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L'INDICE

DEI LIBRI DEL MESE

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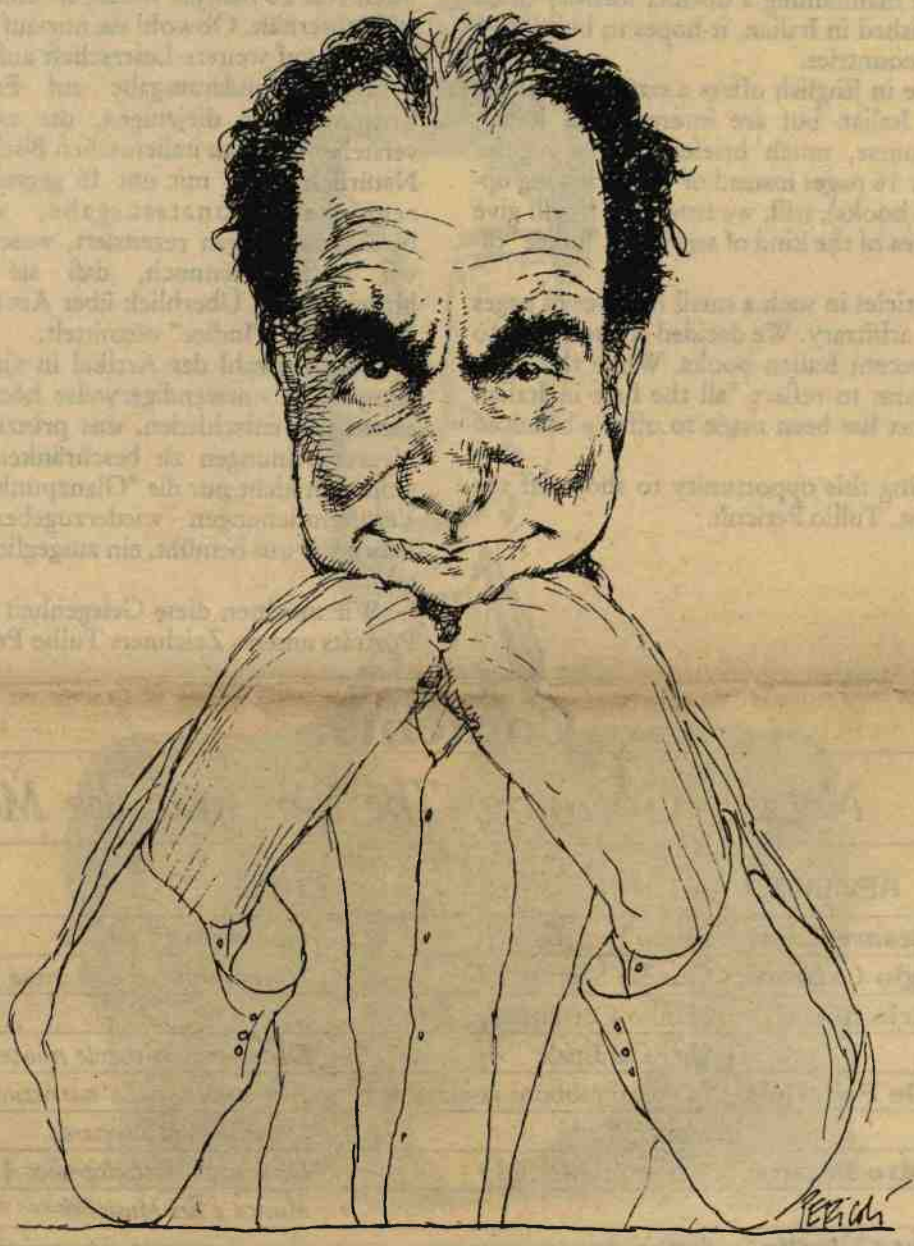

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Italo Calvino

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L'INDICE
DEI LIBRI DEL MESE

A Note from the Editor

As the subtitle of this special issue indicates, "L'Indice" likes to think of itself as *the* Italian review of books. True, it is a mere two years old: but it has illustrious foster parents, and like most children it strives to live up to their fame while maintaining a distinct identity of its own. Though published in Italian, it hopes to build up a readership in other countries.

This special issue in English offers a sample for those who do not read Italian but are interested in Italian books. It is, of course, much briefer than a regular monthly issue (only 16 pages instead of 48, reviewing upwards of a hundred books); still, we trust that it will give the reader a good idea of the kind of service "L'Indice" offers.

The choice of articles in such a small number of pages is obviously highly arbitrary. We decided at the outset to limit ourselves to recent Italian books. While this issue certainly cannot claim to reflect "all the best in Italian publishing", an effort has been made to offer a balanced picture.

We are also taking this opportunity to show off the portraits of our artist, Tullio Pericoli.

Wie der Untertitel dieser Sonderausgabe verrat, versteht sich "L'Indice" als *die* italienische Buchkritikzeitschrift. Sie existiert zwar erst seit zwei Jahren, hat aber dafür illustre Vorfahren und ist bemüht, ihren Ruf zu nähren, indem sie eine klare Eigenidentitat aufrechterhält. Obwohl sie nur auf Italienisch erscheint, hofft sie auf weitere Leserschaft außerhalb Italiens.

Diese Sonderausgabe auf Englisch bietet eine Kostprobe für diejenigen, die zwar kein Italienisch verstehen, aber an italienischen Büchern interessiert sind. Natürlich ist sie mit nur 16 gegenüber 48 Seiten einer regulären Monatsausgabe, welche über 100 Neuerscheinungen rezensiert, wesentlich kürzer gefaßt; wir hoffen dennoch, daß sie dem Leser einen hinreichenden Überblick über Art und Aufmachung der Zeitschrift "L'Indice" vermittelt.

Die Auswahl der Artikel in einer derart gekürzten Ausgabe ist notwendigerweise höchst willkürlich. Wir haben uns entschieden, uns prinzipiell auf italienische Neuerscheinungen zu beschränken. Da diese Ausgabe sicherlich nicht nur die "Glanzpunkte" aller italienischen Veröffentlichungen wiederzugeben behaupten kann, haben wir uns bemüht, ein ausgeglichenes Bild zu vermitteln.

Wir möchten diese Gelegenheit auch nutzen, um die Porträts unseres Zeichners Tullio Pericoli vorzustellen.

Contents:

We gratefully acknowledge the help and support received from a number of Italian institutions (and, as always in these cases, those individuals within them who have believed in the usefulness of what we are trying to achieve with this English edition): the Comitato per la promozione del libro italiano all'estero, coordinated by the Direzione Generale delle Informazioni Editoriali e Proprietà Letterarie of the Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri; the Direzione Generale delle Relazioni Culturali of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri; the Direzione Generale degli Scambi Culturali of the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione; the Direzione Generale per gli Affari Generali (Divisione Editoria) of the Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali; the Associazione Italiana Editori. It goes almost without saying that they have no responsibility for the choice of books or the content of the reviews.

