burdensome, and beyond my strength, but that would free me from the agony!! (and with me, another woman -) - Amen! - You know, since yesterday how, in the space of a few hours, the offer of Work was offered, and on that day, it was pure and firm -- To be sure, afterwards, it was shipwreck - And how could it not have been?? and it is right that, today, so be it! - "

A letter of Duse's dated only "Friday morning" seems a sequel to this long soul-baring. It begins simply with the word "peace", repeated twice, then continues:

"Peace. Let us give one another peace, in this distraught world, in these days we are experiencing! And even the word peace is two faced - no longer has the same meaning as life - - but, only, one probability out of many. We are dazed, all of us - and between past and present, it is all grief. As I say peace to you, I will tell you how I regret, how hotly I blush for having written you, (lately) a letter so coarse - disordered (...) I was writing to you: to one who understands everything, but (it is not enough). It is not pretty to overflow in that way, nor can I be either judge or consoler for myself (...) Because I was unable to resign myself to having lived in vain as a woman, there, I spoke like a prima donna, (...)" And Duse continues, insisting on the donna vs. prima donna conflict.

The correspondence became less frequent during the last years of the war, or at least fewer letters -- especially from Papini -- survive. Duse wrote to him still about her movie plans, which continued for some time after the completion of Cenere. But the reality of the war, especially after the crushing Italian defeat at Caporetto, was becoming evident even in Florence, filled with refugees from the Friuli area, occupied by the Austrians.

"I go out in the morning more tired than in the evening when I come home, and there is no sense, no direction in what I do. I bundle about all day long among the bundles of Friuli people, and I remain among them -- I have no peace elsewhere -- and all those people - - I know them, I recognize them, one by one, since I possess their dialect, their speech, their silence, the turn of their thought, the hiding-place of the heart -- I stay among them, and not out of pity, no! no! -- but to bear, with other people, my day. When I come home, it's as if something falls from my arms, I see the drop of water carried away by that stormy sea, and I ask myself, most bitterly, if it wouldn't be better to give up - - - But then, when I'm here, alone, at evening, and I remember, I think back to what I saw (!) during the day (!) and I remember the words - - - and I see again that indefinable something of some poor face -- and (seeing it) there reappears to me - childhood, the cold, the hunger, a yard of a house, and my mother, poor thing, then - I can't say how - all becomes light in my soul, and, every day, I return to my suffering (...)"

Duse had visited the front. After refusing to take part in some performances for the troops (she considered the idea ill-advised), she spent time with the soldiers, wrote letters for them, visited hospitals. One of her soldier-friends, a young Sicilian named Luciano Nicastro, wrote her such moving letters that she arranged for Papini's Libreria della Voce to publish them in a little volume. When it appeared, Nicastro was in a prison camp in Hungary.

Finally, the war ended. Duse's restlessness continued, and often she was away from Florence. On one of these occasions Papini paid a visit to her, but she could not receive him because she was ill. So he

wrote her a letter (it is dated 3 February 1919):

"(...) That day, I don't know why, I needed to see you, to listen to your voice for a few moments. I didn't know why. I had nothing to say to you. I came a long time ago (in December) to see you - the day the Giorni di Festa appeared. I came with a copy for you, with a few words written in it, because I knew you were waiting for that book...But the house was empty, closed, deaf. Nobody answered.

"But the other evening I had gone to Hedda Gabler and it had upset my ideas about the theater, about Ibsen. I never go to the theater. When I go, the next day I am as agitated as a child...And then (perhaps) I remembered you, other days, another soul. In the general emptiness I reminded myself that you live. How! I don't want to know the answer. But I wanted only to greet you, tell you that I am working, my book (the one really mine) is proceeding...I'll come again. In a few days I'll come back to your door. And I will tell you about Nicastro's book. Don't worry about the costs, which have been already covered, I believe. And in any case, it's the publisher's wish that you no longer worry about it. The book sells, not a great deal, but it sells. (...)"

Ibsen was Duse's god. Years before, she had gone to Oslo (then Cristiania) especially to see him, and when she was not admitted -- he was near death -- she stood below his window in the snow, silent, for long minutes. Now she answered Papini: "So Ibsen gave you a jolt, too! - What hands! how he grabs you, and if you are not all for him and with him, he doesn't want you - He is right -- Hedda is beautiful - but even more beautiful is Rebecca - and even more beautiful is Ellida - and even more, more beautiful is Ella R. in Borchmann [sic]: - Gone - vanished! - and without any jolt, but through the power of things that rules and destroys. If I could say them again, as I saw them: Hedda, and Rebecca, and Illida - But what is the true truth cannot be re-said - Last night, I saw them, calm (they were), around me - and they said to me: 'from us you withdrew yourself!' And I felt a great amazement, in my dream, in my sleep, not like what we feel, in the face of death, when we are alive. (...)"

At some point during these years, Papini must have suggested that Duse write her memoirs. She answered: " - - - alas! what advice! to put some words together, to seek out my so-called: "recollections" - to compose, something between truth and lie, between poetry and bogus humility of the heart. - Finally, to compose, to arrange neatly from page to page this thing: the soul, which still aches. - To obligate myself, bravier moi même - to make theater, again: to narrate it, that poor theater of scenery, that all deface, that no one has ever told, ever, with another voice now,

" - To narrate it, now, when I am unfit for service and have left the great door of time - to reenter now! softly, cautiously, without jostling anything or anybody, almost secretly, and to seek well, for seek and ye shall find! - To find again amid the rubble some shattered truth, today, which I would bend over and pick up, today, when my eyes see differently!

" - - - love, solitude, tears of young womanhood. -

" - - - magic of the art that for brief days veiled the reason for living - - - - now, as a Liberation, for others, for me?"

After signing the letter -- simply with her initials, as usual -- she added one of her piquant post scripts: "- -and something in the soul says to me softly 'don't do it' and I won't."

Finally, despite her frail health, Duse returned to the stage; and she returned with her beloved Ibsen. On 5 May 1921, in Turin, she played Ellida in The Lady from the Sea. Her repertory also included Ghosts and -- a work born of a great love -- D'Annunzio's La città morta. She resumed her touring life, and Papini was hoping to see her. His last letter, dated 19 January 1922, says: "I would come to visit you at once if you had told me where you are. I have a great yearning to see you (also in the theater) both before and afterwards. Let me know where, when I can find you - unless you are tired and want to be alone.

"How would it be possible for you not to be remembered by your faithful and grateful

Papini"

A letter of Duse's dated 1 February seems to belong to this same period: " - - - I haven't found an hour for myself - and this morning I must leave. Terrible effort, this roaming about - and being silent is still better.

"It was not for this that I returned to work, but, in my country, there is not a theater for me, or a shed, or tent and it is necessary 'to go.'":

And with a greeting for the little girls, she said good-by to him. The following year, still on tour, she went to London, then to Vienna, and finally to the United States, where she died, in a Pittsburgh hotel, on 21 April 1924.

Note: Thirty-six of Duse's thirty-seven surviving letters to Papini are in the possession of his grand-daughter, Ilaria Occhini. The other letter is in Venice, in the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, where Papini's nine surviving letters to Duse are deposited. I am grateful to the Foundation, to Signora Occhini, and to Duse's grand-daughter, Sister Mary Mark, for their generous assistance.

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FIGURES OF WOMEN IN ANNA BANTI'S FICTION

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It is surprising that Anna Banti should have been translated into English for the first time only a few years ago.¹ For many years she was editor of a prestigious literary periodical -- a writer, critic and art historian, whose production, begun in the late '30s, continued unabated to her death in 1985. One might have expected that Artemisia, at least, acclaimed when it first appeared in 1947, although not a prize winner like many of her other narrative works,² would have benefitted from the extraordinary vogue enjoyed by Italian fiction in the United States and elsewhere in the immediate post-World War II period. This vogue began with the publication, precisely in 1947, of the translation of Christ Stopped at Eboli and extended into the '60s, a lapse of time that parallels the life-span of that very special "little magazine," The Cesare Barbieri Courier.³

Instead, it was left to a very different cultural context and to the initiative of the Nebraska University Press in founding a series devoted to European Women Writers, to repropose Artemisia as a work capable of engaging today's reader with the same urgency as literature written more recently. Indeed, the novel's translation into English was followed rather than preceded (the more usual route) by its reissue in Italy where it had for some time been out of print.⁴ As a member of the Nebraska Series' editorial board, I was guided in choosing Artemisia primarily by my initial enthusiastic response to it more than thirty years before as a psychological novel concerned with the forging of personal destiny.

The moment of the original impact is recalled in my article, "Women Novelists in Postwar Italy,"⁵ which preceded the vogue of feminism. To remember that article here brings into sharp relief the changes that have since occurred in the perspectives from which women's writing is judged. I had been prompted to write the article by the personal experience of the many Italian novels I was reading, novels

which gave me the vicarious feeling of life in Italy, a life from which I had been excluded by my family's coming to America when I was still a child. In particular, the novels written by women spoke to me, a woman reader looking for an un-lived woman's life (or adolescence), more directly, intimately, differently from novels written by men out of the same historical and social circumstances and with more or less similar intentions of realism.

On a less autobiographical, more objective level, I took as my point of departure the "coming of age of the woman writer in Italy" as reflected in the many literary prizes that between 1947 and 1956 had gone to women. It was my feeling that "women writers were being judged by the same standards generally applied to all works of literature," and that what might be considered as specifically and subjectively feminine in their works was to be projected "against the background of a changed and changing condition (to a large extent attributable to the War), and against the novel's general orientation toward external realism and documentation." I identified the themes most frequent in women's writing: the exploration of the feminine psyche, the social and psychological position of women in modern Italy, the expression of resentment against the injustices and enslavement of which women had been victims, the war experiences of women and their awakening to political realities, a predilection for stories of childhood and of the transition years to adolescence, the emphasis on the portraying of relationships among women, between fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters -- all contributing to a growing awareness of self and of the world. In reviewing a large number of novels and shorter narrative writings and relating them to the general trends, the overall subject matter, the various techniques of the modern novel, I finally came to the conclusion that "the intimate problems of the writer, those which concern intellectual and artistic growth, are felt no differently by women than by men writers."

But beyond the recognition of the affective and artistic merits of Artemisia, in the late '80s I was also drawn to the work by an added attraction, its up-dated appeal as the novel of a woman writer about a woman painter, women painters being a category of creative women to whom feminist art historians were paying increasing attention.⁶

Moreover, the novel, whose subject matter suited it so effortlessly to both interdisciplinary and feminist perspectives, turned out to intrigue also by its self-conscious narrative strategy, by its enticing the reader to follow the narrator in "inventing the biography of a historical figure,"⁷ by its blurring the line between past and present, intermingling the aspiration to self-expression of a long-dead woman with the same impulse of her modern recreator and of women in general today.

As is by now well-known, Artemisia is Artemisia Gentileschi, one of the few women painters of all times to have achieved fame. She was born in 1593 to Orazio Gentileschi, also a painter, sufficiently highly thought of to be invited to the court of Maria de' Medici in France and later to that of Charles I in England, to which his daughter followed him. Artemisia was also "the reviled victim in a public rape trial," a woman of blemished reputation. This is the historical Artemisia used by Banti as an exemplar of those rare women who through their words and deeds have upheld, as she writes in her foreword to the reader, "the right to congenial work and the equality of spirit between the sexes." The literary Artemisia, instead, the fictional character, was originally the protagonist of a novel on which Banti was working in 1944 when her house was destroyed during the German occupation of Florence. This second Artemisia is not the author's subject but her interlocutor, the prod that counterbalances frustration and dismay, and keeps her at her task in rewriting the book.⁸ It is this Artemisia who speaks the first words of the book, "Do not cry." They evoke the figure of a young girl (the historical Artemisia as imagined by her author) running uphill in the Boboli gardens, where Banti sits mourning the destruction of her manuscript: "Under the rubble of my house I have lost Artemisia, my companion from three centuries ago, who lay breathing gently on the hundred pages I had written."⁹ Finally, Artemisia is also this figure reborn a second time, the protagonist of the novel we have, in which the little that is known about Artemisia Gentileschi has been completed by that imagination endowed by the strength of enabling sympathy of which Manzoni speaks apropos the

faculty needed in historical fiction in order to integrate the plausible (the verisimilar) with the known (the facts).¹⁰ "Artemisia," wrote Gianfranco Contini in an early review, "is both... object and symbol; a person who existed, a created character, a character to be fashioned, and once destroyed to be refashioned."¹¹ And underlining the book's complexity from a related point of view, Emilio Cecchi wrote in a similarly early review: "Anna Banti took her cue from the little that is known of the famous painter Artemisia Gentileschi, daughter of Orazio, so as to write a book in which motifs and aspects of biography, of the novel, and at times almost of autobiography are innovatively interwoven."¹²

All of Banti's works are "difficult," but they are not difficult in the same way. Lavinia fuggita, for instance, the story usually cited as second only to Artemisia as a full measure of Banti's talent, is also about a woman artist and likewise set in the past. Its frame, however, is not autobiographical and its protagonist, as far as is known, is not a historical figure. Nor is painting, which played so dominant a role in the lives of Banti and her art critic husband, Roberto Longhi, the art form at its center. It has thus not profited from the converging factors that led to Artemisia's reevaluation, and still awaits a published translation into English.¹³ Written in 1950, it first appeared as the fourth story of Le donne muoiono, the collection that won the Viareggio Prize in 1952.¹⁴

The difficulty of Lavinia fuggita lies not in the changing point of view and the superimposed levels of narration that create a problem of genre classification for Artemisia. It lies rather in the frequent, unsignposted shifts in time which, given the compactness of the short story format, increases the need for reader alertness even beyond what is required for Artemisia. Of the relation between novel and short story Banti wrote that the latter has in its succinctness the capacity for recapitulating all the elements found in the former, but in perspective, "on the crest of the wave" as it were.¹⁵ Lavinia fuggita is not the continuous narrative of a life, however episodic and elliptical, but the retrospective illumination of an unexplained and decisive moment in a

life, which continues to puzzle the two interested spectators who witnessed it as they go over it in memory again and again.

A further difficulty -- and in this Lavinia fuggita is by no means unique in the Banti corpus -- is raised by the unfamiliarity of the setting. Not that Venice as such is unfamiliar, and the shimmering light of the magic city that has enthralled visitors for centuries is readily recognizable in the pages of Lavinia fuggita. But the Venetian Ospedale della Pietà -- the specific setting -- a charitable institution for abandoned infants and well-known to music lovers in the 18th century because of its all-girl orchestra and choir, is all but forgotten today.¹⁶ Lavinia is one of its wards, and so are Orsola and Zanetta, her companions. The time is that of the presence of the great Vivaldi there as composer of sacred music and musical director.

It is not clear at first what constitutes Lavinia's mystery: the lever of suspense in the story. The other orphans, too, are of unknown origin. It is the generic trait that links all their fates. Each girl has her own precious story of deprivation, a deprivation to be redeemed, each hopes, by the fairy-tale ending of a happy marriage, or the glorious career of a virtuosa, or the more uncertain life of the kept woman. Lavinia's amulet, her wonder-working talisman, is the piece of oriental cloth in which she was wrapped when brought to the Pietà as a baby. In the story's principal 'scene' -- a summer outing for the orphanage in a garden at the Zattere -- the hint contained in this piece of cloth is 'doubled' by the insistent gaze of a Turk with his "red and yellow turban" and "enormous coal-black moustache" to which, according to her companions, Lavinia appears to respond with a look of recognition. (The Ali Baba motif thus points back in passing -- and most appropriately in a tale set in Venice -- to the oriental source of all story telling in the West.)

But it is in the same scene at the Zattere that the other, more significant source of Lavinia's mystery emerges, the root cause of her difference, which beyond her uncertain birth connects her thematically to Banti's other 'feminist' figures. For Lavinia is driven by a demon more difficult to satisfy than her nostalgia for the East -- whose mythical contours only are known to her as we later learn from the fantasized life after her flight. While the dangers of the outside world can be eluded

by the closing of the garden gate, those that come from within, from a talent impatient of the restrictions imposed on it, from the hunger for complete, consummated, self-expression, are harder to control, and it is they that eventually lead to her flight.

When the mystery is unveiled, her crime or mania, trick or prank, the scandal that cannot be forgiven (all terms in which her transgression is viewed) lies in the discovery that "a girl could compose music too, if she wanted."¹⁷ Lavinia, choir mistress at the Pietà, a position assigned to her not as a mark of distinction but to check, to humiliate her imperious self-confidence as a musician by subjecting her to wearying routine, has had to rely on subterfuge to achieve what she cannot do without. This is how she confesses to Orsola that during Vivaldi's absence she substituted her own oratorio, Esther, for one of his:

Don't you understand, I had no choice, they would never take me seriously, never allow me to compose. The music of others is like a statement addressed to me, I must reply and hear the sound of my own voice. The more music I listen to, the more certain I am that my music and my voice are different. This is no joke: could you remain silent when you hear your beloved call your name? Just think about it, here inside me is everything I need, instruments, voices, audience. But unless I play these tricks it is like a buried treasure, no one would ever play a single note of my compositions.¹⁸

The poignancy of this plea for understanding, this uncompromising statement of what it means to be a creative artist, is infinitely more powerful than any ever made by or for Artemisia, tempered as her aspirations were by the pride of achievement in a man's world and by her father's recognition of her as an equal:

...Orazio talks to her with clarity and brusqueness, just as he did to his friends in Via della Croce, the best painters in Rome. ... It does not matter that she is a

woman, often discouraged, twice betrayed. There is no longer any doubt, a new painter has been born: Artemisia Gentileschi.¹⁹

But, of course, in contrast to Artemisia, Lavinia appears exclusively as a shadow, a ghost, a figment of Banti's imagination, a created character unsupported by a historical counterpart. She is known only -- as is her notebook, Cantatas and Concertinos, forgotten at the house of Iseppo, the baker, Zanetta's husband -- through art, not hers but her creator's, who fashioned her ex nihilo, or rather out of a possibility, an intuition so true to life that it could actually have been as it is told.²⁰ The recovered canvasses of Artemisia Gentileschi can be hung again in exhibition halls for spectators to discover and admire anew (perhaps out of all proportion to their intrinsic merit). Lavinia's music remains the faint echo that Banti once heard and invited the reader to hear with her.

The historical background of I porci is infinitely more remote than either that of Lavinia fuggita or of Artemisia. 18th-century Venice and 17th-century Rome have, after all, never ceased to exist in the experience and imagination of countless travellers, readers and students. But no monuments and very few documents survive to bear testimony to life in the Po Valley during the period that was long referred to as the Dark Ages. The protagonists of I porci are a brother and sister, Lucilio and Priscilla, members of the patrician Roman family of the Valeri. They are in flight from the invading Vandals, the most recent of the Barbarian hordes that have been laying waste the faltering, overcivilized Roman Empire. Siblings who have little in common except their origins and the brutalization of their trip as refugees, they are bound for an almost mythical villa somewhere in the vicinity of what is today the city of Modena. What they know of the villa is vague, based on the tales of an aged grandmother who had come from that region when Rome was still in its glory and who had then been murdered in an earlier attack on the city. When they finally find the villa, it is not only an empty shell but, a further degradation, it is being used as a pigsty by the primitive

local population who are expert pork butchers and sausage makers.

Like *Lavinia fuggita*, so *I porci* was first published in *Le donne muoiono*, but its date of composition (1946) places it with the tiny number of Banti's works written under the impact of the War.²¹ Indeed, the magnitude of the upheavals alluded to, the effects of cultural loss in an alien setting, the collapse of familiar and stable social and political structures, and the unexpected -- even grotesque -- adjustments forced on individuals trapped in times of radical change invite a reading on two levels. The experiences of a very distant and of the immediate past are superimposed one on the other, the familiar rubs off on the unfamiliar, and though the particulars may be different, the effects of the dislocations suffered show the essential identity of the two periods. Thus, relying on the resonance her past story has in her present reader, Banti needs no more than a scanty twenty pages to call back to life what is potentially a vast teeming canvas: the period of Western history that saw the end of the Roman Empire.