Where not otherwise indicated, the articles have been translated into English by Malcolm Skey. We thank him and Donata Origo, who has done the other translations. Francis Haskell and Ronald Witt wrote their pieces directly in English. We also thank Katia Lysy and Virginia Kay who helped us with the editing and the proofreading of the English text.

The Sun and the Moon

by Natalia Ginzburg

The last time I saw Italo Calvino alive was in a room in the hospital at Siena, the day after his brain operation. His head was bandaged; his bare arms, strong and bronzed, lay outside the sheets; and he seemed to be asleep. His face was calm, his breathing steady: there were no visible signs of suffering. I imagined that he would recover quickly enough, and soon be able to leave that bed. Over the next few days, I read in the papers of things he had said on awaking. Looking at the tubes protruding from the drips by his bed, he had commented: "It looks like a chandelier". When his daughter entered the ward, asking him "Who am I?", he had replied: "The tortoise". When one of his doctors asked him the same question, he got the answer "A police inspector". To those of us who loved Calvino, those few phrases were a precious gift, a sign that he was still himself, that nothing in him had changed, that his mind was still peopled by tortoises, chandeliers, and police inspectors.

I find it quite impossible to think of him as dead. I don't know why, but death always seemed such a long way from Calvino. When I first met him, he was only twenty-three: a mere boy. And now I realize that I have never stopped seeing him as a boy, really. It never did strike me that he could age, be transformed into an old man with a limp and grey hair. And to tell the truth, at twenty-three he wasn't very different to look at from what he later became. Time brought with it deep horizontal lines on his forehead, and a few tufts of white hair on the temples; but very little else, in physical terms. In his youth he was lean, straight, and swift in his movements; and so he remained.

Straight and upright though he was, even when a young man he had that habit of occasionally stooping forward a little, as if to curl himself up as a defence against prying questions. As a young man he tended to stammer, too: true, he never did lose his stammer entirely, but it was more marked then. Often, he seemed to be pulling his words out of some secret word-bag of his own, or tearing them from a secret bundle: as he pronounced them he would stumble over them, frown slightly, and look down at his interlocked fingers, with a kind of obstinate, ironic perplexity, as if he were doing an imitation of himself. But however effortful and slow his speech, there was no sign of effort or slowness in his thinking, or in anything else he did: effort, slowness, and stammering were a way of making fun of himself, and of others, part of his way of life. When I first met him, that stammer, half genuine and half assumed, struck me as somehow extraordinarily cheerful and gay: he had a wonderful faculty for making a continuous comical commentary on himself, on others, and on the infinite, hairy, scaly tails which words drag along behind them.

I met Calvino in the winter of 1946, in Turin, in the offices of the publishing firm of Einaudi. He was standing by a stove, in the corridor. It was a snowy morning, grey and dark, so the lights were on in the corridor. The stove was one of those ceramic ones which come from Castellamonte and which leave red marks on your hands if you touch them. Calvino was working at *l'Unità*, and had simply dropped in, quite by chance, perhaps in search of books to review for the paper. There were only a few of us working at Einaudi in those days: we were still waiting for Pavese to return from Rome, where he had been living for some months. Calvino and I stood there for ages, talking by that stove: heaven knows why we didn't fetch a couple of chairs.

I well remember the stove, and the snow outside; but I cannot recall what it was we spoke of. Short stories, I think. Calvino had written one, entitled *Andata al comando*, and had sent it to Vittorini for his review *Politecnico;* and Vittorini had replied, not without a few reservations. At that time my idol was Hemingway, and I knew that he was one of Calvino's idols, too: either of us would have given ten years of his life to have written Hemingway's story *Hills Like White Elephants.*

Shortly afterwards, Pavese returned from Rome. He and Calvino became friends. *Andata al comando* was duly published in *Politecnico.* And Calvino, I believe on Pavese's suggestion, left *l'Unità* and came to work for Einaudi.

Two years later, on behalf of the firm, Calvino and I went to Stresa to meet Hemingway. We were glad to be going, but a little afraid that he might refuse to see us. We were shown into his room. At a little table, lit — I don't know why — by candles, we were at last able to tell him how much we loved *Hills Like White Elephants.*

Calvino used to bring his stories for Pavese and me to read. They were written in a minute, rounded hand, bristling with erasures. They struck me as very fine indeed, with their festive landscapes bathed in bright sunlight; at times they told of war, of death, of blood, but nothing seemed to detract from that sunlight; no shadow ever darkened those green leafy woods, with their children, animals, and birds. From the very start, Calvino's style was direct and limpid: with the years, it was to become pure crystal. In this fresh, transparent medium, reality appeared as if speckled with a tnousand coloured lights; and that in itself seemed a miracle, at a time when writing tended to be severe, frowning, and frugal, and the very world we were trying to describe was dominated by fog, rain, and ashes.

When Pavese committed suicide, we shared the tragedy together: Calvino, Felice Balbo, Giulio Einaudi and I. Over the years, that tragedy kept us united, it was locked away in the deepest roots of our relationship. Other losses kept us united in the same way, even though in time we had come to live in different towns, and our lives had taken different courses.

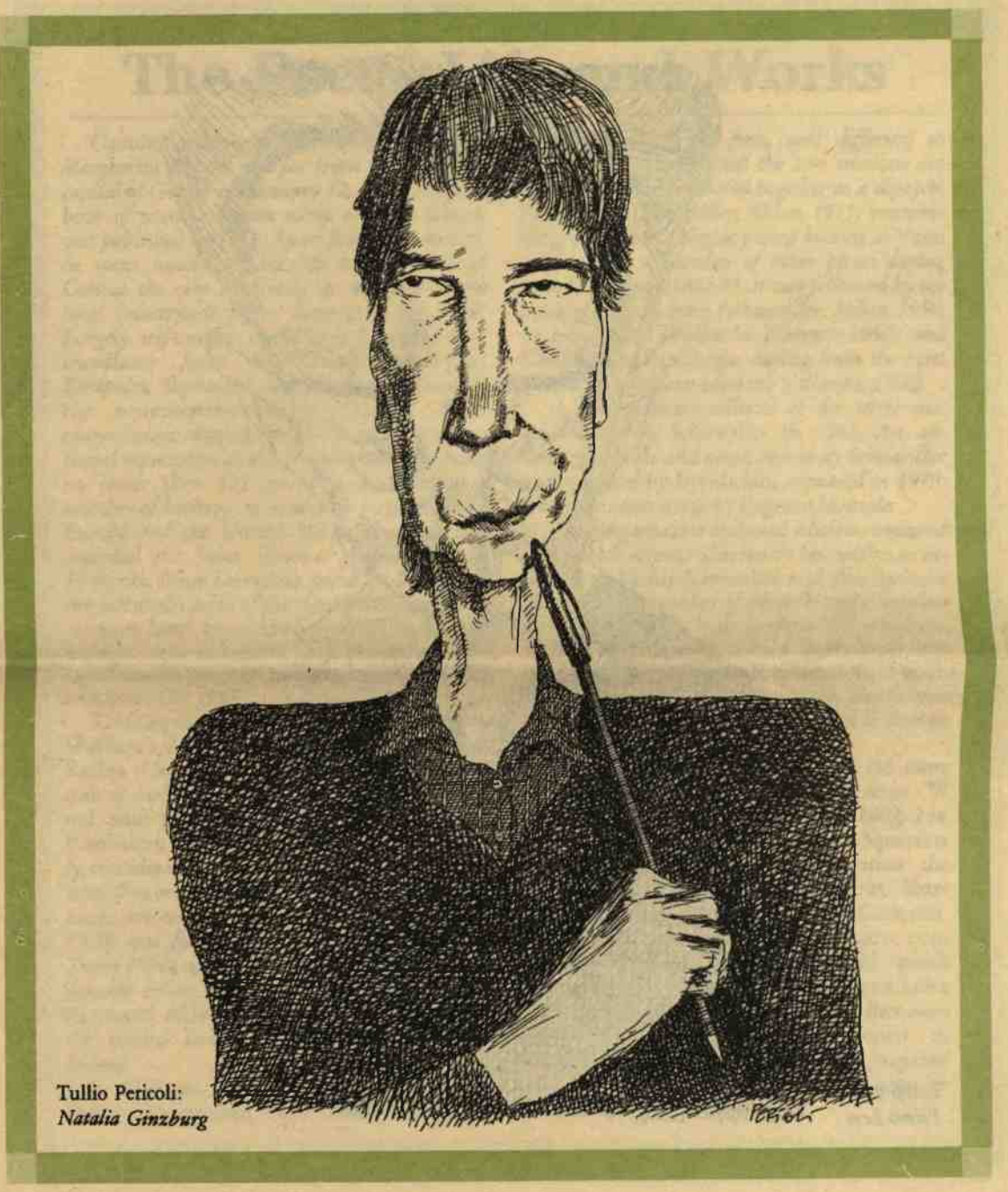
In 1956 Calvino published his *Le fiabe italiane.* I think that this retelling of Italian folk-tales is the best book for children to have appeared in Italy since *Pinocchio.* It ought to be read in schools. Perhaps it is: if so, it ought to be read more. The style is swift and trasparent. One can learn concreteness, conciseness, and a feathery brightness by reading it. It is brimming with that same festive sunny light you find in *Il visconte dimezzato* and in his earliest stories.

Of all the articles that have appeared recently in memory of Calvino, I feel the finest is that by Pietro Citati; because, in his words, I seem to recognize Calvino as he really was, both in his youth and as he later became. Not that he changed much, physically speaking: to look at, he remained a boy. But at some stage his mind and spirit changed profoundly. And this, as far as I know, is something only Citati has pointed out. What the reasons for this transformation may have been, what were the processes by which it came about, we cannot tell. It was noticeable, if anything, in Calvino's walk, in his smile, in his way of looking at you. And it was reflected in his writing.

Citati writes: "With ever-increasing tenacity and restlessness, with an extraordinary capacity for picking up and transmitting vibrations, Calvino delved into that enormous part of our existence which lies hidden behind our feelings and our thoughts, lurking in tne crevices, the depths, the abysses of the spirit...". And again: "His mind unverwent a profound change. It became the most complex, labyrinthine, winding, architectonic mind of any modern Italian writer... He was no longer able to affirm anything whatever, nor could he rule anything out; for each affirmation generated its own negation; and the negation yet another affirmation, and so on, in a dizzy movement which at times rendered him incapable of speech or of writing".

Little by little the green and leafy landscapes, the glistening snow, the bright daylight, disappeared from Calvino's books. A new light filters through them, no longer radiant and sunny, but white: not cold exactly, but somehow utterly deserted. The irony remained; but it was imperceptible, no longer glad to be alive, white and uninnabited as the moon itself.

Already, in that wonderful book *Le città invisibili* — the best of all, in my opinion — this transformation can be seen clearly. Certainly, the world is there, radiant, variegated, speckled with a myriad colours; yet it is as if the gaze turned upon it, searching and contemplative, is conscious of being about to leave it for ever. From now on that gaze will alight elsewhere, no longer on the infinite brightness of sky and sea or the tangle of human affairs; from now on it will search for that immensity elsewhere, in insects' shells or in cracks in the rocks — "the crevices, the depths, the abysses of the spirit". The pain of memory has condensed around the "invisible cities" of the book's title. In all of Calvino's other works, memory is absent; or rather, when it is present it is never painful. Here, in these "invisible cities", not dreamed-of but *remembered,* reigns the painful memory of a time which will never return. Over the cities, towering beneath the sky, teeming and resplendent, swarming with human mistakes, brimming with goods and foodstuffs of all kinds, the domain of rats and of swallows, the sun is setting. And the eyes which gaze upon them are bidding farewell to a world much-loved, from on board a ship which is sailing swiftly out to sea.



Tullio Pericoli:
Natalia Ginzburg

Rethinking the Absurd

by Cesare Cases

PRIMO LEVI, *I sommersi e i salvati*, Einaudi, Turin 1986, 167 pp., Lit. 10.000.

Four decades on from *Se questo è un uomo*, the best-selling (and much translated) account of nis time in Auschwitz, Primo Levi returns in this new book to the problems which have troubled him ever since that terrible experience. Forty years is a long time; and Levi has never been able to stop reflecting on it, reading others' accounts of it and comparing notes. Jean Améry, anotner survior — to whom one of the chapters of *I sommersi e i salvati* is dedicated, and with whom Levi evidently had a far from easy relationship — called him "the forgiver". Frankly, the description does not seem particularly accurate.

Levi's book contains some particulary fine passages on memory and oblivion. One who is unable to forget the wrongs suffered, who feels the need to make sure that they are not forgotten by others, continually racking his brains over the incomprehensible and irrational aspects of what happened to him, who "fails to understand" the Germans (*those* Germans, obviously), and who frequents them and provokes them into writing him letters in the hope that they may shed at least some light on the matter: a writer like this can hardly be called a "forgiver", surely. True, Levi defines himself as one who doesn't know how to react: he is the sort who after tracking down his former tormentor to his very front door, turns away without ringing the bell. But this does not mean that he *forgives* his tormentor: why, otherwise, should he have expended so much effort on tracing the man in the first place?