The dual focus on two rather than one principal character no doubt contributes to the tightness that this compression creates. The experience of exile at first brings Priscilla and Lucilio together. They share the discomforts and uncertainties of the three-months' trip which ends in the barren fog-drenched valley they have reached. As the narrative gets under way, the figure of an uncouth peasant occasionally emerges from the darkness, or a herd of wild animals is heard thundering next to the slow-moving ox-cart. But following their taking possession of the ruins of their property and their attempt to turn it into a home, their destinies have diverged. Lucilio, unable to cope with his sister's despair -- her sense of loss and at the same time imperious desire for vindication -- has sunken into the ways of the local inhabitants. He lives with them, shares in their manual labor, and has become the husband of one of the twenty-seven daughters of the Barbarian chieftain. In the "heavy and contorted language, only half Latin" that he speaks, his sister recognizes, "like old toys they had both played with, expressions and interjections used by their maternal grandmother."²² Priscilla, instead, reverts ever more to her Roman origins, clinging to the pure Latin of her childhood, treasuring the few volumes she has brought with her, "her Vergil, her Lucan, and the terrible epistles of Jerome," and she finally

succeeds in rebuilding part of the villa into a cloister or sanctuary, a place of undefined worship where she surrounds herself with those daughters of the invaders who choose to follow her and whom the Bishop Eusebius has permitted her to recruit as acolytes. The rituals performed there hover curiously between the Christian and the pagan but in contrast to the rough work of Lucilio, who has meanwhile adopted the leather apron of the butcher, they conserve the ways of the gentler, more civilized existence of her sex: "she prayed standing up, with her arms raised, but her young attendants convinced her to pray beneath the trees and hang garlands in offering from the lowest branches."²³

The title of the story may orient the reader to a general meaning: the audible but invisible pigs that disturb whoever sleeps at the villa stand for the fears and disorders not only of the time written about but of the time of writing. But the outcome of the story, with the separation of brother and sister as each becomes more and more him/herself, invites a second look at Priscilla, the person who has turned out to be the dominating one, the character for whom the story might well have been named, and in whom Banti invested the bulk of her empathy. Priscilla is the one who acts rather than being acted upon; if she has found a refuge in a cloister, she first created it. In doing so, she was sustained by the faded memory of the religion of her childhood, rekindled by the image of the martyr Felicita still visible on one of the walls of the villa. But she was sustained above all by the remembrance of the women in her family who had ideally preceded her and wipe that image out -- a gynaeceum to which Banti indirectly pays homage as her feminist project once more fashions the results of her historical imagination:

It was no longer the fateful image [of Felicita], but her family itself, with the imperious chin of its women, their ashen skin, their coal-rimmed eyes, and that questioning, mournful expression on their high narrow foreheads. Her grandmother, her mother, her aunt, the cousin who left for Africa, and even the most devoted and pious slaves. They were all with her, they had waited for her here.²⁴

The mingling of faiths as revealed by a sufficiently long historical perspective is also an element in another story of Banti's, which has obvious links with I porci. Joveta di Betania was written more than twenty years after I porci and was first published in the collection Je vous écris d'un pays lointain.²⁵ It is set in feudal Palestine at the time of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, which was founded after the first Crusade and conquered by Saladin in 1187: a short span of time in the annals of history, but rich in the trail it has left in literature through Provençal and chivalric poetry. The story does not spell out this historical background. Rather, it takes it as a given, fusing it with the narrative as determining Joveta's life both as a whole and in its details. As Banti alludes to and as we can read, for instance, in the pages of Runciman's A History of the Crusades,²⁶ Joveta (Yvette, Ivetta or Juditta, as she is variously referred to in documents), the youngest daughter of King Baldwin II, had three sisters: Melisande, Alice and Hodierna. The first, together with her husband, became Baldwin's successor to the throne; the second was Princess of Antioch, and the third Countess of Tripoli. Unlike her sisters, Joveta was left unprovided for at her father's death and, after many efforts to find her a suitable and to her acceptable husband, she was forced to wrest a fulfilling existence for herself on her own. In the medieval European fighting man's world transferred to the shores of the Mediterranean, where East and West, past and future, Christian, Orthodox, and Moslem meet, Banti has pinpointed a family story that will be repeated time and again, although in different settings, down to and including part of the 20th century.

Joveta first appears cross-dressed, a slender knight wearing a white silk turban in place of a helmet, standing up in his (her) stirrups to look down into a barren valley. In the cracked yellow mud at the bottom, she fails to recognize the "paradise" of twenty years earlier when for a short time she had been held a Christian hostage by the Syrian prince Timurtash. She had lived in the harem with his women then, and had tasted what the wizened guide who leads her describes as "the sweetness of the Moslem custom," a quite different way of life in his view from that of Christian women in the East, cooped up for months in

gloomy castles manned for war, "with distaff and loom, and the practices of a cruel religion as their only pastimes."²⁷

With this pictorial representation of the deep split in Joveta's identity, a cultural discordance that spills over into the sexual area, Banti has set the scene for her reconstruction of the complete 'life' of her protagonist from childhood to old age. In Lavinia fuggita the focus had been on a culminating point, the brief series of events that turned Lavinia's predicament into an unsolved mystery for Orsola and Zanetta, and even for the much wiser reader who remains in the end no closer to an answer. In I porci's divided focus, Priscilla's evolution, her adaptation to changed circumstances and her recapture of an underlying, only half perceived continuity in her life, had been given no more than intermittent attention. In Joveta di Betania we follow a process, which comes full circle -- in the formal sense too -- at the end of the story when the protagonist, now a "decrepit abbess," invokes Saladin as "Triumphant, Merciful and Wise," while the nuns, her companions, cover their ears shuddering, the older ones remembering that "raised by the women of Timurtash," their superior had always been more Moslem than Christian.

It is probably difficult in today's secular world to accept the fact that before the full emancipation of women, the cloister was in many respects the best possible choice for an unmarried woman. It offered opportunities more attractive than the marginal existence to which penniless relatives were relegated at all levels of society. Of course, these opportunities were open especially to women who in taking the veil did not feel that their new life would be a prison or even a refuge but who, beyond whatever religious vocation they might have, saw in the Church the social institution that it was, with its opening out to the world as well as its vertical link to God.

Joveta's decision to become a nun is portrayed as the result of such a rational decision, unburdened by neurotic resistance. Overbearing and independent, willful, morose and dictatorial, once her troubled childhood was behind her, she began to fantasize what her life in a cloister might be like. She knew that as a king's daughter she would be no ordinary nun, and she went so far as to envisage "a revolutionary program," a new rule she could devise in which prayer, fasting and the

mortification of the flesh would be alleviated by the pleasures of the harem: picnics, games, song and the playing of the lute in a setting of luxuriant gardens, woodland and forests surrounding a delightful dwelling. "What is a convent, after all," Banti quotes Joveta as thinking, "if not a harem without the marriage bed?"²⁸

But her author does not permit her unchecked self-indulgence. There is a stubborn, intellectual side to Joveta as well, something she shares with many of Banti's other women. This side expresses itself in her insistence on the most rigorous religious instruction prior to taking her vows, in the "tempestuous discussions" that she engages in with the theologian selected to acquaint her with "the mysteries of the Catholic faith," in her rebuilding of the monastery and the cultivation of the land around it, and in her endowment of a rich library to rival those found in bishoprics, where she spent long hours studying Greek, Latin and Arabic texts, anxious to be the equal of her most learned contemporaries. In time, spurred on by the example of other rulers, whose duty it was to put their fiefdoms to practical use, she expanded the convent into a boarding-school for the daughters of the Overseas Kingdom.

Religious themes recur with a certain frequency in Banti's fiction. This is in large part due to the realistic component of her work. Her historical narratives are grounded in firm, that is, factual knowledge of the past, and the dominance of Christianity in Western culture for the past two millennia would make it difficult to ignore its manifestations in the social and psychological situations that are her focus. But, as must already be sufficiently clear, Banti is not interested in the doctrinal aspects of religion, either to maintain or to question a set of beliefs. Thus her portrayal of nuns is easily removed from the religious sphere and placed within a secular context where it has often been all too reductively equated with the conventional view of the cloistered woman chafing under the loss of her freedom, with Diderot's La Religieuse rather than with Manzoni's more complex representation of convent life.

Indeed Banti's reading of I promessi sposi, Italy's historical novel par excellence with its macroscopic religious presence, may be

taken as a case in point.²⁹ For Manzoni, Catholicism was not simply an inevitable part of the setting of 17th-century Lombardy and of the dramatis personae he "found" there; it determined the course of the novel's action and the nature of the lesson to be learned from it. Yet Banti's appreciation of the book in "Manzoni e noi" is exclusively aesthetic. As early as age twelve, she recalls, she and her classmates hailed the appearance in Chapter V of a very minor character, conte Attilio, as a welcome relief from Padre Cristoforo, "a saint according to the rules, with those fiery homilies of his... that bored us rather than winning us over." And if these same young readers later waxed enthusiastic over Gertrude, Cardinal Federigo and the Innominato, it was because of what they perceived as the greater verisimilitude of these characters, their more successful artistic rendition, and not because they are pivotal figures for the fundamental meaning of the work.

In the context of Joveta di Betania, Banti's most illuminating observations are contained in the other essay on Manzoni, "Ermengarda e Geltrude," published two years after the foregoing. This essay concentrates on two antithetical representations of women in Manzoni: Gertrude, the tragic and guilty if not downright criminal Monaca di Monza, and Ermengarda, the innocent repudiated wife of Charlemagne in the tragedy Adelchi. The more conventional pairing of opposites in the critical tradition would have been Gertrude and Lucia, both characters in I promessi sposi. But the "rustic" Lucia, "a respectable and simple-minded peasant girl," had from Banti's earliest reading of I promessi sposi seemed absolutely "unbearable" to her.³⁰ Thus Ermengarda becomes a screen figure for Lucia, a displacement all the more significant in Banti's developing argument, for by virtue of their social class, Gertrude, daughter of a Milanese prince of Spanish origin, and Ermengarda, daughter of the Lombard king Desiderius, are in contrast to Lucia close to equals. And not completely negligible in this rearrangement must have been the fact that as a historical figure Ermengarda belongs to a period in which the Latin and Germanic races clashed on Italian soil, creating a cultural climate, as already noted apropos I porci, of particular appeal to Banti.

The identification of Lucia and Ermengarda is, of course, a topos in Manzoni criticism. Both are gentle, modest, chaste and bashful. Both

are sinned against, victims in their respective violent times and as such the objects of Manzoni's compassion and of his indignation against their oppressors. But in using them as foils for Gertrude, Banti is led to exaggerate their characteristics, thereby making hers the most strongly negative strain in Manzoni criticism on this point. Emphasized are the tears and laments of Lucia and Ermengarda, their resignation and non-resistance, their weakness in brief, which in Banti's interpretation make them romantic heroines in the pejorative sense of the word: "The fact is that neither Lucia nor Ermengarda are creations of the true, authentic Manzoni, but of a Manzoni slave to the Romantic age, which was unfortunately his."³¹ And in the one word, unfortunately, lies Banti's total rejection of what she sees as the debased taste of the early 19th century. Making her condemnation all the more explicit, she mentions the historical painting of Hayez and Bartolini, the *bisque* figurines found in the well-appointed parlors of the bourgeoisie, the cloying engravings that embellished ladies' calendars -- all of them no different in their failure as art than Manzoni's "washed-out, tearful" Ermengarda.

On the basis of what Manzoni had been able to achieve with "a true protagonist" -- Gertrude -- "she too a victim, but not in the romantic mold," a woman different from those that surrounded Manzoni in his biographical reality, "a woman to be completely imagined if not downright invented,"³² Banti now sets out to try her hand at remaking Ermengarda into a character that might be hers. The question for us is not what it is in part for Banti: whether, that is, her Ermengarda is less anachronistic, more true to life (*verisimilar*) than Manzoni's. The question is what exactly does Banti miss in Manzoni's representation and what does she add to her own figure in keeping with her perception of women's destinies. In contrast to Lucia, to Manzoni's Ermengarda, to the ideal virtuous women of the 19th century, Banti proposes a woman, be she Gertrude or the remade Ermengarda, Artemisia, Lavinia, Priscilla, or indeed Joveta herself, "full of contrasts and violence, never wholly innocent nor wholly guilty," who may weep but whose tears "burn with pride." Pride -- the sin that in Manzoni must be humbled -- is what recurs in Banti's sketch of Gertrude's psychological make-up, coupled with a "greedy hunger" by virtue of which the convent becomes a prison. And it is essentially the absence of pride in Manzoni's

Ermengarda that Banti cannot accept.³³ She cannot imagine that the example of (the historical) Ermengarda's Germanic sisters, among whom -- she reminds us -- were "tremendous viragoes thirsting for power, vengeance and blood... Brunhilds... wild with ambition and the desire to be men," should not have helped her to develop the political finesse needed to survive at the Frankish court or nourished in her a potential indifference to men which might have even made her welcome the state of repudiated wife, "happy to be left alone."³⁴ The colloquialism of this expression clearly takes us back to Joveta's flippant dismissal of the importance of what by many is considered the greatest hardship of convent life, the absence of "the marriage bed" -- in Banti's scale of values obviously a trifle.

There are two high points in Banti's comments on Manzoni. Both relate to the art of fictional (poetic) historical reconstruction. Both reveal behind her assessment of Manzoni what she herself aspired to. In Chapter X of I promessi sposi, the chapter that portrays Gertrude's capitulation to her father's inhuman pressure in forcing her into the cloister and its consequences, Banti says that Manzoni "received from the hands of history a rough-hewn image and turned it into a character for all time"³⁵ -- a character, that is, capable of speaking to readers of periods subsequent to the time of its creation, one which no amount of factual documentation alone could have produced. And at the end of the same essay, after having proposed her own interpretation of what Ermengarda's feelings for her husband might have been, she states that "of all the ir retrievable things of the past everything can be evoked and reconstructed by dint of induction and conjecture, except the 'color' of feelings."³⁶ While the first statement expresses the familiar pride in creative authorship, the second raises a more troubling cognitive point: the disjunction between the evanescence of the specific quality of a feeling (love, for instance) and its name which may remain unchanged over long periods of time. "Without being aware of it," Banti writes, "the heart of man expresses feelings that change not only in their form but in their very essence according to the time in which he lives."³⁷

The writer -- be he Manzoni in the case of Ermengarda or Banti herself in her historical fiction -- in reconstructing the past may well come upon feelings whose designation has not changed but whose substance no longer elicits sympathy either from him or from his contemporary reader. When that occurs the feelings in question can be represented only through an effort of reflection, through an intellectual operation, that is, which takes the place of a spontaneous reaction of liking or disliking and for that very reason results in superior art. Clinching the argument, Banti quotes Manzoni: "La rappresentazione delle passioni che non eccitano simpatia, ma riflessione sentita, è più poetica di ogni altra."³⁸ Taken out of Manzoni's context, as Banti herself does here, I see this statement as supporting her claim that her rendition of Ermengarda is more truthful and therefore artistically superior to Manzoni's, but suggesting at the same time that her Ermengarda -- and implicitly others of her proud, self-reliant female figures -- may be less appealing even to the readers of Banti's more enlightened day than what she considers Manzoni's rendition of a superseded stereotype.

The question we have come up against here is the same one already broached at the beginning of this essay. Why should her stories, admired by critics and sophisticated readers of her own day and of ours, have failed to reach a wider public? Why should even her most faithful adherents, Cesare Garboli and Grazia Livi, speak of her as "impersonal," "distant," "unapproachable," "haughty," "an idol of unattainable perfection," "a woman larger than life," "a writer, disdainful of what is perishable, guarding an uninhabited world of letters," "with no sympathy or respect for the rules of democratic fellowship?"³⁹ An examination of some of her other stories may help to clarify this paradoxical situation further. In these other stories the problem of historical reconstruction as it impinges upon her representation of women is absent. They are stories whose time recaptured is not the distant and to most readers unfamiliar past (even more unfamiliar today than in Banti's own time and certainly more so in English-speaking countries than in Italy), but the present or a period just gone by.

Vocazioni indistinte was first published in Il coraggio delle donne and later collected in Campi elisi. La rana first appeared in Campi elisi. In both the protagonist is not woman triumphant but woman defeated. In both there is a second female figure that sets the protagonist's destiny off by contrast. In neither is it documents that are made to speak. Vocazioni indistinte, whose title might be translated "A Confused Vocation," is set in a provincial Tuscan town not far from Florence; La rana, which takes its name from a frog in a garden, in an elegant quarter of an unidentified city. The former can be thought of as a middle-class biography, a 'life'; the latter as the dénouement of a aristocrat's cosmopolitan existence. It has been suggested that there are autobiographical elements in each. Certainly both stories appear to have grown out of experience remembered even if distanced, out of personal observation more than "induction and conjecture."

Ofelia is the principal character in Vocazioni indistinte. We first meet her as an awkward, unimaginative, unnaturally envious and suspicious adolescent, who is expected eventually to marry and is meanwhile studying the piano. Her family subscribes to the practical wisdom of the day: "A woman should be self-sufficient" and "Teaching the piano is a lady-like profession."⁴⁰ With a few well-placed strokes Banti has succeeded in characterizing a conservative, small-town middle-class milieu of the pre-World War I period. As a matter of fact, it is possible that all five of the stories in Il coraggio delle donne were conceived as a cycle to which Conosco una famiglia (written in 1938 but not published until 1951, ten years after Il coraggio delle donne) was to serve as an introduction.⁴¹

But it is not so much the milieu that interests Banti in Vocazioni indistinte and the stories allied to it as her protagonists' psychology. These stories are concerned with details, with minute descriptions of fluctuating states of mind, which make one miss the broader vistas of the historical narratives and blur the line of development. At one point, Banti says of Giulia, Ofelia's cousin from Rome, that she "greatly inclined toward the puzzles of psychological investigation"⁴² and was overjoyed in finding Ofelia a more complicated individual than she had expected. The observation suits Banti's attitude toward her subject as well, and an overemphasis on psychological analysis may account for the

weakness of the story's total effect. The climax: Giulia's rediscovery many years later of Ofelia as a harassed, impoverished, and mentally unbalanced wife and mother -- a scene which is a veritable descente aux Enfers, a piece of neorealism in the midst of dominant formalism -- comes as a shock to the reader and not as the resolution of a carefully orchestrated interplay of tensions.

One of the most frequently cited critical judgments on Banti is Contini's: "Her fundamental theme is what might be called the condition of women. This is investigated with deep sympathy. However, the feeling turns into harshness, even dismissive harshness, when she tries to control it."⁴³ In Contini's comment one recognizes the apparently contradictory presence of opposing impulses in Banti's work, but it may not be her desire to control excessive sympathy that accounts for her "harshness." It seems more likely that her attitude changes according to the kind of woman who is her subject. In other words, the condition of women is not an abstraction, uniformly constant; there are many conditions as there are and have been many women. Some women win Banti's sympathy, others do not. It may be the portrayal of the latter that accounts for her "dismissive harshness" rather than her desire to moderate her impulse toward involvement. In contrast to the figures of women we have examined, her treatment of Ofelia and Giulia in Vocazioni indistinte is a case in point.

Ofelia spends years at the piano but her relationship to music has nothing in common with Lavinia's nor with Artemisia's artistic vision. Ofelia places her fingers on the keyboard and the challenge of technical perfection -- the only aspect of music she can conceive of -- takes over: she must make no mistakes, her tempi must be just right. If she stops for a moment between one piece and the next, the petty annoyances of her daily life float into her consciousness and she is busy ruminating over her chances at a rich inheritance. Even later, when after a number of setbacks, she begins studying in earnest at the conservatory and must face for the first time questions of interpretation, taste and style, it is only her tenacity, her fear of failure, her insensitivity, her amor proprio -- the debased version of the sense of pride which we have seen elsewhere as marking Banti's women of exceptional (masculine) achievement -- that help her to conquer this hurdle too. Forced by her

teacher finally to listen to music, she surprises him by being able to reproduce note for note a famous pianist's concert. But Banti is merciless: "she felt no pleasure whatsoever, paying attention like a (trained) dog and imitating like an (eager) beaver."⁴⁴ Only once is Ofelia permitted to experience something approximating fulfillment -- consummation -- in her music, pleasure instead of martyrdom. It is during her stay in Rome that Giulia's invigorating presence brings her to the point at which "her miraculous fingers chased one another over the keyboard, toyed with different rhythms, paused rejoicing, in brief, discovered a kind of gymnastics, an exhilarating dance."⁴⁵ It is a moment of brief duration.