Jean Améry denied that Levi was an "intellectual" (certainly a far from privileged category, in Auschwitz): for him, the only true "intellectuals" were on the humanities side, and Levi, as is well known, is a chemist by training and profession. Levi protests at tnis *a priori* judgment, both because he rightly does not agree that those with scientific training should be excluded, and because well before finally giving up chemistry for literature, he had always felt that his earlier classical education was essential to him: indeed, in today's world Levi (who, incidentally, not long ago published an anthology of his favourite authors) stands out as a living monument to the tradition of the old Italian *liceo classico*, rooted in Homer, Dante, Manzoni, and Leopardi. And it is precisely the "scholastic" nature of this culture which — luckily — prevents him from being an "intellectual" in the Améry sense, a sort of person whom Levi sees as feeling no real interest in the diversity of the men who peopled Auschwitz but who were not "intellectuals" themselves. The trouble with the intellectual, in fact, is that he is absorbed with his own category, interested only in his own kind. It is an attitude which seems to me to be disastrously present not only in the works of the gallicized German Améry (the surname is an anagram of Mayer) but also, for example, in Jorge Semprun's memoirs of Buchenwald: and here, too, the influence is the same, the corporative spirit of the French intelligentsia. Inhumanity is not inhumane because it kills culture, but because it kills men. "The lot, but not the Gobelins" — to quote the ironic title of a poem by Karl Kraus — is the attitude of those who take notice of atrocities only when it is Culture that is being attacked.

For Levi, on the other hand, the classics are useful only in that they illustrate certain constants of the human spirit. Thus, telling of the *Sonderkommando* whose job it was to clear the corpses out of the gas chambers and which once halted in embarrassed amazement before a girl who by some miracle had survived the gas, Levi adds: "How can one fail to recall the scene in *I promessi sposi* where the rough corpse-gatherer hesitates with "unaccustomed respect" before the mother who refuses to let the body of her daughter be thrown onto the plague-cart with all the others"? Auschwitz and an outbreak of plague in Manzoni's seventeenth-century Lombardy are worlds apart, of course; but in each case there is the awareness that man is not a monolith, that there are moments of humanity even in those who have become mechanical servants of evil.

The "two cultures" are equally present in the mixture of comprehension and legitimate bewilderment which has enabled Levi to write his finest books, of which *I sommersi e i salvati* is undoubtedly one. In the event it is science which emerges as the more frustrated of the two. True, in a chapter of *Se questo è un uomo* Levi used Dante's song of Ulysses as a reminder that even in the midst of horror man must follow "virtue and knowledge"; but for the most part the classics or the humanities — as the episode quoted from the *Promessi sposi* shows — bear out the contradictions of the human spririt which make the horror somehow plausible, while Ulysses' exhortation coincides rather with the chemist Levi's need for knowledge as such. Scientific theory and practice had given him a faith in the basic rationality of reality, and in the perfectibility of man, which Auschwitz was to put to the test. It is the sense of amazement allied with his implacable curiosity about this apparent betrayal, which gives many of Levi's pages their peculiar aptness and strength. What could Ceronetti or Cioran have found to say about Auschwitz, except "We could have told you so"? Maybe they would have been at least partly right; but we should have learned nothing about Auschwitz. If mankind really were just a *massa damnationis* there would be no "grey area" in which good and evil cannot be separated with the naked eye, and it is here that Levi is able to apply his unrivalled analytical ability. This "grey area" is actually *beyond* good and evil: not because they are not present there, but because the particular situation makes them blend into one another and become somehow less relevant for an overall judgment. In the Ghetto Museum at Prague there is a note made by a prisoner in Theresienstadt who finally found out why the victims in medieval portrayals of martyrdom look unconcerned or even happy while they are being beheaded or burned alive: there was nothing they could do about it.

The "particular situation" does not by any means imply that all human beings behave uniformly under the jackboot. Far from it; but that is no reason for not taking circumstances into account. Hence Levi's protests at those psychoanalysts who apply to the particular world of the concentration camps (even when they are exinmates themselves, like Bruno Bettelheim) simplified models derived from the world outside. And he is particuarly incensed by talk of the "uncommunicable nature" of the experience. Not just because he himself belongs to the category of eye-witnesses who like Ancient Mariner are impelled to tell all; but because the experience through which he lived was one in which the ability to communicate was from the outset a question of life and death, and in which the refusal to communicate was a sure sign that the end was not far away. The irritation at talk of the "inadequacy of words", etc., is one-sided, if you like; but it is just as well that once in a while such platitudes, however well-intentioned, should be brushed angrily aside by one who has earned the right not to care a whit for Beckett or Wittgenstein. Indeed, Levi even has the pluck to find Nietzsche intolerable: indeed, he actually goes so far as to say that he senses a certain connection between the philospher and the camps.

No, Améry was not mistaken in refusing to classify Primo Levi among the "intellectuals": one feels that if it were not for a veritable heap of mitigating circumstances they might crucify him, thus obligingly making amends for the sins of omission of the SS.

Levi tends to consider the phenomenon of the extermination camps as basically an unrepeatable one. I think he is right, at least as far as the type of organization involved is concerned. I also feel convinced by his analysis of the differences between the Nazi death camps and the Soviet model or other monstrosities born of totalitarianism. The pathos of memory must serve to reconstruct the experience for those who are unaware of it even through hearsay: it would indeed be good if this book were to find its way into the hands of the many young people who (even without having read Faurisson) doubt the truth of such accounts simply because the mass media have taught them to believe that anything can be fantasy, with the same actors moving on from *Holocaust* to King Arthur and the Round Table.

But the distance between the world of the camps and the world of every day occasionally breaks the threads which link them. Levi never completely abandons his basic conviction that once the intrusion of the irrational is at an end, scientific rationalism will contrive to get itself, and the world, back on the rails. What he simply cannot swallow is that the esteemed manufacturing firm of Topf, in Wiesbaden, builders of crematoria for civil use, should have supplied the equipment for Auschwitz and then calmly returned to its former activity without even bothering to change its name. It is here, perhaps, that the secret of the "immense folly of the Third Reich" (which Levi tried in vain to fathom in *Se questo è un uomo*) really lies: if so, then it is a universal secret. For science, technology, and reason itself have all in their turn crossed over to the side of unreason without so much as a change of name. Of course, Levi is well aware of this; but he is unable not to point out the distinction, and it is well that someone should feel the need to do so. It is worth looking carefully at his chapter on "useless violence", in which Levi distinguishes between "rational violence" (which is violence with a practical purpose — even when that purpose is extermination) and the useless variety, intended only to degrade the individual, a sort of art for art's sake in which the Germans were masters. There are observations of great subtlety in this chapter: here, too, I agree that it is only proper to protest against the trend, in fashion since 1968, which puts a month's jail today on the same plane as a year in Auschwitz (moreover, Levi has no doubts about what to think of model prisons, and begs to differ with a German friend who accepts the official version of the suicides at Stammheim). But is not this methodological division between rational and irrational violence a way of rescuing rationality when it is past saving? And in the eyes of that God who is not (not in Levi's eyes, or in mine) might not the useless violence of the Germans appear a barbarous hangover or throwback — like the behaviour ot a child who tortures an insect before finishing it off — whereas the rational, scientific exterminator tranforms it in a flash into the famous shadow imprinted on the wall at Hiroshima?