In her self-possession, her easy teasing manner, her readiness to have fun, her vivacity, Giulia sets off the drabness, the crabbedness, the unattractiveness of Ofelia, just as the breath of fresh air she brings from Rome relieves the gloom of her cousin's cramped small-town environment. A more conventional writer than Banti might have been kinder to her than to Ofelia, if only to create contrast in her own attitude to the two characters within the overall economy of the story. But Banti, whether in her own narrating voice or through Ofelia's point of view, heaps ridicule on Giulia, beginning with the reputation of precocious intelligence that precedes her arrival in Ofelia's home town, her restless exploration of house and countryside, down to the great confusion in her speech and manner of "pride, intransigence, arrogance, self-indulgence, and vanity, all sprinkled with buffoneries and unbearable bursts of laughter."⁴⁶ The most damning statement, however, is made apropos Giulia's human insensitivity, the dark and dangerous pendant to Ofelia's artistic deafness. The zeal with which she espouses Ofelia's cause, her championship of Ofelia as "a great concert artist" blind her not only to the limitations of Ofelia's talent but to the psychological damage her exaggerated enthusiasm is inflicting on her cousin: "Conversation between the two girls proceeded in sudden spurts interspersed by silences, all modulated by Giulia's inner poses: a masterpiece of reciprocal misunderstanding which might have frightened a mature listener conscious of the hidden meaning of Ofelia's broken outbursts and new-found euphoria."⁴⁷ The "mature listener," endowed with insight into the hidden springs of behavior, with privileged psychological

knowledge, is of course Banti herself, who is even more pitiless in her portrayal of the silly and superficial city-girl Giulia than of the inhibited, provincial drudge Ofelia, neither of whom is endowed with any special redeeming talents.

Varvara, the protagonist of *La rana*, belongs to a different social class. She is first shown as she playfully teases the resident frog in the garden pond of her villa, urging it to raise its head among the floating leaves and watching it disappear again under the muddy surface. Approaching her fiftieth birthday, long married to a wealthy industrialist who spends his week-ends with her, shy by nature, she is intent on avoiding demanding human involvements and on filling her days with pleasurable activities. "What a good time I'm having!" / "How well I feel!" / "I can do anything I want!" / "I am free!" -- such are the contents of her inner monologue. Yet even in the midst of the initial, up beat evocation of her carefree days, her author has injected the somber note of "the emptiness that was in her and the stillness of time reduced to ashes that she felt weighing down on her like a shroud."⁴⁸ It is a hint of the suicide to come, when Varvara will hang herself as she had seen a peasant do when she was a child in Russia before the Revolution.

What makes Varvara commit suicide? What turns a ball of rope found in an old chest in the attic into a noose? It is the problem that preoccupies Banti in this story. Alternating between summary narrative and just barely sketched-in scenes, between present and past, between third-person narrative and long first-person passages in which Varvara tells about herself, Banti runs through the main events of Varvara's life, events that evoke experiences common to *émigré* Russian aristocrats in the period following World War I. Neither Varvara's youthful love affair with a French bourgeois, nor her marriage with a romantic Italian nobleman attracted by a "Nordic" woman, nor yet her encounter with an electrician, "a new kind of workman, well-bred and self-possessed,"⁴⁹ escape from the stereotypical; indeed, in the last instance there is even a self-conscious reference to *Lady Chatterley* in the text. Nor is Varvara's love of solitude, her preferring domestic animals to vain, noisy, self-centered friends totally out of the ordinary for the depiction of the potentially dangerous state of mind that may overtake a woman of her age and condition. As for Banti's pointing to the futility of most of

Varvara's activities: her gardening, her shopping expeditions, her daydreaming, summed up with epigrammatic conciseness in the comment, "Nothing is necessary to a woman who is free to do whatever she wishes"⁵⁰ -- it identifies in freedom without responsibility one of the accepted causes for depression and eventually perhaps even for suicide.

What is really new in Banti's exploration of the age-old suicide theme is the presence of a second female figure in La rana, who fears that it was an inadvertent remark of hers that may have triggered the crisis induced by Varvara's raised consciousness of her situation and her inability to cope with it. Elena is a journalist, a friend Varvara has made in Italy and who reminds her of the writers and artists she had known in Paris during an earlier stop in her nomadic existence. Varvara likes and admires her without, however, lowering the guard that protects her from all intimacy: "Elena amuses me" is the usual alibi whereby she justified the friendship to herself. The two women are unequally matched (as Banti and her friends probably were in reality). Elena is independent, Varvara dependent. The greatest contrast, however, is that Elena works (and the professional choice of journalism as against the more generic and prestigious writing is not without significance) while Varvara, for all her keeping busy, is idle. It is one afternoon that in answer to Varvara's hesitant question whether she is disturbing her, Elena is not content with the usual polite answer and adds: "You know, at our age there is only this, work. If I didn't have my work...".⁵¹ This one conversational exchange, on top of the often embarrassed relationship between the two friends, is credited with causing Varvara's sudden awareness of her attitude toward work: work as "a condemnation, an enslavement to be rid of as soon as possible" in her youth at the time of her employment in a dress-shop in Paris; and a different kind of work in the creation of the self-deception, the self-justification which she now discovers have failed her because at her present age "her preferences -- her inner laws -- were abandoning her, were no longer valid."⁵² Pitted against an ethic of self-indulgence, of pleasure and the desire to please (the poule, Varvara feels she is for her husband), is the heritage of the 19th-century work ethic, embedded not, as is more usual, in the single-mindedness of the male as achiever and provider but in the variant the 20th century had

added to it: the determination of women likewise to seek and find fulfillment through it.

After the publication of Banti's last fictional work, Un grido lacerante (1981), only Artemisia and Il coraggio delle donne of her earlier works have been reissued, respectively in 1989 and 1983. But while the novel reproduces the original 1947 text, the collection of stories is derived from both the 1940 volume of the same title and Le donne muoiono of 1951. It contains Lavinia fuggita, Vocazioni indistinte, Inganni del tempo, Il coraggio delle donne and Le donne muoiono from the earlier collections, and omits Conosco una famiglia, I porci, Felicina and Sofia o la donna indipendente -- thus continuing that shuffling of stories begun by Banti herself in the successive rearrangements of her corpus, in the repeated sifting of her work intended to separate what she -- and later others -- felt to be the more durable from the less. The emergence of the title of the distant 1940 collection in the Italian publication and of the story by that name in the recent New Italian Women volume is not accidental. It reflects both a constant theme in Banti's work and a dominant interest in today's readers. But it should not be taken as a slogan containing an absolute value judgment. As we have seen, Banti's portrayal of women is more complex than any one statement might be taken to imply; with its ambiguous ending, Il coraggio delle donne itself could be read in an ironic rather than celebratory key. Similarly, the dismissive label, "stories of other centuries in a language of other decades," applied to her work by an unfriendly critic with a different agenda,⁵³ easily shows its awkward reductiveness in the light of the scope and variety of her production -- unfortunately still an almost closed book to the English-speaking reader without Italian.

ENDNOTES

1. Anna Banti, Artemisia, trans. Shirley D'Ardia Caracciolo (Lincoln and London: U of Nebraska, 1988). Published originally: Florence, Sansoni, 1947. Subsequently: Milan, Mondadori, 1953, 1969, 1974. A few passages, translated by Joan Borrelli, are included in Longamn Anthology of World Literature by Women, 1875-1975, eds. Marian Arkin and Barbara Shollar (New York & London: Longman, 1989), 339-343. I have found no trace of early translations of Banti into English. One of her short stories, Il coraggio delle donne ("The Courage of Women") is included in New Italian Women. A Collection of Short Fiction, ed. Martha King (New York: Italica Press, 1989). The quality of the translation can be judged from the following passage: "The group came straggling down by a short cut that threads across the crest of the hill. They were in such a hurry that the upturned rocks rolling down and striking the feet of the three women didn't even amuse the children." This is the story's first sentence, which presumably renders: "La compagnia veniva su, sbandata, per la scorciatoia che infila il crinale del colle: tanta era la fretta che i sassi rimossi dai ragazzi, rotolando in giù e urtando i piedi delle tre signore, non parevano nemmeno avvertiti." The sentence is an example of Banti's indirect, allusive style. But in spite of its difficulty, the translator might have recognized that su is not down, rimossi cannot be upturned since it refers to stones dislodged by the people walking, and that avvertiti (noticed) is certainly not divertiti (amused).
2. Banti won the Viareggio Prize in 1952 for Le donne muoiono, the Marzotto Prize in 1955 with Allarme sul lago, the Veillon Prize in 1957 for La monaca di Sciangai e altri racconti, the Asti d'Appello Prize in 1967 for Noi credevamo, and the D'Annunzio Prize in 1973 for La camicia bruciata.

3. For information on American translations of Italian fiction, see Vincent Luciani, "Modern Italian Fiction in America, 1929-1954," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, January 1958. For an informative and sensitive assessment of the Cesare Barbieri Courier, see Thomas G. Bergin, "An Anniversary: Cesare Barbieri Courier," Italica, 47 (1970), 119-120.
4. Anna Banti, Artemisia (Milan: Rizzoli, 1989). A French translation by Christiane Guidoni (Paris: POL éd.) was likewise published in 1989.
5. Books Abroad, 33 (Winter 1959), 5-9.
6. For relevant bibliography, see Valeria Finucci, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Female Painter: the Künstlerroman Tradition in A. Banti's Artemisia," Quaderni d'italianistica, VIII, 2 (1987), 167-93; Deborah Heller, "History, Art, and Fiction in Anna Banti's Artemisia," pp. 45-60 in Contemporary Women Writers in Italy: A Modern Renaissance, ed. Santo L. Aricò (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), Francis Haskell, "Artemisia's Revenge?," The New York Review of Books, July 20, 1989, pp. 36-8; James Gardner, "A Star is Reborn," National Review, August 4, 1989, pp. 44-5.
7. Caryn James, "The Characters Are Real, the History Isn't," The New York Times, January 4, 1989, C15-6. Robert Pazzi's Searching for the Emperor, Peter Acroyd's Chatterton, and Jonathan D. Spence's The Question of Hu are the novels considered alongside Artemisia.
8. Early reviewers tended to puzzle over the textual rather than the fictional relationship between the two versions. Among them were: Gianfranco Contini, now in Altri esercizi (1942-1971) (Florence: Vallecchi, 1961); Emilio Cecchi, now in Di giorno in giorno (Milan: Garzanti, 1954); Giuseppe Ravegnani, now in Uomini visti II (Milan: Mondadori, 1955). Contini's conclusion was categorical: "Ogni ipotesi sull'originale sarà illegittima."

9. Artemisia, 10.
10. Alessandro Manzoni, "Lettre à M. Chauvet," in Opere (Milan: Casa del Manzoni, 1943), II, 345.
11. Contini, 173.
12. Cecchi, 19.
13. Lavinia fuggita exists in a manuscript translation into English by Shirley D'Ardia Caracciolo, with the title Lavinia Has Fled. There is also another translation, likewise in manuscript, by Joan Borrelli with the title After Lavinia's Flight.
14. Milan: Mondadori, 1951. Lavinia fuggita was later included in the collection Campi elisi (Milan: Mondadori, 1963), and more recently in Il coraggio delle donne (Milan: La Tartargua, 1983). This latter edition makes use of the title given by Banti to a collection she published in 1940 but does not reproduce its contents. It contains instead Il coraggio delle donne, Le donne muoiono, Lavinia fuggita, Vocazioni indistinte and Inganni del tempo.
15. Anna Banti, La monaca di Sciangai e altri racconti (Milan: Mondadori, 1957), 5.
16. In a review of John Boswell's The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance, which appeared in The New York Review of Books (June 29, 1989), we read: "One of the most popular tourist attractions of eighteenth-century Venice was the all-girl orchestra and choir of the Ospedale della Pietà, for which Antonio Vivaldi, appointed director in 1714, wrote music in such prodigious quantity that much of it lies still unpublished in the National Library in Torino."
17. Le donne muoiono, 107.

18. Le donne muoiono, 107.
19. Artemisia, 183-84. Lost in translation is the implied distinction between pittrice (woman painter) and pittore (man painter). The original reads: "un pittore ha avuto nome: Artemisia Gentileschi."
20. In Manzoni's words: "... the representation of a given state of society by means of events and characters so similar to reality, that they can be believed to be a true story that one has just discovered." Letter to Claude Fauriel, 3 Oct. 1821.
21. Enza Biagini, Anna Banti (Milan: Mursia, 1978), 56 cites only two war stories, Il colonello (1945) and Incanti di Circe (1946), but includes I porci and Un ragazzo nervoso (1946) among the a-typical, non autobiographical works of that period.
22. Le donne muoiono, 33.
23. Le donne muoiono, 54.
24. Le donne muoiono, 49-50.
25. Milan: Mondadori, 1971.
26. Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 1952. Volume II: The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East 1100-1187.
27. Je vous écris d'un pays lointain, 92.
28. Je vous écris d'un pays lointain, 96.
29. Banti's volume of essays, Opinioni (Milan: Il saggiatore, 1961), contain two pieces on Manzoni: "Ermengarda e Geltrude," 44-52, and "Manzoni e noi," 53-65. The original date of publication of the first was 1954, of the second 1956. Geltrude is the variant of Gertrude, by which name the character appears

in Manzoni's Fermo e Lucia, the first version of I promessi sposi. The standard edition of I promessi sposi (Milan: Mondadori), which includes Fermo e Lucia and the 1825-27 edition of I Promessi sposi, was published in 1954.

30. Opinioni, 55.
31. Opinioni, 45.
32. Opinioni, 46.
33. A thematic study of Banti's representation of women could take its point of departure from the implicit theory of the passions in her work. Pride would seem to be the crucial touchstone for such an investigation.
34. Opinioni, 52.
35. Opinioni, 46.
36. Opinioni, 52.
37. Opinioni, 52.
38. "Della moralità delle opere tragiche," in Lettre a M.C. sur l'unité de temps et de lieu dans la tragédie, ed. Umberto Colombo (Brunello, VA: Ed. Otto/Novecento, 1981), p. 233.
39. C.G. (Cesare Garboli), Paragone, XXXVI (August 1985); Grazia Livi, "Anna Banti o della impersonalità," Paragone, XXXVI (December 1985). Livi's earlier writings on Banti are now part of her Le lettere del mio nome (Milan: La Tartaruga, 1991), an extraordinary retelling of the history of feminism from Beauvoir's The Second Sex side by side with evocative essays on women writers from Colette to Agnes Bojaxhiu (i.e., Mother Theresa).

40. Campi elisi, 44.
41. Enza Biagini, Anna Banti (Milan: Mursia, 1978), 33.
42. Campi elisi, 79.
43. Gianfranco Contini, Letteratura dell'Italia unita (Florence: Sansoni, 1968), 865.
44. Campi elisi, 63.
45. Campi elisi, 77.
46. Campi elisi, 66.
47. Campi elisi, 79.
48. Campi elisi, 573.
49. Campi elisi, 577.
50. Campi elisi, 575.
51. Campi elisi, 577.
52. Campi elisi, 578.
53. Walter Pedullà, "Anna Banti: storie d'altri secoli in un linguaggio d'altri decenni," La letteratura del benessere (Rome: Bulzone, 1973).

**ROME: OCTOBER 16, 1943:
REVIEW OF AN INFAMY**

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In the pre-dawn grey of October 16, 1943, Gestapo forces, together with SS militia and the *Sicherheitspolizei*, surrounded Rome's ancient Jewish Ghetto, precluding all exit from the area's maze of sinuous streets and alleys. At 5:30 a.m., and with teutonic precision, troops commenced their pre-planned *Judenaktion*, a raid that was to spare no one, not infants, the infirm, nor the elderly. Over one-thousand Roman Jews, in great number women, children, and the aged, spent the two nights following the raid in Rome at the Military College on the Tiber. On Monday, October 18, 1943, the prisoners were transported by lorry to the Roma-Tiburtino train depot and loaded onto eighteen sealed livestock cars. For six hours this suffering human cargo was forced to wait on dead track while the *Sicherheitspolizei* kept at bay any friend or relative who so much as dared approach the convoy. At five past two that afternoon, the convoy set off from Rome. On board were more than one-thousand captives. On October 22, 1943, the convoy reached its final destination: Auschwitz. Of the more than one thousand transported to the death camp, fifteen returned at war's end, fourteen men and one woman.

For the Jews of Rome, and for anyone not yet totally shorn of historical memory, the date, October 16, 1943, can still provoke the twin emotions of terror and rage. "It can be said - rightly so - that few days among the bimillennial history of the Jews in Rome will ring as doleful as the 16th of October 1943."¹ So states Michael Tagliacozzo in the opening to his penetrating investigation into Jewish Rome under Nazi occupation. Most recently, in Alexander Stille's highly acclaimed Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Italian Jewish Families Under Fascism², the 16th of October 1943 figures as the focus of the third section dealing with the De Veroli family of Rome. Robert Katz's, Black Sabbath,³ written close to thirty years ago, combines the methodological exactitude

of the trained historian with the passionate drive of the investigative journalist in providing a scrutiny into the machinations surrounding the date that to this day invites heated debate. Elsa Morante's much discussed novel of the 70's, La Storia, at one point incorporates events in Rome centered on October 16, 1943. The date has been the object, then, of historical study, sociological scrutiny, narrative enterprise, and popular film (L'oro di Roma, 1962) by Carlo Lizzani.⁴ Indeed, so intermingled have these various forms of discourse become some fifty years later that anyone today wishing to evaluate the 16th of October 1943 must first come to grips with the mythic configuration the date has assumed, mythic in the sense of exerting a power to provoke dread and/or denunciation not tied to any one 'narrative' re-presentation.

To my mind, however, there is one narrative 're-presentation' which distinguishes itself amidst all other necessary but necessarily fragmented accounts. Naturally, while no account is the actual event, Giacomo DeBenedetti's "docu-fiction," 16 ottobre 1943, through its masterful blend of a documentarian's concern with the accuracy of description and the fictional writer's preoccupation with character and psychological field, best appeals pari passu to its reader's historical curiosity, moral sensibility and esthetic engagement. Though first published in Italy in 1944 and subsequently translated into nearly thirty languages (the first French translation appeared in 1947 with an introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre), to date DeBenedetti's text awaits an English-language publication.

My first encounter with the text occurred in 1978 while on the staff of the Trinity College/Rome Campus in Rome. Rummaging through a book table at the Rinascita bookstore, I was struck by the small volume's dramatic cover (a vivid red X canceling out a field of small white Stars of David on a black background), and by the title's chilling historical specificity: 16 ottobre 1943. Though priding myself on an excellent graduate-school preparation in twentieth-century Italian history and culture, I could recall no reference to the text. So, there on the Aventine, on an exquisitely Roman autumn afternoon, I devoured the novella in one sitting. I began soon afterwards to incorporate passages from the story into my courses in advanced Italian. In 1978 I began to translate snippets of the book I could then use on walking tours in Rome

with students otherwise incapable of understanding the original Italian. Since the sites of the novella's horrific narration were within blocks of Trinity's Rome Campus, the geographic concreteness of DeBenedetti's evocation intensified the students' experience and lent powerful immediacy to the text.

Presently, my work at the first English translation of 16 October, 1943 nears completion.⁵ I remain evermore convinced, then, that the tale wrought by Giacomo DeBenedetti be available to an English-speaking audience, especially in light of a growing interest in, and a burgeoning literature on, the Nazi-Fascist persecution of Italy's Jews in the English-speaking world.⁶

There is little 'postmodern' about 16 ottobre 1943, except perhaps in the implications of DeBenedetti's textual practices and strategies by which he transgresses neat conventional distinctions between 'fact' and 'fiction' (actually, it could be argued that such transgression squares perfectly with 'modernist' techniques, and coincides chronologically with biographical data: Giacomo DeBenedetti was born in Biella in 1901, he died in Rome in 1967).⁷ An eyewitness to the events he narrates (as a Jew himself, the author was in hiding in Rome in October of 1943), DeBenedetti is driven first and foremost by a desire to wed historical specificity to 'rhetorical' engagement. Consequently, the many temporal/thematic digressions and flashbacks of which the text is replete function not only to provide the reader, perhaps otherwise unfamiliar with the historical context of the narrative, with pertinent information and insight, but likewise to enhance the tale-telling with powerful dramatic interruptions. Moreover, the narrative's steady switch of stylistic registers (from the lyrical temper of descriptions of the Jews and their community just prior to the Nazi incursion, to the mastery of concision by which, in a few, precisely constructed images, DeBenedetti vividly paints not only the character of the SS Officer thieving amidst the inestimable richness of the community's ancient archives, but the entire historical, moral and cultural project that has engendered that character and its behavior, and finally to the abruptness through which reverie or naivete is sundered by the brutality of event), far from dissipating the reader's emotional responses, serves to underscore them. Even the occasional employment of overwrought language (especially by means of

sumptuous adjectivization) as in the story's opening paragraphs, must be considered in terms of DeBenedetti's overall rhetorical strategy: to contract drastically the atmosphere of disingenuous calm permeating the Ghetto and its inhabitants on the eve of the Nazi raid with the ferocity of the Germans' subsequent Judenaktion.

There will be without doubt those who question the appropriateness of an English-language translation of DeBenedetti's work at so distant a date from its original publication. Such reservations, I imagine might gravitate to one of two categories, the 'esthetic' or the 'political,' or perhaps a combination of both.

From the 'esthetic' or textual point of view, DeBenedetti's novella is definitely an 'old-fashioned' text, out of keeping with the kinds of texts privileged today by readers and practitioners of any number of forms of 'postmodernism' criticism (neohermeneutics; semiologists; poststructuralists of various hues; etc.). After all, a literary text grounded in historical event, albeit the historical event as mediated by the writer's textual interplay of 'fact' and 'imagination,' a text constructed on inescapable binaries (victim and victimizer; brutality and benevolence; ruthlessness and naivete), is a text whose deliberate admixture of 'fact' and 'fiction' is clearly structured to elicit in its reader much more than the "hedonism and 'pleasure' of the text," while contesting in its very format (let alone, dare I say it?, intention) any contemporary view (Asor Rosa) that holds "political-ethical commitment in literature as irreparably 'tiresome'."⁸

There is no way one can escape the 'political-ethical commitment' in a text like 16 October 1943. DeBenedetti's fundamental motivation is to provide witness to an atrocity that is, yes, time-bound, but one whose artistic articulation guarantees it a status beyond mere chronicle. It is not only that the horrors so movingly depicted in 16 October 1943 can find innumerable analogies in our own time and place (true as this be) but that, by its very existence and dissemination, it works to subvert any 'postmodern' assertion that literary artifacts today be encouraged or appraised insofar as they sustain the notion that we in the West are at history's end, and that all contradictions (moral and political) have been erased. A text like DeBenedetti's 16 October 1943, with its artistic complexities inescapably evident to even the most

contemporary theoretician, - to even the most stalwart advocate of 'pensiero debole' - can help its readers reconsider connections between 'literature' and 'history.' This is not to propose any devaluation of literary enterprise to a level of propaganda, nor is it here suggested that historical documentation be privileged over imaginative acts (once again, the artistic integrity of DeBenedetti's text belies any such reductions). What a text like DeBenedetti's 16 October 1943 does do is to present the case for a 'politically and ethically committed' literature that treats the 'historical' event and circumstance in such a way as to "penetrate [our] defenses of denial and evasion rather than to fortify them..."⁹

DeBenedetti's discourse in October 16, 1943 - the words he employs to make his characters and even the inanimate objects he describes palpitate with pathos and the pain of human torment - could never be truly 'translated' from the original Italian. What I have attempted, then, is not so much a 'translation' as a 'rendering' of the writer's prose which may, at best and only when most successful, approximate the bittersweet lyricism and surgical precision of his style, a style constituting an amalgam of detached reportage and impassioned fictive creation. It is this hybrid nature of its discourse which most contributes to the text's success. DeBenedetti's discourse is 'fictionalized' in that some of his characters are historical while others are invented, and the story shifts abruptly and frequently from dramatic dialogue to narrator's commentary achieving a complexity of tone that unleashes, in the end, a collective voice. This constant shift of narrative voice from insider/participant to observer/scribe constitutes a textual tension that keeps pulling the reader into the action only to extract her/him in Brechtian manner outside and above the fray to assess both character and event.

Examples of the above-mentioned shifts abound in the text. For the sake of argument I propose three main categories to describe the main tonal qualities I think interweave in the construction of DeBenedetti's narration. These three categories I call: 1) the lyrical; 2) the fact-fiction blend; and 3) the homely and historically literal.

1) The paragraphs that open 16 October 1943 employ a language, lush, liturgical and hypnotic, that engulfs the reader in a recall to a time and place preceding the horror to befall. DeBenedetti's florid

use of adjective and winding syntax removes the reader temporarily to the safe confines of a charmed circle whose precious links will soon be tragically and irreparably severed.

Until a few weeks ago, as soon as the first star appeared every Friday, those great doors of the Synagogue were opened wide onto the Temple Square. Why those massive doors and not the partly concealed side entrances used every other evening? And why not a lean menorah instead of that blaze of light irradiating the golden splendor of the stuccoes (David's shield; the knops of Solomon; the trumpets of the Jubilee - a flood of light reflecting off the brocade veil hung before the Sacred Ark, the Ark of the Covenant with the Lord? Why? Because every Friday evening the return of the Sabbath was celebrated as soon as the first star appeared.

Not the cantor's usual thin psalmody muffled on the distant altar: this night, instead, from high in the choir amid the organ's strain, the boys' chorus was chanting the ancient canticle of sacred tenderness that welcomes the Sabbath like an approaching bride: 'Leha Dodi Lichra Cala: 'Come, oh Friend, come to greet the Sabbath.'¹⁰

So in happier times (and when were these? surely before the Racial Laws of 1938), the glow of the menorah and the strains of the choir greeted an approaching 'Bride.' On the day in question, however, a figure terribly unbridelike erupts within the Ghetto.

But on that particular Friday evening, the fifteenth of October, a woman dressed all in black, dishevelled and bespattered with rain, bursts into Rome's former Ghetto. She has trouble opening her mouth; anguish garbles her words and she foams at the lips. She's come racing all the way from Trastevere where, just moments ago, she met the wife of a carabinieri in the home of that woman

for whom she does part-time housework. She's found out that the woman's husband - the carabinieri - recently met a German and this German had in his hands a list of two-hundred Jewish families slated for deportation.

2) Celeste, this unheralded and unheeded harbinger of disaster, is the first of a number of characters invented by DeBenedetti. But she is 'fictional' only to a degree, for it is clear from the author's restructuring of verifiable event that someone like Celeste must have existed. Celeste is, moreover, the creation of an imagination grounded in strict familiarity with the 'real' Ghetto's inhabitants, the literary construct of 'one from their midst' (it must be remembered that DeBenedetti, the Jew, was hiding in Rome at the time of the events he later reconstructs).

In similar manner, no one can verify (as the Italians would say, "anagraficamente") the historical existence of another of DeBenedetti's characters, but the 'invented' personage of the aforementioned thieving SS Officer assumes a 'reality' uncannily necessary to the historically verifiable economy of DeBenedetti's narration. A short time before the Nazi raid on the Ghetto, SS forces had ransacked the Roman Synagogue and libraries. While the majority of the troops conducted a brutish rampage, one of their officers, of obviously more refined temper and training, worked to mitigate the wanton destruction in an effort to secure what he recognized to be treasures of inestimable value. DeBenedetti's summation of this occurrence is synthesized in the chillingly scrupulous and trenchant concision of his sketch.

A strange character about whom one would like to have further particulars suddenly appears in various parts of the community on October 11. He was accompanied by an escort, and to look at him, one would have said that he was just another German officer. (...) Like every other German officer of his kind he is all uniform. From head to foot, like all the others, he dons a well-tailored uniform of fussy elegance, abstract and implacable. The uniform sheathes the body - the person

- while also, and more importantly, it envelopes with zipper-tight imperviousness the wearer's moral fiber. He is the word/verboten/translated into uniform. (...)

While his men rifle through the libraries of the Rabbinical College and the community, this officer, with cautious and meticulous hands like those of an embroiderer, begins to graze, caress, and fondle scrolls and incunabula. Delicately, he turns the pages of manuscripts and rare editions; carefully, he leafs through parchments and palimpsests. (...) Nevertheless, at the turning of each page, the officer's eyes grow fixed and sparkle in the same way those of some readers particularly familiar with a subject do when they fall upon a long-sought page or revealing passage. In those elegant hands, as if under sharp but bloodless torture, the books yield to a delicate sadism. (...)

A quick pull on the zipper and the uniform has sealed in the semitologist who once again becomes an officer of the SS. He shouts orders: if anyone touches, harms or steals even one of these volumes, he will be summarily shot in accordance with German laws of war.

3) The homely, in the proper sense of the term, is captured throughout the text by DeBenedetti in ways so delicately alluring that, for moments brief and captivating, horror is held at bay. Among countless examples, one can cite the following description of a lingering reminiscence of Jewish domesticity evoked in the very midst of the incessant shooting and shouting that German troops used to terrorize and disorient the Roman Jews an hour or so before the traumatic roundup was to begin.

(...) One woman who has just given birth a few hours ago can put up with it no longer. She drags herself out of bed, clutches her newborn, races to a neighbor's kitchen and promptly faints. Women rush to help her; cognac; a hot water bottle; at least all this is the stuff of

daily life, or evils for which there are remedies. But what are they all about, those down there who have been shooting and screaming for two, three hours - for more than three hours?

These selections, though representative of the categories outlined above, obviously do no justice to DeBenedetti's text as a whole. It is only in its entire ensemble of relations that the text invites an appreciation of its author's mastery at situating and structuring all the varying tonal registers. So too, an anthologic reading falls far short from any appreciation of the author's overall rhetorical strategies and their dramatic effects. It is hoped, therefore, that these cursory observations whet the appetite for a proper investigation and assessment of 16 October 1943 in recognition, that is, of the book's status as a pre-eminent document (historical and artistic) of Italian 'Holocaust' literature deserving rank alongside the better-known works of, for example, Primo Levi.

What might be the result of a larger (i.e., English-speaking) audience for DeBenedetti's novella? Could not one recognize its documentarian and artistic merit while lamenting yet another depiction of the frail, feckless Jews of Europe, pathetic victims of the Nazi juggernaut? Does the world really need another tale of hapless Jews led 'meekly' to the slaughter? Such questions are legitimate, applicable to the extant of European 'Holocaust' literature, and especially appropriate in light of a most recent historiographical and ideological shift contesting the longstanding 'Bruno Bettelheim - Hannah Arendt' interpretative insistence on depictions of the 'passive' Jews of Europe as inept victims of Hitlerism.¹¹ Will portrayals of pathos, like that one so exquisitely wrought by DeBenedetti, foster in Jew and non-Jew, Israeli and American, a commitment to a higher "Jewish" ethic, or will it stoke the fires of those who cite such examples as justification for strong-arm policies in the contemporary Middle East? And do harsh Jewish-Israeli tactics vis-à-vis the Occupied Territories honor or besmirch the collective memory of the twin European atrocities of genocide and collaboration of fifty years ago?

These are questions of greater complexity and import than either

my intentions or competence can admit to handle, and I defer the necessary debate to other voices and to other fora. However, one additional controversial issue directly tied to any 'political-ethical' evaluation readily prompted by DeBenedetti's work, an issue with which I have some familiarity¹², does deserve comment here. I refer to the thorny question of what most likely constituted the social, psychological and political underpinnings to Roman-Jewish "passivity" and "disingenuousness" when confronted by so clear and undeniable a threat beginning with the Nazi occupation of Rome in September of 1943.¹³

Among the most searing "historical-political" inquiries that a mere "artistic" document like DeBenedetti's 16 ottobre 1943 renders unavoidable are: 1) to what extent did the Italian Fascist formation and contact of so many among the Roman Jewish community, especially its leadership, contribute to an improper assessment of the imminence of disaster ready to befall the Ghetto Jews beginning in September of 1943? and, 2) what was the Vatican's role, given Rome's status as an "open" and papal city in the tragic events of October 16, 1943?

Numerous are the accounts testifying to how much Rome, Jewish and Gentile, was abuzz with talk of the German atrocity the moment the raid neared its denouement. What surprised numbers of Romans was the Nazis' brashness in conducting such a Judenaktion in the papal city, literally within shadow of Pope Pius XII's balcony.¹⁴ Many historians and witnesses, both then and now, have attributed this belief in immunity precisely to the Pope's presence. After all, does not the persistence of such belief help explain the near total lack of preparations taken by so many of Rome's Jews, especially the working-class and poor inhabitants of the Ghetto? Sad conjecture leads one to ask how many lives might have been spared if preparations, of whatever nature, had been undertaken, especially since the raid followed so closely on the heels of the gold swindle¹⁵ and previously mentioned sack of the community's synagogue and libraries in late September. What is clear is that all too many of Rome's Jews, both residents of the Ghetto as well as those more prosperous and assimilated living in other parts of the city, trusted in the Pope's presence and expected that some form of Vatican intervention would thwart German attempts to do in Rome what they had been doing for some time in other parts of Europe. In retrospect, it is clear that to

a great degree these Roman Jews were immobilized as much by their illusions as by their circumstances.

After the deportation of the 18th - on October 27 - Rabbi David Panzieri, an assistant to the official Chief Rabbi of Rome, Israel Zolli, hiding incognito in the city in fear for his life, wrote directly to Pius XII (October 27) in the name of the Israelite community. While the language of the missive was flowery, its tone was emotional, even desperate. Panzieri entreated the pontiff to intervene on behalf of the deported. Specifically, he asked for warm clothing to be sent to the captured, since those deported had been pulled from their beds with clothing hardly suitable to the rigors of an approaching winter. Unlike those at the Vatican, Panzieri appeared completely unaware of the graver danger reserved for those taken to Auschwitz.¹⁶

Jesuit Father Pietro Tacchi-Venturi, who frequently acted as intermediary between the Holy See and the Italian government on Jewish matters, also begged the Pope's help. Romans had been barbarously shipped like "butcher's beasts"¹⁷ and Tacchi-Venturi wanted the Holy Father to find out what had happened to them. He saw the Pope as possibly the most viable vindicator of those whose rights had been so brazenly trampled.

Apparently, the deported Jews themselves also placed in the Pope their best hope of salvation. According to the Bishop of Padua, Carlo Agostini, when the deportees passed through his city, their cries for papal intervention could be heard issuing from the sealed boxcars. Indeed, so tenacious was this belief in the possibility of papal intervention that Roman Jews, say witnesses, clung to their illusion right up to the moment of extermination at Auschwitz.¹⁸

The Pope's presence alone had not served to thwart the Nazis' designs, nor did any meaningful or effective intervention on the part of Pius XII and the Vatican hierarchy come to the aid of Rome's Jews before, during, or after the raid. From the first moments of the Nazi occupation of Rome, Pius XII and the Vatican had settled on a general policy of silence.¹⁹ True, that silence had been punctuated, but only infrequently and with carefully-worded pronouncements of vague disapproval whose cryptic 'Vaticanese' ensured an ambiguity posing no clear condemnation of Nazi policies and programs. Apologists for this

line of (in)action defend the Pope's behavior with claims that any direct maneuver on the Vatican's part would have occasioned a rupture with the Reich that could only have made matters worse for the Roman population in general, and for Rome's Jewry in particular. Such a rupture, so proceeds the argument, might have endangered unnecessarily the Church and the Pope's very person (abduction of Pius XII), thus eliminating a potential source for subtle and future persuasion.

Such is the apologia offered by one Jesuit, Father R. Leiber (at one time, confidant to Pius XII). In his 1961 article in the Jesuit publication, La civiltà cattolica,²⁰ Father Leiber later stated in Look magazine (1966) that, at the time of the Nazi razzia in Rome, Pope Pacelli had done everything he could; indeed, the Pope had allegedly even exhausted his personal fortune on behalf of the Jews. In that same Look article, Fr. Leiber states that Dr. Raffaele Cantoni, a Jewish leader, once informed him that Roman Jews sought no papal pronouncements, but practical assistance. Leiber quotes Cantoni as having said: "Thus he [Pius XII] gave us as much as he was able."²¹ The Roman Jews were allegedly happy that the pontiff did not make any public statements on their behalf since Nazi reaction to such might have proven unpredictable.

But an opposing line of argument - and one to which I ascribe - can likewise and equally be made. Supposedly dictated by moral principles transcending mere Realpolitik, the Vatican might have issued an interdiction on Nazi genocide whose effects could have arguably been to cause dissension within German, especially Roman-Catholic German, ranks (a dissension already present albeit slight, submerged and unorganized). Furthermore, Vatican condemnation might have fueled the already deep-seated hostility to Nazi control in occupied territories, among the Italians in particular, and could have helped increase the ranks of those who did pass from passive resistance to open rebellion.²² At the very least, papal intervention might have abated the full brunt of Nazi butchery, saving some lives in the process.

Historical (though not moral) conjectures of this kind remain always tenuous. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that Pius XII had not minced words, nor had he opted for a 'diplomatically' ambiguous phraseology when condemning the Soviets or the Spanish

Republicans. Precedent did exist. Consequently, is it really beyond the pale to raise the moral question as to whether or not the extermination of Jews residing within earshot of the papal apartments is any less heinous a crime than the killing of others, and, if so, by what moral measure?

The Vatican was well aware of plans for the raid in advance of October 16 through the German Ambassador to the Holy See, Ernst von Weizsäcker. Weizsäcker had learned of the raid through the actions of the German Consul, Eitel Friedrich Möllhausen²³ who had inadvertently secured secret messages from the Reichsführer, Heinrich Himmler to SS Major Herbert Kappler in Rome. Those messages referred to previously secret communications from Himmler calling for application of the "final solution" through the mass deportation of Italy's Jews. Responding to these communiqués sent to Kappler from Himmler's headquarters in Rastenburg, Möllhausen - because of personal disagreement with Nazi genocidal policies he considered not only humanly repellent but politically unsound²⁴ - rushed a telegram on October 6 to the Wilhelmstrasse offering an alternative to the deportation scheme.²⁵ About twenty hours later, Möllhausen sent a second dispatch to Berlin that read:

Very very urgent! For Herrn Reichsminister personally. In connection with telegram of the 6th, no. 192, Field Marshal Kesselring has asked Obersturmbannführer Kappler to postpone planned Judenaktion for present time. If however it is necessary that something be done, he would prefer to utilize the able-bodied Roman Jews in fortification work here.²⁶

Möllhausen was unsuccessful in arresting the Nazi Command's plans for a raid and deportation. By his actions, however, he brought to the attention of German diplomatic and military circles in Rome the designs of the High Command, designs which then became known within the upper echelons of the Vatican. Robert Katz has asserted that:

The Vatican too was informed by Weizsäcker of

Möllhausen's intervention; it was good news, of course, but from that moment on the highest authorities of the Church, including Pope Pius XII, knew beyond any doubt that the Germans were planning to deport the Jews of Rome.²⁷

Only when the October 16 raid and deportation constituted a fait accompli did the Vatican shatter its long silence through an editorial in the Osservatore Romano (Monday-Tuesday edition, October 25-26, 1943). In that editorial the Vatican expressed its discomfort with the Nazis' actions, though no direct reference was made to the raid or the deportation. In language both veiled and, to the uninitiated, exasperatingly abstract, the Holy Father was lauded for his indefatigable efforts in alleviating the pains of an afflicted world.

Persistent and pitiful echoes of calamities, which as a result of the present conflict do not cease to accumulate, continue more than ever to reach the Holy Father.

The August Pontiff, as is well known, after having tried in vain to prevent the outbreak of war by striving to dissuade the Rulers of the nations from taking recourse in force of arms, which today are so fearsome, has not desisted for one moment in employing all the means in his power to alleviate the suffering, which, whatever form it may take, is the consequence of this cruel conflagration.