This difficulty of circumscribing the area of horror is clear in the field of linguistics, a field which seems neutral enough but which is nothing of the kind, as Levi well

Tullio Pericoli: *Primo Levi*

knows, for he devotes a lot of attention to it. It is sometimes said of the language of the camps that it was "a particularly barbarized version" of what the writer Victor Klemperer termed *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, even proposing the acronym *LTI* "in an ironic analogy with the hundred others — NSDAP, SS, SA, SD, KZ, RKPA, DVHA, RSHA, BDM, — so dear to the Germany of the time". Only to the Germany of the time, and not to the world of today? Do today's initials stand for more innocuous institutions? Perhaps. Let us not forget that another German philologist, the Communist Werner Krauss, while awaiting execution in Plötzensee, actually wrote a satire on Nazi Germany which had as its title the acrostic *PLN* (i.e. *Postleitnummer*, "post code"). The central character is the grotesque but not unpleasant figure of an Austrian-born Nazi Postmaster-General, who dreams up this wonderful invention: what more rational institution than this system which in a mere ten years will speed correspondence from one end of the country to the other in just twentyfour hours (as in 1910) always provided we write the envelope properly according to the computerized rules?

Levi has never made any attempt to remove the camp number tattooed on his forearm, because it is the visible and outward sign of that degredation and sense of shame for the guilt of human kind about which he has written so movingly. I am sure that he is right. But suppose he were to receive tnrough the post one of those little machine-readable cards — scheduled for introduction in Germany — bearing in their magnetized strip full details of everything that has ever gone wrong in our lives (from bad marks at primary school to parking fines): would he pocket it, like the rest of us? Is the difference all that great? Yes, of course, but... In God's eyes all ways of "administering the world" are the same.

But God does not exist, so we have to get along as best we can among tne risks of making too many distinctions and not making enough. It is a comfort, in this bigoted age, to see that Levi's agnosticism came through Auschwitz unscathed, although he realized that faith, any sort of faith, was essential to survival (on this, too, he has one of his illuminating anecdotes, about a certain Frenchman who — after the Liberation — expressed amazement that anyone could have despaired of ever being rescued, because "you ought to have known that Joseph was there!": and it took Levi some time to realize that "Joseph" meant Stalin). In *Se questo è un uomo* there is the figure of one Cohn, who after each "selection parade" thanked God for having spared him: Levi adds that if he had been God he would have spat the prayer onto the ground. Here he confesses that before a selection parade (and not afterwards) he had been tempted to pray. "A prayer in those circumstances, though, would not just have been absurd. It would have been blasphemous, obscene, full of the greatest impiety of which an unbeliever is capable. So I resisted the temptation: I knew that if I survived I would have been ashamed". And it would indeed have been shameful to try this "wager" in the teeth of imminent annihilation, in that place whose very existence was a definitive denial of theodicy and thus of the existence of a God with arms wide enough to welcome all the repented sinners of our day. For God knows, there are enough of them.

Sbarbaro's Asparagus

by Giorgio Caproni

CAMILLO SBARBARO, *L'opera in versi e in prosa*, edited by Gina Lagorio and Vanni Scheiwiller, Garzanti, Milan 1985, 726 pp., Lit. 50.000

"A publishing event" proclaims the slogan on the olive-green wrapper enclosing this handsome volume, nothing less than the complete works of Camillo Sbarbaro, edited by Gina Lagorio and Vanni Scheiwiller. An understatement if ever there was one. Indeed, one can but stand aghast at the extreme modesty of the publisher — a discretion which the "frugal" Sbarbaro would undoubtedly have wholeheartedly approved — in these days when the big drum is beaten with such monotonous regularity to ensure the success of the latest boring novel of the season. I am almost tempted to compose a hymn of praise to Garzanti of Milan, not just to Sbarbaro himself.

Almost, but not quite. What the editor has asked for is a review. But that is impossible for a mere poet, so I shall leave it to the experts; though I doubt whether their complicated technical arguments will do much to bring the crowds flocking into the bookshops.

This article, then, is no more than a more or less private (but open) celebration of the event, an attempt to enjoy it as Sbarbaro himself would have done. I am put in mind of a letter he wrote me back in 1960, when an article of mine about his work appeared in *Il punto*. Here it is:

"Dear C,

As soon as I got the news, I rushed out to catch the first bus to Savona, where I found a copy of *Il punto* at the station book-stall (...). An hour later, having bought some asparagus by way of celebration, I was back on the bus again, slowly working my way through your article, savouring every word.

Please let me sav "thank you". I can't think of anything more important, and more intimately true. The "golden thread of harsh pity", the "private hell" to which I continually return, and so on, are fundamental insights which so far as I know nobody else has even put down on paper. It is all as penetrating and exact as an X-ray. Comforting and rewarding, too.

Two days ago I received from Scheiwiller the December issue of the *Mercure de France* containing Bigongiari's selection of poems of today. I re-read your *Ascensore travestito* with renewed pleasure (there are one or two points where I thought the rendering could have been improved) and the lovely *Interludio*. "Proper poetry" it is; as people used to talk of "proper coffee" in days when the real stuff was hard to come by.

Yours ever,
Sbarbaro"

But if this letter reveals my own incorrigible tendency to show off, it also — and this is the point — throws light on the innate modesty of Sbarbaro, especially if one already knows that in the brief anthology published by the *Mercure* (fifteen poets, from the elderly Saba to the young Pasolini) Sbarbaro himself had been unaccountably left out. That same Sbarbaro who was already thought of as the greatest figure in that important "Ligurian group" of poets (or "ligustrian group" as I once punningly termed it with a play on "Ligurian" and the Italian for the common privet: the expression was, incredibly, adopted by critics in the garbled form of "*linguistic* group"!). As Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo writes: "well before Montale, Sbarbaro brought his home region of Liguria within the circle of the holy places of Italian verse, strengthening the idyll with his typically Ligurian terseness and economy".

Enough said. What I feel about Sbarbaro I have already written on a number of occasions. No point in repeating myself here. All I wished to do was celebrate, enjoy the event in my own way.

To begin again. A book of verse — any book of verse — is always a joy. All the more so when it contains some pieces we already knew before. Poems we have loved "singly" before they were ever collected: poems which have found their way into our own private "anthology of the heart" which each of us slowly builds up without any regard for critical judgments or prejudices. An anthology of the heart, all the more precious for being irrational, unreasonable.

And then, isn't a book of verse really an object meant to be *used*, like a shoe-brush, a comb, or a dictionary? Please do not be scandalized by the comparison. What I mean is that one suddenly feels the need to re-read certain verses one loves, some of which have temporarily escaped the memory; and there is the book, ready to oblige, just like the photograph of girlfriend or wife kept in one's wallet. No more, no less.