With the augment of so much evil, the universal and paternal charity of the Pontiff has become, it could be said, ever more active; it knows neither boundaries nor nationality, neither religion nor race.

This manifold and ceaseless activity on the part of Pius XII has intensified in recent times in regard for the increased suffering of so many unfortunate people.

Such blessed activity, above all with the prayers of the faithful of the whole world, who unanimously and with ardent fervor never cease to look to Heaven, can

achieve even greater results in the future and hasten the day on which the shining glow of peace will return to the earth; and men, laying down their arms, will put aside all their differences and bitterness, and, becoming brothers once more, will finally labor, in all good faith, for the common weal.²⁸

Unfortunately for those who already lay dead at Auschwitz, this news of papal solicitude was of no consolation. Moreover, the above are the only words to issue from the Vatican in the wake of the deportation. They did succeed, nonetheless, in bringing solace to at least one segment of the paper's readership: the German Command. Weizsäcker immediately translated the Osservatore Romano piece and dispatched it to Berlin. Robert Katz informs us that certain inaccuracies in the Weizsäcker translation were most likely the result of the haste with which it had been prepared. Just the same, the substance of the Vatican pronouncement was clearly interpreted by Berlin officials. In a letter accompanying the translation, Weizsäcker wrote:

(..) in connection with telegraphed report n. 147 of 17 October last: the Pope, although under pressure from all sides, has not allowed himself to be pushed into a demonstrative censure of the deportation of the Jews of Rome. Although he must know that such an attitude will be used against him by our adversaries and will be exploited by Protestant circles in the Anglo-Saxon countries for the purpose of anti-Catholic propaganda, he has nonetheless done everything possible even in this delicate matter in order not to strain relations with the German government and the German authorities in Rome. As there apparently will be no further German action taken on the Jewish question here, it may be said that this matter, so unpleasant as regards German-Vatican relations, has been liquidated.

Weizsäcker continues his commentary in the following reassuring

manner:

In any event, there is one definite sign from the Vatican. L'Osservatore Romano of October 25-26 gives prominence to a semi-official communique on the loving kindness of the Pope, which is written in the typical roundabout and muddled style of this Vatican newspaper, declaring that the Pope bestows his fatherly care on all people without regard to nationality, religion and race. The manifold and growing activities of Pius XII have in recent times increased because of the greater sufferings of so many unfortunate people.

No objections need be raised against this statement, insofar as its text, a translation of which is enclosed, will be understood only by a very few as alluding in any particular way to the Jewish question.²⁹

Most revealing is the fact that, after the translation's arrival in Berlin, someone took care to underline the following key words and phrases: Pope ... not ... pushed into demonstrative censure [of the deportation] of the Jews of Rome ... done everything possible even in this delicate matter ... it may be said that this matter, so unpleasant as regards German-Vatican relations, has been liquidated.

Coupled with Pius XII's silence after the Osservatore Romano's abstruse public pronouncement, the underlining that took place in Berlin speaks volumes. Vatican silence before and in the wake of the Roman Judenaktion, as well as in relation to what was yet to occur in Nazi-occupied territories for the remainder of the war, is deafening. After all, if Pius XII had refused to address directly what had occurred just meters from him down the Tiber, could there be hope for any meaningful intervention on his part for Jews (and others) in lands far removed from St. Peter's Square? Almost fifty years after the deportation of Rome's Jews and the stirring account left to posterity by Giacomo DeBenedetti, the silence of the Pope and the Vatican reverberates yet throughout the moral universe.

That same moral universe resounds in celebration of those Italian

individuals and groups - lay and cleric; religious and without religion, but all non-Jews, nonetheless - who risked their lives to shelter their Jewish compatriots from the murderous grasp of the Nazi behemoth. Italians, as has been amply documented in countless studies,³⁰ enjoy a reputation second only to the Danes for popular non-compliance with Nazi genocidal policies that allowed for the high proportion of its Jewish population to survive the scourge of German mass murder. Apologists for Pius XII and the Vatican hierarchy are wont to insist that the shelter given Jews in many convents, monasteries and churches, especially in Rome,³¹ could only have occurred through papal directive. To date, documents to that effect have never been provided by the Vatican.³² And certainly if such a document or documents did exist, Vatican apologists would have exhibited it/them as far back as the controversies surrounding the publication and production of Rolf Hochhuth's play, The Deputy, in the early 1960s.³³ The true moral grandeur of the Italians' heroic behavior resides, instead, in the fact that those Italians who rescued Jews did so without directives from any but their own sense of justice and humanitarianism. Italians of all backgrounds who helped their Jewish compatriots to survive thus emerge as the true moral figures of those now seemingly remote "anni di piombo." Consequently, they, and they alone, merit our praise and - dare I say it - emulation, whenever such is demanded in our own "leaden" decades.

ENDNOTES

1. Michael Tagliacozzo, "La Comunità di Roma sotto l'incubo della svastica. La grande razzia del 16 ottobre 1943," in Gli ebrei italiani durante il fascismo: Quaderni del Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea, Milano, novembre 1963, p. 21.

2. Alexander Stille, Benevolence and Betrayal, Five Italian Jewish Families Under Fascism, New York: Summit Books 1991, see pp. 167-222.
3. Robert Katz, Black Sabbath: A Journey Through a Crime Against Humanity, Toronto: Macmillan, 1969.
4. Carlo Lizzani, Il cinema italiano 1895-1979, Roma: Edizioni Riuniti, 1979, p. 265.
5. The translation has been accepted; I have yet to complete the Introduction and critical apparatus. To be published by Wayne State University Press, the first English translation of DeBenedetti's novella should appear in the Spring of 1993.
6. In addition to the Katz's work (both Black Sabbath and Death in Rome, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967) and the Stille book cited above, one should see also: Susan Zuccotti, The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue and Survival. New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1987; Dan Vittorio Segre, Memoirs of a Fortunate Jew: An Italian Story, New York: Dell Publishing, 1988; Vivian B. Mann (ed.), Gardens and Ghettos: The Art of Jewish Life in Italy. Berkeley: University of California press, 1989; and Robert G. Weisbord and Wallace P. Sillanpoa, The Chief Rabbi, the Pope and the Holocaust, New Brunswick (U.S.A.) and London (U.K.); Transaction Publishers, 1992.
7. See: Giacinto Spagnoletti, La letteratura italiana del nostro secolo, Milano: Mondadori, 1985, p. 601.
8. Quoted by Romano Luperini in "Tendencies of Criticism in Contemporary Italy," Rethinking Marxism, vol. 5, No. 1, Spring, 1992, p. 39.

9. Blossom S. Kirschenbaum in unpublished abstract, October 16, 1943: Fact, Fiction, and the Perils of Mythicizing, Providence: Brown University, March 1, 1992, p. 4.
10. Giacomo DeBenedetti, 16 ottobre 1943 ebrei, Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1978. This translation, and those to follow, are mine.
11. See: Paul Breines, Tough Jews, Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry, U.S.A., Basic Books, Inc., 1990, pp. 70; 81; and passim.
12. Robert G. Weisbord and Wallace P. Sillanpoa, op. cit.
13. See: Liliana Picciotto Fargion, L'occupazione tedesca e gli ebrei di Roma. Roma: Carucci editore, 1979.
14. Anyone familiar with Rome's topography will immediately understand the real proximity of the city's Jewish Ghetto and the Vatican, both of which flank opposite banks of the Tiber.
15. "(...) September 26, 1943, the Nazi Command alerted leaders of Rome's Jewish Community that, unless they consigned fifty kilograms of gold to the Reich within two days, the heads of two hundred Jewish families would be deported. As word of the ransom demand spread throughout the Ghetto and the city, lines of mostly poor Jews gathered at a collection site set up within the Ghetto to donate their few precious gold objects. In addition to the Jewish contributors, a number of non-Jewish donors, including some Catholic clergy, also came forth to help in meeting the Nazi demand. Though the fifty kilograms (and more) were collected and the German hunger for gold was appeased, the Nazi thirst for Jewish blood was not quenched by the ransom. Less than one month after the extortion, Nazi troops surrounded the Ghetto ..." Also, at this time, Jewish leaders "received papal authorization for a loan (emphasis mine) of (...) fifteen kilograms [of gold], a loan which was to be paid four years after the cessation of all hostilities." Wallace P.

- Sillanpoa and Robert G. Weisbord, "The Baptized Rabbi of Rome: The Zolli Case" in Judaism: A Quarterly Journal, issue no. 149, vol. 38, no. 1, Winter, 1989, pp. 81-82.
16. Rabbi Panzieri to Pope Pius XII, 27 October 1943, Pierre Blet et al. (eds.), Actes et Documents du Saint Siege relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1966-1980, vol. 9, p. 529.
 17. Father Pietro Tacchi-Venturi to Cardinal Maglione, Vatican Secretary of State, Actes et Documents, vol. 9, pp. 525-526.
 18. See: Lilian Picciotto Fargion, op. cit., passim., and Bishop Carolo Agostini to Cardinal Maglione, 25 October 1943, Actes et Documents, vol. 9, p. 528.
 19. See: Robert G. Weisbord and Wallace P. Sillanpoa, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
 20. See especially, R. Leiber, S.J., "Pio XII e gli Ebrei del 16 ottobre 1943," in La civiltà cattolica, n. 1657, 4 March 1961, pp. 454-458.
 21. "Pius XII and the Third Reich," Look, 17 May 1966, p. 40.
 22. See especially, Michael Tagliacozzo, op. cit., p. 33.
 23. See, Robert Katz, Black Sabbath, p. 55.
 24. See, Michael Tagliacozzo, op. cit., p. 10.
 25. Reported in Robert Katz, Black Sabbath, p. 136.
 26. Reported in Robert Katz, ibid., pp. 136-137.
 27. Ibid., p. 136.

28. Katz, Black Sabbath, pp. 286-287; Zuccotti, The Italians and the Holocaust, p. 130, and Tagliacozzo, La Comunità di Roma, p. 31.
29. Reported in Robert Katz, Black Sabbath, p. 287.
30. See, Susan Zuccotti, op. cit., including her bibliography.
31. It must be kept in mind that not all clergy in charge of monasteries, convents, etc., afforded shelter to hapless Jewish Italians. There are also examples of said clergy who turned away Jews, as well as those who made conversion of the children a requisite for protection.
32. See, again, Pierre Blet et al. (eds.) Records and Documents of the Holy See Relating to the Second World War - The Holy See and the War in Europe March 1939-August 1940, vol. 1. Washington: Corpus Books, 1965, and Actes et Documents du Saint Siege Relatifs à La Seconde Guerre Mondiale, 10 volumes. Città Vaticana: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1966-1980.
33. Hochhuth, Rolf, The Deputy. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. New York: Grove Press, 1964.

REMEMBERING THE RESISTANCE

H. Stuart Hughes

I stumbled on the Italian wartime Resistance quite by accident. I find it curious that an experience--for the most part vicarious--whose memory was to serve both as a stimulus to writing and a source of ideological renewal for decades thereafter was one I might well have missed entirely. I had not been sent overseas as an "expert" on Italy. I had arrived in Algiers in September 1943 in the guise of an OSS officer who knew a good deal about France and could assist in preparations for the landing in the Midi that was to occur a year later. Then as the war moved on, I moved on, too. With a barely adequate reading knowledge of the Italian language and a rudimentary speaking ability, I found myself catapulted into the bewildering complexity of wartime Italy. I had to learn as best I could on the spot.

Let me say at the start that I ran no danger. I was not one of the rare scholar-heroes--I think of Max Salvadori--who parachuted into the North. I found out about the Resistance from the safe haven of Rome.

My first real encounter, however, occurred in newly-liberated Florence in the autumn of 1944. There I met the great jurist Piero Calamandrei, who had led and was still leading the Action Party in a situation he described as "un po' caotica." (I had never before heard the aspirated "c" of high Tuscan; nor did I know anything of Calamandrei's anti-Fascist association with Gaetano Salvemini in the mid-1920s.) What struck me most about him was his utter honesty. He made no claim to doing more than grope his way through chaos. Beyond that, he had fixed his eye on the future: without illusion about the obstacles to converting his country to democracy, he ticked off for his young American interlocutor the specific steps that needed to be taken. And so I had a preview of the Calamandrei of the future--the indomitable lawyer hammering away at vestiges of Fascist legislation and the grave lacunae in the new republican constitution.

The second important encounter, at the very end of the year, was even more prophetic. I was one of a privileged few among the swarm

of intelligence officers in Rome who received invitations to meet in secret with Ferruccio Parri, co-chief of the northern Committee of Liberation, come south for the negotiations that were to link his committee into the Allied chain of command. Obviously I was not negotiating; I was merely listening. And he, having finished his task, was responding as best he could to eager, sympathetic questions. His air was weary and infinitely sad. An unlikely figure, I mused, to be placed in a position of leadership. So the event was to prove. When six months later, as the Resistance nominee, he became prime minister, I devoutly hoped that he would succeed. He didn't. And the man who dislodged him, Alcide De Gasperi, I had also met in Rome and instinctively disliked.

The next time I saw Parri was a decade and a half after his fall from power, when he was presiding at an international conference on the history of the Resistance, held in Milan in the early spring of 1961. He seemed more relaxed now: doubtless he had not enjoyed his brief stint of high office. And he may have found it refreshing to be back with old comrades, to renew with them a long-dormant spirit of fraternity. I recall in particular an evening of drinking wine with Resistance veterans turned historian: Leo Valiani and Franco Venturi and others whose names I forget. They treated me as one of their own; they were far too kind, but I relished the honor. Slightly tipsy, I bathed in the glorious memory of the now defunct Action Party, to which they had all belonged and whose aspirations, in our different ways, we were alike trying to perpetuate.

The third and last time I encountered Parri was another half decade later, in Paris in 1967. Once again historians of the Resistance had gathered; once again Parri, now frail and elderly, was in the chair. By this time, the European countries had established permanent committees or study groups on the history of the Second World War. Their representatives were in attendance. It was my job to speak for the Americans, who lacked such a body, and to assure those present that I was in the course of seeking out a few friends to launch what subsequently mushroomed into a formally constituted American committee. Organizational business aside, the main point of the gathering was to reconcile, if possible, the divergent interpretations of

those from the East and from the West. Here Parri was at his best: although he had been outmaneuvered in ministerial in-fighting, he showed himself a superb diplomat. At a final gala lunch, the Soviet representative, glass in hand, rose to propose a toast to the Westerners on behalf of the Eastern bloc. The result: scarcely veiled protest among those for whom he claimed to speak. A brouhaha threatened--at which Parri too stood up and launched into a rambling homily in fluent, if uncertain French. Around this particular table, he reminded us, there was neither East nor West: there were only historians come together to share their knowledge. Taking care not to offend the Russian, who picked up the cue and said nothing further, Parri reconciled us all. With unerring tact, he found the words the occasion demanded: a phrase or two recalling great memories and thereby transcending ideological contention.

It struck me at the time that the attitude of the French lay somewhere between that of the Russians and of the Italians. The latter spoke for themselves alone; they evidently felt no official constraints. With the French one sensed something of the pressure to conform that the Soviet representative had made so evident. Henri Michel epitomized their situation: as director of a vast, bureaucratized (and officially funded) research organization, he and his co-workers necessarily presented their data in an orthodox Gaullist framework.

In 1967, of course, De Gaulle was still President of the French Republic. And even after his resignation two years later, his successors continued to celebrate the memory of the Resistance in an "official" style. The contrast with Italy is again instructive. Here it was out of the question for the dominant party, Christian Democracy, to try to monopolize the Resistance heritage: the Christian Democrats' contribution to it had been too modest for that; no roster of "Compagnons de la Libération," on the French model, had been set up for trotting out on ceremonial occasions. Still more, in Italy the Communists could not be ignored; their wartime record bulked far too large. In France also the Communists had played a leading role. But as

their Italian counterparts kept edging toward democracy, they lingered in their Stalinist past; successive French governments saw no reason to treat them with respect. Such was the impression I derived from frequent visits to both countries in the 1950s and 1960s: in Italy, the memory of the Resistance remained alive; in France, it had ossified.

Nor did the electoral victory of the French Socialists in 1981 mark a perceptible change. Their leader, Francois Mitterrand, had an honorable Resistance record; but his supporters seldom alluded to it. Even on the left, it seemed, to have been a Resistance figure added little to one's political clout. In Italy it was quite otherwise: there another new Socialist president, Sandro Pertini, swept into office as the incarnation of heroic wartime memories.

When I met Pertini in the summer of 1978, a few weeks after his election, he not only charmed me; the vitality of this octogenarian quite literally overwhelmed me. His new eminence had in no way diminished his proverbial playfulness. He appeared to be enjoying his job and making the most of it. As I was leaving his office in the Quirinal, I heard him on the phone, summoning the minister of the interior to see him next; the tone was quite as though he rather than Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti was in charge.

Several years later, when I read the memoirs of Altiero Spinelli, I caught a glimpse of how Pertini had always managed to surmount--and sometimes even derive joy from--the most trying situations. In the late 1930s these two had shared the experience of confino on the island of Ponza. Characteristically it was Pertini who did better. "Only a very few confinati ... were authorized to rent a small apartment. Pertini was one of them, and frequently we would hear him in the morning singing from a balcony that overlooked the sea: 'Oggi è un bellissima giornata, una giornata piena di felicità -- which meant that his beautiful island girl had spent the night with him.'

Perhaps it was this joie de vivre which endeared him to the Italian people. It betokened something beyond caring about their individual triumphs and defeats; it betokened a readiness to share in their pleasure as in their sorrow. And when disaster struck, when the earthquake of November 1980 devastated the Irpinia mountains, naturally Pertini was first on the spot. Millions heard on TV his voice vibrant

with indignation: "I have seen a spectacle that I shall never forget ... After forty-eight hours, the necessary aid had not yet arrived! ... From the rubble groans were still rising, cries of desperation from those buried alive; the survivors, full of rage, told me: 'We don't have the equipment needed to save our relatives, to free them from the rubble.' ... Now something more than tents should be sent ... It is raining; the winter is coming on, and with the winter the cold."

How often had an Italian elder statesman spoken directly to his countrymen in tones of such sincerity? Therein perhaps lay the secret of what began to be called the "Pertini phenomenon." On the one hand, profound humanity, on the other, integrity far beyond the norm and an almost total absence of self-seeking. (When he was elected President of the Republic, people recalled that he had never held ministerial office, that this living symbol of Resistance memory through three decades and more had stubbornly clung to his independence.)

A third and final vignette: Pertini in June 1984, at a hospital bedside in Padua as Enrico Berlinguer lay dying. True to form, the aged president, now close to the end of his term of office, had been the first major public figure to arrive. True to form, during his three-day vigil, he wept openly. And when Berlinguer expired, Pertini accompanied his body back to Rome on the presidential plane -- to Rome, where more than a million people turned out to honor the Communist leader -- the largest public demonstration that Italy's history had seen.

It was clear that Pertini ranked Berlinguer in a class by himself. And for his part, Berlinguer had replied without hesitation "Pertini" when a reporter once asked him which living Italian uomo politico he most esteemed. What bound these two together? And what is Berlinguer, too young to have played anything more than a peripheral role in the Resistance, doing in an evocation of that memory?

The answer lies once again in the mid and late 1970s, the period of Communism's electoral triumphs and the "Historic Compromise." Subsequently this, the boldest of Berlinguer's initiatives, was to fall into disrepute. Nearly everyone who now writes on the era condemns the notion of Communists sharing power with Christian Democrats as at the very least quixotic. But that is to miss the point. What Berlinguer was after was something beyond a maneuver, in the time-honored tradition

of trasformismo, to get his party's foot in the door. Nor was it a proposal without precedent. As Berlinguer's biographer, Giuseppe Fiori, has reminded us, it was a "return to that other great compromise, among Communists, Socialists, Action-Party adherents, and Catholics, that in the 1940s had served as the foundation for the Resistance and the anti-Fascist revolution."

In short, Berlinguer envisaged a "second round (tappa)," a reevocation of Resistance solidarity. Alignment with the Christian Democrats constituted only the most conspicuous aspect of "an understanding among all the popular forces." As in the last half decade of his life, Berlinguer more and more stressed the moral dimension of his endeavors -- as in the spirit of Gramsci he kept insisting on "quality of life" -- it became apparent that he shared with Pertini a "policy of democratic unity" with the Resistance as its model.