There is barely any point in saying here that of course, I already had almost all of Sbarbaro's works at home — both books and originals, for he gave me many of the latter before he died, including Vivante's autograph letters Vivante, which he had used to compose a delightful "self-portrait" entitled *Autoritratto involontario di Elena De Bosis*, edited, he said, "so that those who knew her can still hear her voice". I cannot get its lively style out of my head, even now.

As I was saying, I already possessed almost everything Sbarbaro wrote; but that doesn't mean that the celebration is any less the real thing, for the thick volume by my side is a lot more convenient to handle than a heap of often rather delicate papers and paper-bound volumes.

One day, if the mood takes me, I may sit down to compare the texts, in search of variants and alterations. For the moment, I am content to spend my time looking up early loves.

The very first of all is the poem entitled *Versi a Dina:*

"La trama delle lucciole ricordi

The Poet's Life and Works

Camillo Sbarbaro was born at Santa Margherita Ligure, not far from the Ligurian capital of Genoa, on January 12, 1888. His first book of poems, written while at High School, was published in 1911. Apart from war service, he spent nearly all his life in and around Genoa: the city (especially at night) and the local countryside figure largely in his work. Largely self-taught, he became a sought-after translator from the Greek (Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles) and the French (mainly the nineteenth-century classics. With characteristic modesty he also won an international reputation as a lichenologist, identifying no fewer than 127 species and donating a number of herbaria to academic institutions in Europe and the United States. Sbarbaro was awarded the Saint Vincent poetry prize in 1949, the Etna-Taormina prize in 1956, and the Feltrinelli prize of the Accademia dei Lincei six years later. From 1951 onwards he lived in isolated semi-retirement with his sister in the small seaside town of Spotorno, until his death on October 31, 1967.

Considering his relatively small output, Sbarbaro's bibliography is singularly complex. Resine *(Caimo, Genoa 1911) is a short collection of early efforts which he later said he did not wish to have reprinted after his death.* Pianissimo *(La Voce, Florence 1914) is generally considered his most important collection of verse (but see* infra*). A first series of short prose pieces, known as* Trucioli *(Vallecchi, Florence 1920) was followed by* Liquidazione *(Ribet, Turin 1920), after which there was a gap of two decades before the second edition of* Resine *(Garzanti, Milan 1948) and, in the same years, the second series of* Trucioli *(Mondadori, Milan).*

In 1954 an entirely reworked edition of Pianissimo *appeared, (Neri Pozza, Venice), just forty years after the first, and differing so significantly from it that the two versions are now traditionally printed together as a diptych.* Rimanenze *(Scheiwiller, Milan 1955) contains the group of early elegiac poems known as* Versi a Dina *and a number of other pieces dating back to the years 1921-22. It was followed by the prose of* Fuochi fatui *(Scheiwiller, Milan 1956, etc.),* Scampoli *(Vallecchi, Florence 1960), and* Cartoline in franchigia, *dating from the First World War (Nuove edizioni Vallecchi, 1966).*

A first collected edition of the verse was undertaken by Scheiwiller in 1961. An anthology of prose and verse, edited by Scheiwiller but published by Mondadori, appeared in 1979: it contains two essays by Eugenio Montale.

The long-awaited collected edition reviewed here (which respects Sbarbaro's last wishes as expressed to Vanni Scheiwiller and thus excludes Resine *and a number of other things) comprises the brief* Primizie, *both versions of* Pianissimo, *with* Rimanenze *and a brief appendix, followed by the prose* Trucioli, Scampoli, Fuochi fatui, and Cartoline in franchigia, *plus several translations including the celebrated* Il ciclope *after Euripides.*

On Sbarbaro and his work, see the short studies by Lorenzo Polato, in the series "Il Castoro" (La Nuova Italia, Florence 1969, 2nd ed. 1974), and by Giorgio Bàrberi Squarotti (Mursia, Milan 1971), not to mention the biographical volume by Gina Lagorio, Sbarbaro. Un modo spoglio di esistere *(Garzanti, Milan 1981: a reworking of* Sbarbaro controcorrente, *Guanda, Parma 1973); which contains the most complete available bibliography, including the periodical literature. A full-scale* Bibliografia degli scritti di Camillo Sbarbaro *is currently being prepared by Carla Angeleri and Giampiero Costa for publication by Scheiwiller.*

Tullio Pericoli: *Camillo Sbarbaro*

«

sul mar di Nervi, mia dolcezza prima?
(trasognato paese dove fui
ieri e che già non riconosce il cuore).
Forse. Ma il gesto che t'incise dentro
io non ricordo, e stillano in me dolce
parole che non sai d'aver dette.
Estrema delusione degli amanti!
invano mescolarono le vite
s'anche il bene superstite, i ricordi,
son mani che non giungono a toccarsi.
Ognuno resta con la sua perduta
felicità, un po' stupito e solo,
pel mondo vuoto di significato.
Miele segreto di che s'alimenta,
fin che sino il ricordo ne consuma
e tutto è come se non fosse stato.
Oh come poca cosa quel che fu
da quello che non fu divide!
Meno
che la scia della nave acqua da acqua.
Saranno state
le lucciole di Nervi, le cicale
e la casa sul mare di Loano,
e tutta la mia poca gioia — e tu —
fin che mi strazi questo ricordare."

...

I am not going to clain that this is Sbarbaro's finest poem: after all, it isn't always with the most beautiful girl that one falls in love.

Another point worth making is that we feel and see in a much-loved poem a lot more than is actually expressed in it. Things whose "presence" depends on the state of mind we were in, and the surroundings, the first time we read it. For example, I need only to recall the first line of Montale's *Vecchi versi* or *La casa dei doganieri* and I'm immediately plunged into that cloudy seaside air of Bonassola where I spent some of the toughest, but also the most exciting, years of my life. Perhaps only music can compete with poetry in this capacity to enchant via atmospheric absorption.

I was just nineteen when one windy, sunny winter morning, in Genoa, I walked as usual on Saturday to buy my copy of *L'Italia letteraria* at the newsvendor's at the corner of Corso Buenos Airs and Via Casaregis. Clipped to the glass frontage was a new magazine, the cover an odd reddish colour halfway between ochre and carrot. I saw that it contained some verse (such magazines were not hermetically sealed in polythene in those days) and immediately bought it.

It was the first issue of *Circoli*, for January-February 1931. I read the *Versi a Dina* sitting on a green-painted park bench under the plane trees; and inevitably — in those days my own loves were between nearby Nervi and Loano — the verses etched themselves on my memory.

Until then I had never read so much as a line of Sbarbaro's verse, or indeed of any of the other poets who had published their work in *Riviera Ligure*. And apart from odd scraps of information heard here and there, I learnt nothing more of any account until the years immediately after the war, in Rome, where I first set eyes on *Pianissimo* and on some of the *Trucioli*.

I had been told that Sbarbaro was a "poet of bitterness".

"Bitter?", he once retorted. "The bitterness is in the roots, maybe. The twisted roots without which the tree won't produce its flowers, up above in the air".

I should like this celebration (how many other pages of Sbarbaro, in verse and in prose, have I turned back to in the meantime!) to bring together the largest possible number of readers — and above all the young, for since the original volumes are so exceptionally difficult to find, they cannot possibly yet know to any satisfactory extent this poet who is an ideal author for them.

With his plain, unadorned, but oh so cogent voice; his inimitable hendecasyllables, almost shuffling along in carpet slippers (a description which incidentally did not displease him); the total absence of illusions, in a false world bereft of meaning; his ruthlessness towards that *Terra guasta* (years before Eliot's *Waste Land*); that dry pity, the song sometimes sticking in the throat, always directed at men and never at the Heavens (or the Computer): I am convinced that there is no other poet of this century closer than Sbarbaro to the young people of today, in disenchantment and in hidden revolt. How one would like to be able to make a present of this splendid volume to all the young people one meets: not for consolation, but to show the power of reason.

Tullio Pericoli: *Giorgio Caproni*

"stripped to the bone, skeleton jaws clamped round the sea, which eludes its thirst by merely spattering it with bitter spray...".

It is this same love, bitter and harsh, which inspires Montale's *Ossi di seppia:* but here the music is always muted, not so much a gold-tongued trumpet as a softly jingling sistrum or a squealing Pan-pipe. So much so that one is tempted to see Sbarbaro, by virtue of that mysterious influence of new voices on old, as the most Montalian of poets *avant la lettre,* not least in that life-sickness which Montale calls "il male di vivere" and Sbarbaro "la condanna di esistere".

It may seem strange, for the sons of a region which many, from Nietzsche to Valéry, have described as an area firmly attached to concreteness and solidity; but one should not forget that almost all the lyric poets of Liguria have been deeply versed in Oriental-type philosophies, which lead them (and here the ecstatic light of sea and sky must surely have some bearing) to yearn, despite their love of nature, for a flight to nothingness, an irresistible *cupio dissolvi.*

Sbarbaro spoke of this longing — which is also an impossible flight from Evil — in dramatically ironic terms:

"Talora nell'arsura della via
un canto di cicale mi sorprende.
E subito ecco m'empie la visione
di campagne prostrate nella luce...
E stupisco che al mondo ancora sian
gli alberi e l'acqua,
tutte le cose buone della terra
che bastavano un giorno a smemorarmi...
Con questo stupor sciocco l'ubriaco
riceve in viso l'aria della notte.
Ma poi che sento l'anima aderire
ad ogni pietra della città sorda
com'albero con tutte le radici,
sorrido a me indicibilmente e come
per uno sforzo d'ali i gomiti alzo..."

Yet another of my old loves, and a suitable end to this personal celebration. Let the reader now turn to the volume, with its seven hundred-odd pages, and celebrate in his own way (with or without the asparagus) his discoveries and surprises. It will cost a mere fifty thousand lire, which is less than a celebration meal in a restaurant; and what is more, the food is as genuine as one could wish for.

Tolerant Detachment

by Carla Marello

MANLIO CORTELAZZO AND UGO CARDINALE, *Dizionario di parole nuove (1964-1984)*, Loescher, Turin 1986, 209 pp., Lit. 8.800.

The man (or woman) in the street realizes that the language is changing only when they come across a "new word". They meet a vigilessa *(a female traffic-warden, or "meter maid"), for example; they are mystefied by the host of new objects and processes whose names begin with* video-; *they are shocked by slang, or repelled by the jargon of technocrats. To hunt down all the new coinages or borrowings amid the myriad entries of a reasonable-sized general dictionary — around 100:000 headwords on average — is a labour of Hercules, even for professional linguists. Dictionaries devoted entirely to neologism, such as this welcome work by Cortelazzo and Cardinale, listing about four thousand headwords, offer a valuable short cut: at best they may even offer a sort of alphabetical index to the concepts and objects which have recently entered the culture of a given linguistic community.*

This Dizionario di parole nuove *is perhaps of less interest to the professional than to the general reader. To start with, it covers a period of time (1964-84) which is already dealt with extensively by the most recent of Italian general dictionaries, the eleventh edition of "Zingarelli" (Zanichelli, Bologna 1983); a number of its "first recorded instances" are frankly somewhat doubtful; and it could certainly have included more new* meanings *of "old" words. On the other hand, there are definite advantages — which more general works can hardly expect to equal — in the abundant use of example sentences, selected from a wide variety of non-specialist publications (works of reference, newspapers and magazines, novels, etc.) and in the large number of proper names and multi-word expressions entered as headwords. Among proper names we find* Al-Fatah, Amnesty International, Algol, Annales *(two polical or para-political organizations, a computer language, and a school of French historians): among multi-word expressions are* mobilità sociale *for "social mobility" and* costo della vita *for "cost* of living, *etc. Such things usually tend to get lost, in those general dictionaries which include them at all, in a morass of general information and examples: in this* Dizionario di parole nuove *they are conveniently given full headword status along with actual "new words" in the strict sense such as* defogliante *(defoliant) or* ellepì *(a spelling-out of the English LP or "long-playing record).*

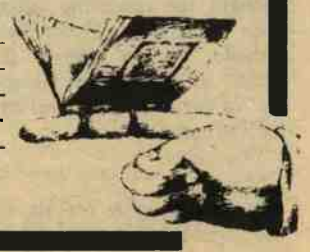
*Cortelazzo and Cardinale have striven to maintain as neutral an attitude as possible: they give a definition of the headword, sometimes an Italian equivalent as well (*pausa caffè *for "coffee-break" and* siparietto pubblicitario *for "spot" in the commercial television sense), but do not sit in judgment. No jeremiads against the wildfire spread of* italiese *(the Italian equivalent of* Franglais, *duly recorded here as a headword); and no condemnation of new expressions made out of home-grown materials. This tolerant detachment at times makes the reader smile, as when one reads, under* stronzo *("turd", "shit") that it is "an insult now detached from its original etymological base". And just occasionally, one senses a slight shudder of disapproval at the vulgarity of our "liberated" society. See for example, the entry for* vaffanculo *("Fuck off!"): "offensive swearword, as frequent as it is plebeian".*

From the very first page, written in 1910, we are faced with that unmistakable, terrible sense of solitude which the city gives us. Solitude and corruption:

"Vo nella notte solo
per vicoli deserti
lungo squallide mura..."

A mere hint, later developed further in *Pianissimo* (his best-known collection, along with *Trucioli*) which Mengaldo identifies as "Baudelairian in its insistence on the myth of the modern city as desert and brothel".