So Italy had its second chance -- and missed it once again. Pertini's act of escorting Berlinguer's body symbolized the end of a long era of Resistance memory and an apparently definitive return to politics as usual.

* * * * *

Sometime in the 1950s I remarked to Ernesto Rossi -- he too an early collaborator of Salvemini and a veteran of long years of Fascist imprisonment -- that the postwar political evolution of Italy had "disappointed" Americans like myself who had vested their hopes in the Resistance. Rossi took umbrage: who were we to complain of disappointment, when it was Italians who had borne its brunt? My observation had been fatuous; but at least it had underlined the extent to which I and others felt personally implicated in Italy's wartime and immediate postwar history.

Certainly I was right in suggesting that the Resistance had failed to achieve its wider goals. It had not succeeded in "purifying" Italian public life; it had renewed or transformed the Italian political class only at the margin or in unusual individual cases; it had not replaced party strife by a spirit of "fraternity." Indeed, a half year before the war was won, bitter contention among the anti-Fascist parties had resumed, with

the Christian Democrats and Communists taking the lead.

Yet, more closely examined, had fraternity -- or its counterpart, social justice -- ever gone much beyond an aspiration? It had lacked clarity: each ideological grouping had understood it in its own fashion, just as the word "democracy" had hovered somewhere between an insistence on restoring the traditional Western freedoms and the notion of a new order imposed by the Resistance itself. On these points, the Action Party had stated its goals more cogently than anyone else: true to the legacy of Carlo Rosselli, it had stressed the need to combine and fuse the liberal democratic and the socialist traditions.

The fact that this party, one of leaders without troops, was the first to succumb to postwar "normalcy" can be taken as symptomatic. The Resistance had never constituted a cross-section of the Italian people. Within its ranks, the idealistic, the adventurous, the desperate had been over-represented. At one end of the social scale, intellectuals had loomed disproportionately large, at the other, industrial workers. The solid bourgeoisie, the business classes, had furnished a slim contingent. Inevitably, as seems to happen in all such historical situations, the great mass had remained unmoved, *attentiste*, as the French put it, albeit increasingly inclined to give the Resistance their passive endorsement. What wonder, then, that after 1945 the old barriers between classes, which wartime comradeship had temporarily transcended, should have arisen once more? What wonder that so many should have lapsed into familiar political routines?

Does the above mean that the likes of me were mistaken all along, that the memory we cherished should be relegated to the status of a youthful illusion? Far from it. We were deluded only to the extent that we expected immediate results, and these were not forthcoming. If one views the Italian political and ideological landscape as of 1992 -- nearly a half century after the event -- the prospect is distinctly more encouraging. True, the memory of the Resistance has dimmed. True, the notion of anti-Fascist unity has virtually disappeared, with the eclipse of neo-Fascism itself. True, the current practices of mass democracy bear little resemblance to the stirring public assemblies of another era. At the same time, much of what the Resistance was after has belatedly come to pass -- but in a form that its original proponents would find

unrecognizable.

Italian democracy is "alive and thriving" -- so Joseph La Palombara assures us -- thriving in the sense that it commands far more concern and attention than is true, for instance, in the United States. It is "highly participatory": not only does something above 90 per cent of the electorate vote; the voters also do not feel themselves mere spectators in the great game of politics. They manifest a tenacious loyalty to their parties; whether their candidates win or lose ranks below a widely-felt imperative to bear witness to their convictions. And -- perhaps paradoxically -- alongside this habit of participation has run a blurring of class lines. The result falls short of the fraternity to which the Resistance aspired. Nevertheless, interclass hatred has much diminished. For all its faults, consumerism, as a leveling and homogenizing force, has brought contrasting life styles into a semblance of harmony. The major Western country with the shortest experience of interwar democracy has at last reached the point where its people take democratic procedures for granted.

THE ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE IN ITALY DURING WORLD WAR II

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I feel deeply honored to have been invited to speak about the Italian Resistance in this distinguished and well-known college, under the auspices of its Cesare Barbieri Endowment for Italian Culture which has done so much for the advancement of Italian studies, both by calling here in the recent past some of the most eminent scholars of the history of modern and contemporary Italy and by the high standard of the articles and papers which have appeared in the Cesare Barbieri Courier. All this apart, of course, from the conspicuous and remarkably high-level activities which the Endowment has organized and carried on for many years in the field of Italian culture in general. To give evidence to what I've said, let me add that I don't think that there are many institutions devoted to Italian studies, operating outside Italy, that have had the distinction of seeing a large selection of their printed output translated into Italian and published by Italy's review of the State Archives (Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato, XLIII:2-3, May-Dec. 1983). It consisted of an issue almost entirely dedicated to the "documenti di Hartford" and to the papers, studies and essays published by the Cesare Barbieri Courier. It is one of the very few occasions in which the RAS has done such a thing in connection with a foreign magazine.

Let me begin by stating that the aspect of Italian history to which in the Endowment has given, so much attention seems no doubt to be the Fascist period. And for good reason, since the study of European Fascism in general and Italian Fascism in particular has drawn, in recent years, the interest of scholars from many countries.

Italian Fascism played the not too enviable role of originating the totalitarian trend that after World War I spread inside and outside of Europe, and at last found its zenith in the emergence of the monstrous Nazi regime. Historians in their well intentioned tendency to be fair are apt sometimes to see it, a bit too much, as the lesser evil when they

compare the two most notorious Fascist dictatorships. If this is true up to the downfall of Mussolini in July 1943, there is no doubt that in the epilogue of Italian Fascism, epitomized in the history of the Italian Social Republic, better known as the Salò Republic, there were all the ingredients, and all the horrors of Nazism. This puppet state, "a blatantly Hitlerian contrivance, presided over by a very sick Duce and staffed by the dregs of the P.N.F.", as it was defined here some years ago by Alan Cassels,¹ was nevertheless rejected by the great majority of the Italians who had the misfortune of being under the occupation of the Wehrmacht.

It was one of the worst moments of the eventful history of Italy, when all the results of the unification of the peninsula seemed to be shattered and lost. The Armistice of September 8, 1943, badly managed and carried out in an even worse way, left most of Italy in German hands while the Allies, welcomed as liberators, were starting their long march on Rome and the even longer march towards the Alps. Something happened then that for once seems to give credit to Robert Browning's dictum that "in Italy the unexpected always happens." In spite of the marks left by the twenty-year dictatorship, of a lost disastrous war, and of the horrors of a Nazi German occupation, the Italians found in themselves the strength to form a resistance movement, or to give it a more proper name, a liberation movement. The noted military history B. H. Lidell Hart commented on the effectiveness of this movement in his discussion of Allied strength in Italy as the final, spring offensive began in 1945: "the Allies benefited from the help of some 60,000 partisans, who were producing much confusion behind the German lines and forcing the Germans to divert troops from the front to curb their activities."²

The cost Italians had to pay for this achievement was rather high: 44,720 killed and 93,000 wounded in the partisans ranks. About 10,000 civilians lost their lives, in reprisals and massacres, and innumerable villages and townships were burnt and destroyed. Without the active support of the population the partisans could not have carried on their fighting. Why did the Italians do it? There were of course many who were motivated by political and ideological reasons. Among the most prominent were the Communist party stalwarts, and there was also, as

always happens in times of turmoil, an opportunist fringe. But I think it is safe to say that the majority of the Italians who were active in the Resistance, did it first of all because they wanted to do something in order to help the Allies who were fighting for the liberation of their country. A rekindled spirit for freedom and democracy moved them to break away from the slimy conditions of the past, to reject conformism, injustice and degradation and to regain some degree of self esteem and self confidence. In The Italians the well-known book written by Luigi Barzini, there is the following passage which well illustrates what was the mood of that period: "In the course of twenty months men of all ways of life, of all ages, of all political opinions, suddenly acknowledged themselves as brothers, gave almost incredible examples of self-denial, of love for their country and of self-sacrifice, in the mountains, in the desolate fields, in the swamps of the Po, in the ancient quarters of the towns."³

Immediately after the war the Resistance was everywhere highly praised both for the motives which gave life to it and for its achievements. Then, after some time, a swing of the pendulum began. Some historians questioned the military contribution of the resistance to the Allied war efforts. Typical in this respect was the conclusion A.J.P. Taylor reached in his English History 1914-1965: "The Resistance was a rich source of intelligence and information... Hitler's 'New Order' could be overthrown only by defeat in the field... [The activities of the Resistance] provided a useful distraction for politically minded Englishmen and planners who might otherwise have been a great nuisance."⁴ And to come to someone who had a major role in the Italian campaign, here was what Field Marshal Alexander wrote à propos of the Italian partisans in his memoirs: "Although I cannot pretend that the partisans, despite their personal gallantry, were ever a serious problem to the Germans, they played their part in the Allied cause."⁵ A point of view which seems to be indirectly shared by the U.S. military historians who almost completely ignore the irregular or unorthodox type of warfare which helped and assisted the, of course, much more important and decisive regular orthodox military activity.

The regular soldier has an innate dislike of guerilla warfare. To fight clean is for him a sacred tenet. To fight a war against armed bands

means of course to be involved in a dirtier and more hellish type of warfare. But a regular soldier may belittle its results a bit too much especially when it is not directed against himself. Kesselring in a directive issued to his troops on June 17, 1944 had to admit that: "The partisan situation on the Italian theatre, particularly in Central Italy, has deteriorated to such a point, that it represents a serious danger to our troops and their supplying lines, as well as to the operations of the war industries and to the economic output."⁶ An admission that the Italian liberation movement was a considerable help to the Allied cause can be found in a secret report sent to the Allied Force Headquarters by Col. R. Hewitt, Commander of the British Special Force No. 1, in which it is stated that "the contribution of the partisans to the Allied victory in Italy was a considerable one, and far surpassed the most optimistic forecasts. By armed force they helped to break the strength and the morale of an enemy well superior to them in numbers. Without the partisans' victories there could not have been an Allied victory in Italy so fast, so complete, and with such light casualties."⁷

The history of the Resistance is mostly confined to memoirs and testimonials. Historians are more interested in wider and more important aspects of historiographical research. Also I think because the Resistance offers less ground for the historian's insatiable thirst for finding new approaches and interpretations. Since it is difficult to find fault with the choice made by those who fought against tyranny and for freedom and democracy, there is now a new trend in the historiography of the Resistance which underlines the inevitable fight which, alongside the main struggle directed against the Germans, the partisans had to sustain against their countrymen who collaborated with the occupiers. They were a minority, who without the presence of the Germans could not have existed a single day. After the war they succeeded in presenting their case as the counterpart of the partisans and assert their role in what they called "the civil war." Nowadays, also many historians of the left, after trying to hog as much as they could of the credit of the Resistance in favor of the Communist Party, have espoused this thesis. After all a civil war can be more interesting than a war of liberation, probably because it is less respectable, and we know that not only in literature the good, whether referring to persons or events, are in the end rather dull

and tedious. Cordelia is no match for Lady Macbeth.

I would like to end by pointing out one of the most interesting and long lasting consequences of the Italian Resistance. It is the bonds of natural admiration and friendship which developed between the Italian partisans and the Americans and British who happened to fight with them. When the Allied Command realized that the Italian movement was growing quite strong, in the Spring of 1944, they came to the conclusion that it was in their interest to help and assist the partisans. In order to arrange a regular flow of supplies they sent military missions to the most important partisan units. The sixteen American and the more numerous British teams of liaison officers and personnel who reached the partisans mainly by parachute shared the precarious and risky life of the patriots they were helping by supplying them with all sorts of materials and by instructing them in the use of weapons and explosives. They were surprised at seeing the resoluteness and the determination by which the partisans carried on their struggle against almost insuperable odds. Their surprise soon gave way to esteem and admiration. The reports they sent back to their bases, and the books that some of them wrote, did a lot to cause a decisive change of the public opinion of the Allied countries with reference to Italy.

Let me quote from what was written by two of these witnesses and protagonists of the Italian Resistance. Major H.W. Tilman, one of the most famous mountaineers and explorers of our century, head of a British Mission in the Veneto thus ends the book, aptly titled When Men and Mountains Meet, wrote about the time he spent with the Italian partisans: "That they (the Partisans) held together indissolubly during the hard winter months, and were able and willing to give of their best when the time came, is some measure of their determination, self-sacrifice, patriotism, and of their rekindled ardor for the cause of freedom."⁸

A young American officer, Captain R.S.G. Hall, who was captured and barbarously killed by the Germans, in one of the moving letters he sent home while fighting with the partisans in the Dolomites wrote: "...Villages burnt, children hanged, men tortured, old people turned out in the snow, civilians shot for sport -- I've seen those things with my own eyes. Those hideous acts yield a crop of men whose fury

knows no bounds -- they make up the partisan bands I've helped to organize; they're the sword of God, if there ever has been one in history."⁹

ENDNOTES

1. Alan Cassels, "Italian Fascism Comes of Age: The Problem of an Adequate Historiography," in Cesare Barbieri Courier, Special Issue on Mussolini and Italian Fascism (Hartford, 1980): 21.
2. B.H. Lidell Hart, History of the Second World War (New York, 1971): 670.
3. Luigi Barzini, Gli Italiani (Milan, 1965): 16. [The comment appears only in the Italian edition.]
4. A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914-1965 (Oxford, 1965): 516.
5. The Alexander Memoirs 1940-1945, edited by John North (London, 1962): 111.
6. Charles MacIntosh, From Cloak to Dagger (London, 1982): 46.
7. M.R.D. Foot, Resistance, An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism 1940-1945 (London, 1976): 228.
8. H.W. Tilman, When Men and Mountains Meet (Cambridge, 1946): 226.
9. Captain Hall's letters appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, June, 1951.

AMERICAN INTEREST IN POSTWAR ITALIAN POLITICS

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A small surge in the interest of American scholars in Italian politics after World War II was part of the larger surge of American interest in foreign and international affairs. The United States had emerged during and after that war as the major actor on the international stage. Its concerns were worldwide. Millions of its younger citizens had some direct knowledge of foreign societies, peoples, and cultures as a result of their military experiences. More young Americans now had a decent knowledge of a foreign language than ever before, given the traditional parochialism of American education. The universities and colleges were expanding, especially the graduate schools. Programs and courses in international and foreign affairs, in area studies, were growing by leaps and bounds, as were the enrollments in these programs. It was expected that the United States would need large numbers of experts on all parts of the world. Well-trained people could anticipate exciting and rewarding careers.

It is not surprising, therefore, that interest in the Italian political world grew. Italy had been a theater of operations for the U.S. armed forces. Some members of those forces, through direct contact with Italians and through the acquisition of a working knowledge of their language, decided to build on the interest, the information, and the knowledge they had acquired. The G.I. Bill of Rights enabled them to continue their education after the war. It is true that very few courses in very few universities gave any attention to the Italian political system. Even before World War II American scholars had produced only a few serious analyses of the Fascist political structure. The books by Herbert W. Schneider, The Fascist Government of Italy, and G. Lowell Field, The Syndical and Corporate Institutions of Italian Fascism, come to mind. Few courses in modern Italian history were offered in the United States, and these rarely included the Fascist period. I remember one

such course at the University of Chicago in 1946. Given by Professor S. William Halperin, it stopped in 1919. Likewise, most courses in comparative politics then and in the period immediately preceding the war, if they included Italy at all, described the supposed structure and operations of the Fascist government. Little solid material on Fascism was available. Although there were plenty of journalistic accounts, too many of their authors had been taken in by Fascist propaganda and Mussolini's personality.

Postwar Italy became a parliamentary republic on June 2, 1946. Serious study of the new political system was important, but there were few materials to work with. The French parliamentary tradition, which had received much more attention in American academia, provided the closest analogy to Italy, and we realized how strained that analogy was. So the study of Italian politics depended on the students themselves, and the materials had to be created by a few scholars and those students who were themselves the learners.

Eventually the former GIs were supplemented by other categories of American students. In one such category were the Americans of Italian descent. Their heritage provided them with an interest in the old country, and they had some acquaintance with the language, even if only in dialect form. Few came from a strong political background. (Gaetano Salvemini told me in 1948 that 98 percent of the Italo-Americans knew nothing about politics and did not want to know.) Those few, however, were highly intelligent and keenly interested. Their numbers grew as more of a rising generation of Italo-Americans entered higher education and played increasingly important roles in American business and political life.

A revival of Italian emigration to the United States in the 1950s and 1960s brought to this country a small number of scholars educated in Italy in the study of Italian politics. These young Italian university graduates obtained positions in American universities and provided a somewhat different but influential broadening of our perspectives. Political science as a discipline in the American sense of the term had not really existed in Italy; the first professorships of political science were established only in the late 1960s and 1970s. The study of politics in Italy was sporadically covered in programs of sociology, law, history,

or philosophy. The emigrant scholars who came here brought ways of looking at political processes that expanded our horizons. We influenced their approaches to the subject as well. The training and outlook of a rising generation of Italian students who stayed home would, in a broad sense, become Americanized. This was part of the substantial role played by American scholarship in the modernization of all the social sciences in Italy. The social sciences had suffered badly under the Fascist regime. In the republican era there was much catching up to do. The Italians worked very hard to catch up and, in my judgment, they have succeeded.

In the United States a more recent generation of scholars has come to the fore, students of the postwar italianisti. Their backgrounds are varied; certainly there is no concentration of Italo-Americans. They have had many more opportunities to travel and to study abroad than previous generations of undergraduates every had. Italy has been and is the location of numerous American foreign-study programs. Some of the student participants have turned to Italian politics as a principal focus of interest. The existence of the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, an important American graduate program in international relations, has contributed to the growth of European studies, including Italian political studies. The experience of living in Bologna exposes these graduate students to the life of a genuine Italian city, as compared to the denaturalized atmosphere of Rome and Florence.

A hiatus in the growth of Italian political studies occurred in the 1970s. In part the slowdown resulted from a pause in the expansion of American higher education after more than two decades of rapid growth. In part it reflected a neoisolationist attitude among American students in reaction to the Vietnam war. Whatever the cause, enrollments in courses in international relations and in comparative politics dropped. The graduate student population declined. Interest in contemporary Italy flagged. That country suffered from a lack of media attention, for it was not involved in the kinds of crises that dominated American headlines and television talk shows. Italy had its troubles with oil shocks, inflation, unemployment, but so had the rest of the world. Furthermore, it posed no threat to international peace and security nor to American

strategic interests. In 1974, after two decades of shouting, "Italy out of NATO and NATO out of Italy," the Italian Communist Party (PCI) publicly accepted Italy's membership in NATO. And in 1976 Enrico Berlinguer, secretary general of the PCI, told a newspaper journalist, "I feel safer on this side." Since the 1980s there has been a slow revival of international interests among students; course enrollments are growing. A new wave of italianisti may be in the making.

Americans have been leaders in producing serious studies of postwar Italian politics. They have also played a leading role in stimulating the growth of Italian political and social studies. Given the American presence on the world scene, it is obvious that others will pay attention to what we say and write about them. This has been especially the case in Italy. Italian educated elites are not provincial; on the contrary, they are quite cosmopolitan and very interested in other peoples. Foreign works, especially on Italian topics, are translated and read. Foreign ways of doing things are watched and absorbed, although with modifications to fit Italian habits and behavior patterns.

The American government as a superpower exercises direct political, economic, and cultural influences on all countries in the world. Naturally, these influences are of greater or lesser degree. In Italy in the postwar period they have been of a greater degree. I am not writing here, however, of the American government as a political actor but as a sponsor of political studies. Of our governmental programs of educational and cultural cooperation, the Fulbright program is the most important and of the longest standing. Under such auspices American scholars have gone to Italy not only to teach about the United States but also to learn about Italy, including its political system. Through our research and through our contacts and associations with Italian colleagues we learn more, but so do the Italians. Also, they come to the United States to learn about us and to fit our experiences into their intellectual and cultural frameworks.

More is involved than government-sponsored exchanges. The foundations also play a role. Several of them have sponsored research and publication by American and Italian scholars about Italian politics. The most important, by far, has been the Ford Foundation. In addition to sponsoring research it has actively encouraged the development of

important high-quality Italian journals. It was instrumental to the establishment of the Council for the Political and Social Sciences (COSPOS), Italy's closest equivalent to the American Social Science Research Council. Through the dedicated and intensive efforts of Joseph LaPalombara and Pendleton Herring, COSPOS was born in the middle of the 1960s and continues to function. It has made a major contribution to the modernization of political and social research in Italy. Methodological innovations, comparative conceptual frameworks, contemporary objective (relatively) approaches to political analyses have penetrated the perspectives of Italian scholars. It would be presumptuous to claim that the polemical and partisan biases of much of earlier Italian scholarship have disappeared, or that academic groups based on cliques clustered around academic barons are things of the past, but COSPOS certainly has contributed to a partial opening of the academic mind in the social sciences.

The Italian Communist Party (now renamed Party of the Democratic Left) dominated much of higher Italian culture during the postwar decades. This domination extended beyond the area of avowedly communist individuals and organizations. It penetrated not only fellow travelers and sympathizers but also a larger public that did not support the PCI as a party. This meant a naturally anti-American bias in many areas of Italian life, a bias that also extended to American scholarship and its principles and methods. Since Marxist scholarship reflected the interests and policies of Marxist parties and states, Italians took for granted that American scholarship was similarly slanted. Given these prejudices, it is remarkable that American approaches to political and social experience gained as much recognition as they did. It must be understood that Italian Communists were much more flexible and imaginative than the traditional dogmatists found in so many other Communist parties. (The Italian Party has these types also, but they have not controlled the apparatus.) Because the PCI, as the second-largest mass party in the country, pursued a strategy of participation in all areas of Italian life and society rather than a policy of isolated disdain for nonbelievers, inevitably it was exposed to the currents and ideas circulating in the larger world.

American students of Italian politics learned quickly that Italy is

a parties-state. The parties penetrate and control not only all levels of government authority but many private or autonomous spheres of activity that in other nontotalitarian countries are not subject to political party intervention. Study of the parties and of the party system has consequently been the topic of most American scholarly research. The Italian Communist Party has received the largest amount of attention. In part this results from its size; as the second-largest party in the country, it leads the opposition nationally and is the established governing party in various regions and cities as well. More important, its differences from the typical communist party make it a more interesting object of study than the other Italian parties. And, in spite of its anti-American suspicions, it has been far more open and receptive to scholars interested in it, more cooperative in providing information, documentation, and interviews. This does not mean that outsiders are let in to its innermost secrets, but that is true anywhere for any party.

The Christian Democrats (DC) have been the largest party during the entire postwar period. The DC has dominated the national government since 1945 even when it did not have the prime minister's post. It has led most of the regional and local governments. Yet American scholars have not studied it with anywhere near the attention that the Communists have received. Why? Perhaps the Party is too ordinary and uninteresting. Perhaps most American students are laic, while the DC is clerical (despite its denials). But the most important reason may be that the DC has been less cooperative with researchers, less open to investigation, to interviewing, to probing questions. Discouraged students naturally turn elsewhere. A few books and articles have been published on the DC; much more work needs to be done.

Over the years the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) has also received little attention from American scholars. More interest developed during the 1980s, partly as a reflection of the gradual growth of the Party, partly as a result of the impact that the Socialists' leader, Bettino Craxi, has had on the Italian political system. If Craxi should realize his ambition to have the PSI replace the PCI as the alternative to DC domination, the intensity of scholarly focus will surely mirror this changed status.

The many minor political parties are rarely the subject of

American research. Some of them are interesting and deserve better. One or two parties may be intellectually attractive; others, the Greens, (Verdi), for example, may be of interest because they reflect broader movements in modern Western societies. Still others, though small, may be critically located in the political spectrum and thus play a role larger than their size warrants. In general, however, they all suffer neglect from political analysts. Americans are accustomed to ignoring the fringe political groups in their own country, with its two-party system. This indifference may carry over to the small parties of another system.

American scholars have not done justice to other aspects of Italian political life. Foreign and security policies have received scant attention. Postwar Italy is not a great power. Since the Italian commitment to the Western alliance system and European cooperation, a commitment made in the late forties and early fifties, Italian foreign affairs have been routine and unexciting. With the growing crisis in the Mediterranean area during the eighties, some movement in Italian international behavior has developed, but nothing of great significance. Italy's low profile has produced low interest.

There has also been low interest in the Italian legal and judicial systems or public administration and the bureaucracy. Few Americans have given them close scrutiny, although these areas represent important weaknesses in the functioning of the Italian state. The recent surge of interest in structural reforms within the Italian scholarly and political communities may spur American scholars to do research on these problem areas. The activities of organized criminal associations and of political terrorist groups have regularly captured the journalistic eye, but only in recent years have some scholarly analyses appeared.

More attention has been focused on organized interests, particularly the trade union movement. Undoubtedly this concern exists because of the connections of these organizations to party politics. There have been many good studies of the impact of interest groups, including the Roman Catholic church and its organizations, on the political process. Likewise, the close relationship of the parties to the labor confederations has stimulated many publications about the political role of the union movement.

The institution of the regular regional governments in Italy in

1970 led to a flurry of studies on regional and local governments, but after several years the flurry died down. The recent upswing in the power and importance of regional parties in a few northern regions, the Lega lombarda and the Lega veneta, for example, may stimulate renewed research on regionalism.

In 1975 the Conference Group on Italian Politics was formed. The italianisti are a relatively small community, and the organization publishes a newsletter that helps its members keep abreast of activities in their fields of interest. The words "and Society" were added to the name of the group later. The creation of CONGRIPS was part of a larger movement within the American political science community that led to the establishment of similar specialized organizations for Britain, France, and Germany. CONGRIPS was not, and is not, an exclusively American organization; it has members from other countries, particularly from Italy. Nor is its membership restricted to political scientists. The enlargement of the name reflects the presence within the membership of historians, political economists, sociologists and anthropologists, and journalists. There was never any reason to believe that the serious study of postwar Italian politics was an exclusive province of political scientists. The contributions from historians such as Max Salvadori and Charles F. Delzell, from economists such as Franco Modigliani and Gustav Schacter, from sociologists and anthropologists such as Leonard Moss, Feliks Gross, and David Kertzer, and from journalists such as Leo Wolleberg and Paul Hoffman have been essential to the enlargement of our understanding.

To the general American public, Italian films, Italian food and wine, Italian high style and stunning craftsmanship in clothing, in home furnishings, in the fine and applied arts, and even in literature have made a far greater impact than Italian politics. The sporadic journalistic observation of politics concentrated on the threat of Italian communism at election time and on the crimes of the terrorists and the Mafia. That Italy's politics interest only a small number of scholars is, in a sense, a compliment to that country's political elite. It has managed an enormous transition in the life of the people without the crises and tragedies that draw worldwide public attention.*

*The assassination of Aldo Moro is an exception.

Note: Two bibliographies will give the reader a selection of publications on postwar Italy. Peter M. Lange, ed., Studies on Italy, 1943-1975 (Torino: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1977); a select bibliography of American and British materials in political science, economics, sociology, and anthropology. Roland Sarti, ed, A Select Bibliography of English-Language Books on Modern Italian History (Amherst: International Area Studies Program, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1989); most of the works listed for the period after World War II deal with political history.

AMERICAN HISTORIANS AND MODERN ITALY SINCE WORLD WAR II

Borden W. Painter, Jr.

Italy has always evoked mixed reactions among Americans. We find it a charming but sometimes contemptible country. We venerate its historical monuments and remain largely ignorant or misinformed of its present realities. We tend to see it in terms of distorted views of Italo-American life as a land of pizza, the mafia and conversation by gesticulation. We have not come all that far from the nineteenth-century formulation "crime, Catholicism and chianti." We also confidently assume that the government is weak and ever-changing and that militarily it does not measure up because Italians always surrender in the face of a determined enemy.¹ In short, we think we know enough about Italy and that there is not much more to know about contemporary Italian society.²

The fact is that Americans do need to know more about contemporary Italy and its recent past. After all, Italy is now the world's sixth largest economy and ranks as a major player in the European Economic Community. It gave birth to fascism in the twentieth century, yet has developed a strong democratic republic since World War II. Italian society includes both a sophisticated and very "European" north and a poorer south, the mezzogiorno, that in its less developed areas resembles the third world. In short, contemporary Italy and its modern history contain rich and interesting material for Americans.

Our focus is on American historians of modern Italy, the contributions they have made to our understanding of Italy and the consequent place of modern Italian history in American colleges and universities. We will look particularly at contributions since World War II, but with due attention to the work of those historians whose professional careers spanned the pre and postwar periods.

It hardly comes as a surprise that World War II proved a turning point for the study of modern Italy. We entered the war as enemies of Italy's Fascist regime. We invaded the country and thousands of

Americans served there. The enemy became an ally during the course of the war. American troops of Italian origin often fought and then occupied the villages and regions from whence their ancestors had come. All Americans in the Italian theatre played something of a Columbus role in reverse, discovering a land that did not always accord with preconceived images and notions, beginning with the wet, muddy realities of Italian winters as opposed to the "sunny Italy" expected.

The bitterness of the Italian campaign, the often uneasy relationship between American military personnel and the Italian people, and the particularly harsh conditions in the impoverished and war-torn south did not deter some Americans from seeing the charm and beauty of the people, the landscape and the culture. Charles Delzell has noted that some of the historical paths he has pursued are the result of "serendipity"³ which included army service in Italy during the war which had interrupted his graduate studies. He arrived in Bari just before Thanksgiving in 1943.

Delzell found southern Italy challenging and not always attractive. He struggled to learn standard Italian among a populace speaking dialect. His impressions "were not very favorable." Poverty, illiteracy and thievery surrounded him. Fascist attitudes persisted among the middle class while Communism gained adherents among the poor. "But in the course of time, my opinion of the southern Italians improved. By the spring and summer of 1944, I had managed to cultivate friendships with quite a number of them, and was often invited to their homes for meals and parties. I loved Italy's food, its music and art, and its landscape."

Whether encountered in war or peace, Italy has elicited similar responses from many fellow Americans and fellow historians. Indeed one only states the obvious in acknowledging that a great attraction of Italy as a subject for academics is that it provides a professional rationale for fulfilling the personal pleasure of going to Italy. Colleagues who work in other countries sometimes express envy of those of us who have chosen Italy as our place of labor. We may encounter red-tape in the archives and the cost of living now equals or exceeds our own, but its people, culture and landscape provide constant enjoyment. In examining the various reasons of an academic sort for studying modern Italian

history, we should not forget the sheer attractiveness of the place and the people.

The decade following World War II witnessed the emergence of a cadre of American historians of modern Italy made up of those like Charles Delzell and H. Stuart Hughes who had discovered Italy during the war and those like A. William Salomone, Shepard Clough and Kent Roberts Greenfield who had entered the field prior to the war. The newcomers and the new interest in understanding modern Italy--especially Fascist Italy--made a decisive difference. Those factors coupled with the unprecedented growth of American higher education spurred by the G.I. Bill provided the opportunity for establishing the field of modern Italian history in the United States.

One measure of the growth of any field is publications of scholarly books and articles. The 1950s and 60s brought a surge of published work on modern Italy, especially from those drawn into the field as a result of the war. One of the few major works published in the 1940s provided a good example of the potential of American scholars to contribute important insights and interpretations of modern Italy: A. William Salomone's Italian Democracy in the Making (Philadelphia, 1945).

Salomone had begun graduate work at Pennsylvania in 1938 and completed his Ph. D. in 1943. His thesis then appeared as Italian Democracy in the Making two years later. It challenged the widely held view of Giovanni Giolitti as a rather cynical and corrupt manipulator of men and power, the ministro della malavita of Gaetano Salvemini. Salomone's work so impressed Salvemini that he revised his view of Giolitti and said so in a preface to the book. Here was an Italo-American making a difference in the way an important chapter of modern Italian history was perceived here and in Italy. In fact, Salomone as an American, as an outsider, took up a subject too sensitive, too politically charged for Italian historians to address.⁴

The work of H. Stuart Hughes illustrates yet another way an American historian could have an influence on the study of modern Italy. Hughes's reputation rests on his books in the field of European intellectual history: Oswald Spengler: A Critical Estimate, Consciousness and Society, The Obstructed Path and The Sea Change. In the latter

three his special contribution was to integrate Italian thought in the general context of European intellectual history. Croce received ample treatment, and Antonio Gramsci appeared, e.g. in Consciousness and Society well before his work was translated into English in the 1960s. Hughes also gave Italy full coverage in his text book on Contemporary Europe. His purely Italian effort, The United States and Italy first appeared in 1953 and is now in its third edition. It remains a classic introduction to modern Italian history for Americans. More recently he published Prisoners of Hope: The Silver Age of the Italian Jews, 1924--1974 (Cambridge, Mass., 1983) and Sophisticated Rebels: The Political Culture of European Dissent 1968-1987 (Cambridge, Mass., 1988).⁵

Another good example of an American contribution to the field was Raymond Grew's A Sterner Plan for Unity: The Italian National Society in the Risorgimento (Princeton, 1963) which won the Unità d'Italia Prize. It is a masterful study of the nineteenth century Nationalist Association. Grew was born in 1930 and did his undergraduate and graduate work at Harvard after the war. He and his slightly older contemporaries who had served in the war formed part of that first cadre of American historians specializing in modern Italian history. And in Grew's case he chose the nineteenth century as his particular period of interest rather than the twentieth and the fascist period which understandably drew the greater attention following World War II.

As already indicated, Charles Delzell's war-time service in Italy drew him into the study of Italian history. He had already begun graduate work before the war, and then completed a Master's thesis on Belgium after the war started. After his conversion to Italian history he set out on his study of antifascism, earned his Ph. D. and expanded the dissertation into the classic Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Resistance (Princeton, 1961; rev. ed., New York 1973). Once again, the perspective of the outsider helped an American produce a pioneering, yet durable survey of a highly charged subject without the polemics common to most Italian historians writing in the wake of the fascist experience.

Many other individuals of the pre and postwar generations were also doing research and publishing important works on modern Italy, e.g. Shepard Clough of Columbia and S. William Halperin of Chicago. But they did more than go their own individual ways. They took the

important step of forming a professional association in the 1950s for American historians of nineteenth and twentieth century Italy. Within a few years it became the Society of Italian Historical Studies.

The SIHS began as the American branch of the Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano. Howard Marraro of Columbia wrote to Boyd Schaefer in the fall of 1955, and they called an organizational meeting at the 1955 American Historical Association Meeting in St. Louis that December. On January 27, 1956 they issued a press release announcing the formation of the American division of the ISRI. On December 29, 1956 the organization had its first meeting during the annual AHA gathering. The paid membership of 71 has grown steadily since 1956 to approximately 375 by the end of 1991.⁶

The first president was Kent Roberts Greenfield of Washington, D.C. and Howard Marraro served as Executive Secretary and Treasurer. The president served a two-year term, but the secretary--treasurer served one-year renewable terms and Marraro remained in the post for a decade. Both these men came from the pre-war generation of scholars. Greenfield had published his Economics and Liberalism in the Risorgimento: A study of Nationalism in Lombardy, 1814-1848 (Baltimore, 1934) before the war, and an Italian edition came out in 1940. Marraro had presided over the Casa Italiana which had been established during the Fascist period and with the assistance of the Fascist government.⁷

Within a few years the group discussed the desirability of becoming an autonomous professional organization with a less restrictive definition than the Risorgimento period. Official action came at the meeting of December 28, 1959. The name became the Society of Italian Historical Studies with membership open to scholars, including graduate students, in any field of Italian history from medieval to modern.

The SIHS has continued on that basis and is one of the many affiliated organizations of the AHA. The major consequence of this relationship is that the SIHS as an affiliated organization holds a meeting concurrent with the AHA annual meeting. It offers its own program of panels and one panel each year that appears on the regular AHA program.

The Society includes specialists in all periods of Italian history.

Scholars from the earlier periods such as Frederic C. Lane, Robert S. Lopez, Felix Gilbert, William S. Bouwsma, William Bowsky, David Herlihy and Anthony Molho have served terms as president. Specialists in the medieval and Renaissance periods have other organizations and academic meetings attractive to them, but for scholars in modern Italian history the SIHS commonly plays a more prominent and central professional role than is apt to be the case for those in the earlier periods.

By the 1960s and 1970s the World War II generation of scholars had emerged to make its mark on the American academic scene. Examples abound of scholars from a variety of backgrounds contributing to the field of modern Italian history. Italo-Americans, of course, played a conspicuous part, but they labored alongside colleagues of other ethnic and national origins. Their historical interests covered a wide spectrum as well: political, social, economic, cultural, religious, etc. In addition, political scientists, economists, anthropologists and sociologists also contributed work of significance to modern Italian history.

The work of Edward R. Tannenbaum of N. Y. U. and Emiliana P. Noether of the University of Connecticut illustrates well the sort of work getting done. Ed Tannenbaum was primarily an historian of modern France who increasingly focused on modern Italy. His article on "The Goals of Italian Fascism," (AHR 74:2 April 1969: 1183-1204) still remains useful. In 1971 his pioneering book The Fascist Experience, Italian Society and Culture 1922-1945 (New York, 1971) appeared. Emiliana Noether came to this country from her native Italy and received her Ph. D. from Columbia in 1948. After several teaching positions she began a long and distinguished career at the University of Connecticut from which she has recently retired. Her dissertation took book form as Seeds of Italian Nationalism 1700-1821 (New York, 1951, reprint 1968), and she published many articles over the years.

In November 1969 Tannenbaum and Noether organized a "Symposium on Modern Italy" at Columbia's Casa Italiana. Subsequently they edited the proceedings and published them in book form as Modern Italy, A Topical History Since 1861 (New York: NYU Press, 1974). The fifteen contributors included English, American and Italian historians, an anthropologist (Leonard Moss of Wayne State), an

economist (Jon S. Cohen of Toronto) and a political scientist (Norman Kogan of Connecticut). The older generation of American scholars was represented by René Albrecht-Carrié, William C. Askew; the senior American faculty by Noether, Tannenbaum, Ray Grew, Bill Salomone; and those more junior by Elisa Carrillo, Nunzio Pernicone, Salvatore Saladino and Roland Sarti. The symposium and the book showed the range of talent and interests that by then shaped American academic interest in modern Italy.

John Cammet's work opens up yet another perspective on our subject, *viz.* American interest in Antonio Gramsci. Cammett, a student of Shepard Clough's at Columbia, wrote his doctoral dissertation on Gramsci and earned for it recognition from the SIHS in 1960 as the best unpublished manuscript that year in Italian history. He took advantage of the increased interest in Gramsci in the 1960s to continue his research and transform the dissertation into his path-breaking book, Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism (Stanford, 1967; paperback edition 1969).⁸

American interest in Gramsci exploded in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the rise of a new generation of leftists disenchanted with America's war in Vietnam and Soviet repression in Eastern Europe. Gramsci's ten year's in a fascist prison hastened his death in 1937, but his prison writings were just then becoming available in English. Gramsci's role as both martyr and original thinker made him a particularly appealing figure. Eugene Genovese led the way for historians of American history. Gramsci studies have since become something of a major industry in the academic world, although the interest and energy expended have done little to increase American interest in modern Italian history. Certainly the Gramsci phenomenon has made "hegemony," and "hegemonic" the academic equivalent of household words.⁹

One mark of the success of American work on modern Italy, is the recognition it has received by Italian scholars. Such recognition stands as one measure of the value accorded to work produced by foreigners for home consumption.¹⁰ The increased American interest in modern Italy led to a corresponding increase of interest among Italian historians in the scholarship produced by the Americans. Certainly Salomone's revisionist book on Giolitti had an impact on Italian

historians, beginning, of course, with Salvemini.

Phil Cannistraro's 1971 article in Storia contemporanea is one example of the effort to inform Italian scholars of American work, in this case on Italian fascism.¹¹ As Cannistraro noted, the number of studies in America of Italian fascism increased markedly after 1945. Americans were quick to take advantage of the documents that became available, published by the American, British, Italian and German governments.

Many of the books produced by Americans also came out in Italian editions. Charles Delzell's book on antifascism, Mussolini's Enemies appeared in Italian as Nemici di Mussolini (Milan, 1966). Laterza published the Italian edition of John Diggins book on American attitudes towards Mussolini, Mussolini, The View From America (Princeton, 1972) in 1982. Victoria Di Grazia's study of the leisure-time organization, Dopolavoro, appeared in both English and Italian in 1981.¹²

More recent examples include Claudio Segré's 1987 biography of Italo Balbo which won a prize, Premio aereo spaziale, and was published by Il Mulino in 1988. Spencer Di Scala's Renewing Italian Socialism, Nenni to Craxi (New York, 1988) appeared in its Italian edition in 1991. Books by Edward Tannenbaum, MacGregor Knox, Alexander De Grand, John Cammett, H. Stuart Hughes, Richard Webster, Charles Maier, Michael Ledeen, and Roland Sarti have all appeared in Italian editions.

Some books by Americans have appeared only in Italian editions. Philip Cannistraro's La Fabbrica del consenso, fascismo e mass media (Rome-Bari, 1975) broke new ground and continues to be cited regularly. Alexander De Grand's Bottai e la cultura fascista (Rome-Bari, 1978) and H. James Burgwyn's, Il revisionismo fascista; La sfida di Mussolini alle Grandi Potenze nei Balcani e sul Danubo 1925-1933 (Milan, 1979) are two more examples.

Coverage of modern Italian history in American journals is spotty. There is no journal devoted solely to Italian history published in the United States. Some members of the SIHS have suggested sponsoring a journal in Italian history analogous to French Historical Studies published by the Society of French Historical Studies, but the suggestion remains only that. The need for a journal is felt more acutely by

members of the SIHS specializing in modern Italy than those working in early periods, especially the Renaissance, who have more journals open to them.

The Italian Quarterly, now published by the Department of Italian at Rutgers, devotes most of its space to articles on literature, although occasional articles or whole issues are devoted to history. Shortly after the Quarterly renewed publication an appeal came from the SIHS at its annual meeting in December 1976 to publish more history articles.

The American journal which has devoted relatively more space than any other to modern Italian history is the Journal of Modern History. Since 1945 it has published nearly fifty articles and review articles that are wholly or substantially about nineteenth and twentieth century Italy. In June 1981 (JMH 53:2) it published a "Special Issue on Modern Italian Politics and Culture" featuring articles by Roberto Vivarelli, T. R. Ravindranthan and Richard Drake. The English Journal of Contemporary History also regularly features articles on twentieth-century Italy, especially Italian fascism. On average, at least one article devoted to Italy appears each year, and there have been two special issues on European fascism: the inaugural issue in 1966 on "International Fascism 1920-1945" and in 1976 "Theories of Fascism."

In 1978 a journal appeared that promised to give new prominence to modern Italian history among English speaking academics. The Journal of Italian History was published under the auspices of the Banca Toscana (Florence) three times a year. The Journal proclaimed that it "is primarily devoted to the study of Italian modern and contemporary history; its aim is to transmit the debates and results of Italian historical writing and research to scholars not fluent in Italian." Ennio Di Nolfo of the University of Florence served as editor and the editorial board included Myron Gilmore and William Salomone from the United States and Adrian Lyttelton and Nicolai Rubenstein from England.

Although intended to make Italian scholarship available to an English speaking audience, the Journal also carried articles by English speaking historians. In its short life of two years the JIT published articles and review articles on modern Italy by James E. Miller, H. James Burgwyn, and Frank J. Coppa. It provided bibliographical

information on recent Italian books and articles and features on Italian periodicals and historians. Alas, the JIT expired after two years and six issues.

In general, it is fair to say that modern Italian history has found a place in American academic life, but, despite the gains since World War II and the distinguished contributions American scholars have made and are making, the study of modern Italy in the United States remains uncertain and unsure. To put it another way, we can say that Americans have put modern Italy on the academic map, but only in places few and far between. In fact, the major research universities of the United States neglect modern Italy as a field and do not seem inclined to change in the near future.

Columbia University has played an important role in establishing the field of modern Italy in this country. The pioneering work of Shepard Clough and Howard Marraro, the continuing presence of the Casa Italiana, and the existence of the University Seminar on Modern Italy offer some idea of Columbia's important role. Today there is no historian of modern Italy in Columbia's History Department although Edward Malefakis, whose main field is modern Spain, does supervise occasional dissertations on Italy.¹³

The Ivy schools as a group do no better. Marta Petruszewicz supervised some dissertations at Princeton before her departure in 1990, but now no one in the History Department describes him or herself as an historian of modern Italy.¹⁴ Italy has been notably absent at such universities as Yale, Harvard, and Cornell. Pennsylvania has Jack Reece who lists "France and Italy since 1789" as a major field of interest. Brown has Tony Molho and Burr Litchfield, but both concentrate on periods earlier than the modern.

Modern Italy does not do well at major universities elsewhere on the map. Chicago, Stanford, and Wisconsin have no specialists in the field. California does better with Robert Wohl at UCLA and Richard Webster at Berkeley who both list modern Italy as an area of major interest. Rutgers has Victoria De Grazia.¹⁵

Once an historian of modern Italy does get established at a university and gains recognition as a published scholar, there is no guarantee that modern Italy will remain after the distinguished

professor's departure. Harvard took in Gaetano Salvemini, but not modern Italy. Charles Delzell certainly made his mark nationally and internationally, but Vanderbilt University did not choose to hire an historian of modern Italy when Delzell retired.¹⁶

The truth of the matter is that universities are reluctant to hire an Italianist. An historian of modern Europe whose major interests lie in Italy may get hired if he or she seems sufficiently trained in another area, usually France, Germany or diplomatic history. In some cases, historians focusing on the Mediterranean as a region will concentrate on Italy. Graduate students drawn to Italy entertain real risks when they decide to do dissertations that are wholly or primarily Italian even though they normally have European languages in addition to Italian and are capable of broad and comparative work in modern European history.

Given Italy's political and economic importance and the its role in modern European history, one might argue that it deserves some place in the History departments of major research universities. A university policy that insists on having modern Britain, modern France, modern Germany and modern Russia represented in its History department makes perfectly good sense, but it would also make perfectly good sense to think of Italy next! There is no evidence that most universities even consider the issue as a policy matter.

The situation in smaller universities and colleges is, of course, worse from the Italian point of view. The argument here is not that Italy deserves a place before Britain, France, Germany and Russia in the curriculum, but only that modern Italy merits consideration in plotting departmental strategy. If the other four fields are covered and an additional slot is available why not think of a diplomatic or social historian who has Italy as a base? Why not consider a political historian whose knowledge of Italy will provide comparative courses on fascism, or nineteenth century nationalism?

Italy has, of course, attracted the attention of those studying nineteenth century unification movements and twentieth century fascism. In both cases, it commonly gets treated in comparison with Germany and some historians of modern Germany have extended their work to include Italy. Charles Maier of Harvard is a good example of an historian of modern Germany and Europe willing and able to bring Italy into the

picture.¹⁷

William H. McNeill's survey of "Modern European History"¹⁸ provides a valuable summation of recent work. His examination of some 2,000 titles on European history since 1750, published between 1968 and 1978, found Italy with 45 books ranking sixth after Great Britain (543), USSR (311), France (304), Germany (231) and Ireland (50). In the decade since McNeill's article, the picture has not substantially changed, although no one has compiled a similar survey. McNeill did reach the erroneous conclusion that "fascism is clearly fading from the forefront of professional concern". The continued interest in fascism has obviously enhanced interest in modern Italy.

David Pinkney's article in 1981 on "American Historians on the European Past"¹⁹ makes clear the dilemma of modern Italian history. He devotes a sympathetic paragraph to American achievements in the field of modern Italy, but it is only a paragraph, thus giving it equal treatment with Spain. Pinkney concludes correctly that "Modern German history stands with modern British, French, and Russian history as one of the four principal foci since 1945 of American scholarly interest in European history." The problem for modern Italian history in this country is that it does not appear to run even a distant fifth. In fact, many of us suspect it has not yet been admitted as a legitimate participant in the game.

Roberto Vivarelli recently chided English-speaking countries for their neglect of modern Italian history. He acknowledges a lively interest in Italian studies, but complains that the neglect of modern Italian history distorts our understanding of modern European history. He makes his point within the framework of his article on "Interpretations of the Origins of Fascism:"

...the origins of fascism must be studied in situ, namely in Italy, and they must be understood first of all within the context of Italian history. Such a statement might appear a mere truism were it not that in most current historical studies, and particularly in the English-speaking world (indeed a very large area), due to sheer ignorance and subsequent misrepresentation Italy has

been practically expelled from the historical map of modern Europe. Such an exclusion exacts a price and brings certain results, one of which is the incapacity to understand a good deal of what went on in Europe during the last two centuries; and it certainly prevents historians from grasping the reality of fascism. Fascism, at least in its origins, speaks Italian; and in order to understand what fascism was and how it came to life one must first restore Italy to the place it has occupied in the history of modern Europe.²⁰

American historians of modern Italy have the challenge of convincing their colleagues that Vivarelli has a point.

Two bright spots have recently appeared that both recognize the importance of modern Italy and give its study institutional support: the Alcide DeGasperi Chair in Italian Studies at New York University and the Emiliana Pasca Noether Chair in Modern Italian History at the University of Connecticut. The NYU position is for a senior scholar of contemporary Italy "whether in history, politics, political economy, anthropology, sociology, or economics." Luisa Passerini, an historian from the University of Turin, will assume the position in the 1992-93 academic year.²¹ Her responsibilities will include helping to organize the NYU's new Center for Italian Studies. The Connecticut chair appears to be the first of its kind in the United States and resulted from a successful campaign to raise one million dollars in honor of Professor Noether upon her retirement. John A. Davis of the University of Warwick assumed the Noether chair in September 1992 "to develop a program in Modern Italian History."²²

Yale University has also made a senior appointment of a specialist in modern Italy. Frank M. Snowden assumed a professorship at Yale in January 1992. Professor Snowden has published two books in modern Italian history: Violence and Great Estates in the South of Italy: Apulia 1900-1922 (Cambridge, 1986) and The Fascist Revolution in Tuscany, 1919-1922 (Cambridge, 1989). He is currently writing a book on the cholera epidemics in Naples from 1884 to 1912.²³

The NYU, Connecticut and Yale initiatives are good news for the field of modern Italian history. It remains to be seen whether they are the first steps toward a wider recognition of the field at American research universities or remain isolated beacons in a shadowy and ill defined landscape.

The American contribution to the study of modern Italian history has been significant. Americans have produced solid books and articles based on archival research that have gained the attention of colleagues here and abroad, including Italy itself. There is no single slant or interpretative bias to this work to justify a special label for an "American school" of modern Italian history. Nevertheless, we may hazard two generalizations about these American contributions to modern Italian history.

First, there is the outside perspective on the subject that Americans bring. The benefit of that perspective stems, in part, from working outside the often politicized atmosphere of Italian historical studies. Fascism, antifascism, World War II and the emergence of republican and democratic Italy have shaped, not surprisingly, Italian historical scholarship. For example, how a particular Italian historian treated a subject could determine whether he or she qualified as sufficiently antifascist. Americans, in a sense, had more latitude in their choice and treatment of subjects as a result of not having to worry about the contemporary political repercussions.²⁴

The second point follows from the first: Americans have shown a willingness to tackle subjects or present points of view different from those of Italians. Claudio Segré, Robert Hess and Alberto Sbacchi have, for example, written important studies of Italian colonialism, including the fascist period, when Italian historians seemed uninterested or unwilling to take on the subject.²⁵ Edward Tannenbaum's The Fascist Experience: Italian Society and Culture, 1922-1945 (New York, 1972) and Philip Cannistraro's La fabbrica del consenso: Fascismo e mass media (Bari, 1975) pioneered the study of the relationship of Italian Fascism to intellectual and cultural life, on the one hand, and the attempts of the Fascist regime to mobilize popular support, on the other. The Italian historian Nicola Tranfaglia recognized the importance of these two Americans in a 1971 preface to a book on the press during the

fascist period.²⁶ More recently Giorgio Spini praised Spencer Di Scala's Renewing Italian Socialism precisely because it brought a fresh perspective to a subject enmeshed in a well-worn historical and political tradition in Italy. He added the general point that Americans might well do the same on other difficult subjects such as Mussolini and Gramsci.²⁷

The last half-century of American interest in modern Italy has thus produced works of value. The study of modern Italy has established itself in American colleges and universities even if in a somewhat uneven and ill-defined way. Indications are that the interest and the contributions of Americans will continue to increase. To that end, the Cesare Barbieri Endowment for Italian Culture recently established an annual Trinity College Barbieri grant to assist American historians undertaking research in Italy. The first recipient for 1991-92 was Richard Drake of the University of Montana. Professor Drake has published two books²⁸ on modern Italy and will use his grant for research on a third about the murder of Aldo Moro in 1978.

ENDNOTES

1. Although an American, James Sadkovich, is currently challenging the notion that the Italian military effort was negligible in World War II. See his articles "Understanding Defeat: Reappraising Italy's Role in World War II," Journal of Contemporary History, 24:1 (January 1989): 27-61; "Of Myths and Men: Rommel and the Italians in North Africa, 1940-1942," The International History Review, 13:2 (May 1991): 284-313.
2. Many authors have made such observations about American attitudes toward Italy. For an excellent summary of them, see H. Stuart Hughes, The United States and Italy, Third Edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979): 3-13 "Terra Incognita."

3. Charles F. Delzell, "War and Anti-Fascism: A Personal Memoir," typescript copy of valedictory lecture, Vanderbilt University, April 21 1989.
4. American students of Salomone contributed to a Festschrift consisting of essays originally given at a conference in his honor in New York in 1983: Studies in Modern Italian History, From the Risorgimento to the Republic, edited by Frank J. Coppa with an introduction by Ronald S. Cunsolo (New York, 1986).
5. Hughes most recent book, Gentleman Rebel, The Memoirs of H. Stuart Hughes (New York, 1990), tells of his discovery of Italy and growing interest in and affection for it during his career. He also mentions one of his Italian books as his favorite: "Of all my books, I love Prisoners of Hope the best, perhaps because of its lyric undertone." (p. 215)
6. The membership list and newsletter are published each year by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the SIHS. For the past fifteen years Alan J. Reinerman of Boston College's History department has ably accomplished these and other tasks for the Society. Professor Reinerman also cares for the Society's past records that I have used for this account of its history.
7. For the controversy in the 1930s over the Casa Italiana as an outpost of Italian Fascism see John P. Diggins, Mussolini and Fascism, The View from America (Princeton, 1972): 255-56.
8. See also John Cammett, "Antonio Gramsci: Marxism and the Italian Intellectual Tradition," in The Uses of History, Essays in Intellectual and Social History Presented to William J. Bossenbrook, edited by Hayden V. White (Detroit, 1968): 175-86.
9. See, for example, Peter N. Stearns, "Toward a Wider Vision: Trends in Social History," in Michael Kammen (ed.) The Past Before Us, Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States

- (Ithaca and London, 1980): 216-17. Gramsci's influence ranges, of course, far beyond the discipline of history. Literary criticism and political science, in particular, contain many scholars influenced by the martyred Sardinian Marxist.
10. See David Pinkney's discussion of this point as it relates to the work of Americans in the field of French history: "The Dilemma of the American Historian of Modern France," French Historical Studies, vol. 1 (1958): 11-25, and "The Dilemma of the American Historian of Modern France Reconsidered" FHS, vol. 9 (1975): 170-81.
 11. Philip V. Cannistraro, "Il fascismo italiano visto dagli Stati Uniti: cinquant'anni di studi e di interpretazioni," Storia contemporanea, II, n. 3: 599--622.
 12. Victoria Di Grazia, The Culture of Consent, Mass Organizing in Fascist Italy (1981) translated as Consenso e cultura di massa nell'Italia fascista (Rome-Bari, 1981).
 13. There is now a distinct possibility that Columbia will make a senior appointment in modern Italian history in 1993.
 14. For current information on History departments and the fields of specialization for their members see, Directory of History Departments and Organizations in the United States and Canada, published annually by the American Historical Association, Washington, D. C. Professor Petruszewicz is now at Hunter College of CUNY.
 15. Her long awaited study of women in Fascist Italy appeared in early 1992: Victoria De Grazia, How Fascism Ruled Women, Italy, 1922-1945 (Berkeley, 1992).
 16. Delzell's successor, Michael Bess, does have an interest in Italian history within the context of his major field, twentieth-century Europe. His 1989 dissertation at Berkeley was "Rebels

against the Cold War: Four Intellectuals Who Campaigned to Recast World Politics, 1945-85--Leo Szilard (U.S.A.), E.P. Thompson (England), Louise (France), Danilo Dolci (Italy)."

17. Charles S. Maier, Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I (Princeton, 1975); "Some Recent Studies of Fascism," Journal of Modern History, 48 (September 1976): 506-21.
18. William H. McNeill, "Modern European History," in Kammen The Past Before Us, 95-112.
19. American Historical Review, 86:1 (February 1981): 1-20.
20. Roberto Vivarelli, "Interpretations of the Origins of Fascism," Journal of Modern History, 63 (March 1991): 29-30.
21. Her most recent books are Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class (Cambridge, 1987) and Mussolini Immaginario: Storia di una Biografia 1915-1939 (Rome-Bari, 1991).
22. Quoted from the announcement in June 1992 of Professor Davis's appointment by Bruce Stave, Chair of the History Department. Davis's special interest is in the social and political development of Italy's South. His most recent book is a general study of the relations between state and society in nineteenth-century Italy, Conflict and Control (New York, 1988).
23. On September 24, 1992 the Barbieri Endowment sponsored a lecture by Professor Snowden on the cholera epidemic of 1884.
24. Americans have, for example, produced a number of regional studies of the origins and first years of Fascist movements. In addition to Frank Snowden's volumes on Tuscany and Apulia already mentioned, these studies include Anthony Cardoza, Agrarian Elites and Italian Fascism: The Province of Bologna

1900-1926 (Princeton, 1982), Alice Kelikian Town and Country under Fascism: The Transformation of Brescia 1915-1926 (Oxford, 1986), and Donald Bell, Sesto San Giovanni: Workers, Culture and Politics in an Italian Town 1880-1922 (New Brunswick, 1986).

25. Robert L. Hess, Italian Colonialism in Somalia (Chicago, 1966); Claudio Segré, The Fourth Shore: The Italian Colonization of Libya (Chicago, 1975); Alberto Sbacchi, Ethiopia Under Mussolini: Fascism and the Colonial Experience (London, 1989).
26. "Intellettuali e Fascismo: Apunti per una Storia da Scrivere," in Eia, eia, eia, alalà! La stampa italiano sotto il fascismo 1919/1943 (Milan, 1971): "Se la storia del movimento e del regime fascista--una storia fondata sull'analisi del materiale documentario disponibile negli archivi pubblici e in quelli privati, a livello nazionale come a quello locale - è ancora in buona parte da scrivere, la ricostruzione del rapporto intellettuali-fascismo resta, a ventisei anni dalla liberazione, a livello di accenni, ipotesi piú o meno fondate, saggi estremamente circoscritti e settoriali.

Due studiosi americani, Philip V. Cannistraro ed Edward R. Tannenbaum, annunciano la prossima pubblicazione di proprie opere sulla politica culturale del fascismo e su società e cultura durante il ventennio: c'è da augurarsi che, contrariamente ad alcuni lavori nordamericani sull'Italia contemporanea apparsi in questi anni, si tratti di contributi in grado di far progredire le nostre conoscenze su quel problema. Ma, in ogni modo, siamo solo all'inizio." (p. vii)

27. "Ma, visto sotto un profilo americano, il lavoro di Di Scala può dirsi un'opera di rottura, innovatrice addirittura, rispetto ad una tradizione annosa di studi storici e politologici sull'Italia: quella tradizione per cui sembra che un americano, il quale voglia occuparsi di cose italiane non abbia altro di meglio da studiare che Mussolini oppure--in qualche caso id particolare

sophistication--Antonio Gramsci." Il Messaggero 5 November 1989.

28. Byzantium for Rome: The Politics of Nostalgia in Umbertian Italy (1878-1900) (Chapel Hill, 1980); The Revolutionary Mystique and Terrorism in Contemporary Italy (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989).

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