But one should not end up by thinking of Sbarbaro as only a poet of negation and hopelessness or arid despair. Like the "nihilist" Leopardi, no-one had a greater love of nature, of the simple life, and above all of his frugal, harsh native region, a "slender strip of land beside the sea, hemmed in by a long line of bony mountains": Liguria, with its "windy screes", its "dry, bleached river beds", its "sun-soaked lemons", its agaves, the entire countryside



We Are All Narrators

by Lidia De Federicis

Fare scuola/1. La narrazione, Quaderni di cultura didattica, edited by Franco Frabboni, Roberto Maragliano, Benedetto Vertecchi, La Nuova Italia, Florence 1985, 112 pp., Lit. 12.000.

As the first volume of a series which continued with an eclectic examination of the various disciplines (the second title, in 1986, is *The Thinking Machines),* these annotations resume a so to speak democratic formula, which in our memory is connected with the cultural imagination and the impetuous pedagogics of a few years ago. Thus the addressee is a teacher whose double profession is underlined: that of the educational technician, who needs tools for his trade; and that of the scholar, or rather the intellectual (a rather threadbare word which is to be read on the cover-flap), for whom theorizations and books are of interest in themselves. The booklet therefore contains essays which are divided into two sections, research (the greater part) and scholastic activities. Essays are followed by short intervening articles, in the form of interviews with well-known figures and specialists in various particular fields. The ensemble does not have an organic development. The essays which are intended to stand for the field of research do not correlate exactly with those which represent scolastic activities. Nor are the individual articles connected with each other by any apparent mechanism: beginning with Enza Biagini, who opens the booklet, and ending with Remo Cacciatori, who closes it, each author has followed his own path, using his own methods, presenting his own bibliography and his chosen quotatioins, tending in other words to be exhaustive.

One should therefore not consider the book of use to the reader because of the relevance of the matter for didactic purposes or because of its exemplary linearity, but rather for the abundance and variety of the reflections to which he is led. To my view the most engrossing of these concern the concept itself of narration. It cannot but give us a multidisciplinary outlook, as narration consists in communication before it becomes a literary or historical experience (Enza Biagini, Alessandra Briganti and Scipione Guarracino write about this and Mario Lavagetto also briefly intervenes). But it also gives us a multilinguistic outlook, for one can narrate with verbal and non-verbal language, with the body and with pictures, with traditional handmade images or with images produced by technology, such as in films or video music. Dario Fo writes about narration in the theatre, Antonio Leone on the radio, Luca Verdone in the cinema (why is no mention made of television?); Antonio Faeti tries to explain the new and enigmatic youthful audience and Paola Pallottino concentrates on images presenting, throughout the volume a selection of illustrations from the last two centuries which represent a form of narration. Finally the interviews with Carlo Bernardini, on the theme "How scientists narrate", and with Glauco Carloni, on "Narration in a psychoanalytical dialogue", expand the matter further. In observing the lack of the art of narration in the scientific field, Bernardini points out the harm done to social communication: "Thus most people live in a pre-Galilean state, and are not lacking in knowledge but in reasoning processes. These processes can easily be narrated..." (p. 19). Could this really be true? How and what could scientists narrate? We would like to know more, but the article is too brief and ends here.

On the other hand Carloni, speaking of the practice of psychoanalytical dialogue, points out some narrative functions which are not immediately recognizable. He reminds the reader, for example, that the patient often introduces himself with a narration of his own, "an autobiography set up for his own edification and very often in order to ward off any possible inquiry from the psychoanalyst" (p. 23). The analysis will have to "break up these nice tidy stories, these unexceptionable fables"; it will have to take them to pieces "to find what they hold of most interesting" and, if this should be impossible, it will have to discard verbal communication in preference for "a non-verbal language made of silences, mimics, gestures, postures". Thus does Carloni justify the likeness which he finds between the analyst's work and that of the literary critic: both deal with expressive communication, a text which can be either spoken or written, without however being able to take the text itself literally.

In the extreme case of psychic suffering narration more clearly reveals its reassuring, or blocking, mechanism, by classifying the experience into (apparently) consistent sequences, thus redeeming banality by setting it into a significant (i.e., romantic) design. This is worth thinking about, all the more so as just in these years we can observe that literature is returning to narration,

and often in the shape of autobiography.

In the didactic part of these annotations we are presented with an analysis of narrative form in comic strips (in articles by Gianni Brunoro and Ermanno Detti), and a comparative essay by Remo Cacciatori which juxtaposes a topic, a nineteenth century party, in three novels: *Demetro Pianelli* and *The Leopard,* two books frequently read in scholastic narrative, and the less well known *La desinenza in A* by Carlo Dossi. However the thesis which leads to most discussion is provided by Anna Folli and Benedetto Vertecchi. This is *An example of a "prepared" text,* a meticulous analysis of Moravia's short story *Gi Raffa's search for herself,* intended for the elementary school in a didactice prospective in which the educational centre is identified in the text and in the processes of understanding which can be brought about by this patient exercise. The problem therefore concerns once more the function of reading in the age of development. How does one read and what does one read at school? Folli and Vertecchi suggest a "selection of high quality texts" (p. 79), accompanied by additional external information which situates them in time and space, and subsequently analytically studied from inside in the depth of their meaning. This is a suggestion with which I agree. For why should the commonplace imaginary world which we deplore when we observe it in adults be good for children?

(translation by Donata Origo)

Ambiguous Tales

MARIO PICCHI, *Storie di casa Leopardi,* Camunia, Milan 1986, 359 pp., Lit. 30.000.

Mario Picchi, the writer of essays and fiction, translator, and journalist for the *Espresso,* does not like biographical gossip. For example, I recall a very funny review by him on the life of Manzoni as told by Maria Luisa Astaldi with an excessive propension for the so-called private vices. Yet this book of his based on letters and memoirs, passages taken from diaries and essays, confronting friends and relatives, provincial readers and famous scholars, also tells or lets one catch a glimpse of many private stories, to his readers' amusement. However, the heart of the book is of a different nature, and is serious. It is the reconstruction of how, immediately after his death and until well into the twentieth century, Leopardi was described and represented: as a rebellious or affectionate son, as an obstinate heretic or as a convert, of chaste habits or precocious and perverse sexuality, with one or two humps on his back, with or without beard.

It turns out in fact, that not only his family, but all, or nearly all, the Italian cultivated world of the late nineteenth century was unwilling to accept the abnormal behaviour and thoughts of Giacomo Leopardi. It turns out that everyone, from his family to the devoted Antonio Ranieri, quarreling with each other over relentless controversies, behaved like in so far as they constructed ambiguous stories which were primarily autodefensive, whose main purpose was to justify and remove the scandal of the materiality of existence, theorized by the poet and indeed publicly and corporally proclaimed by him. An attitude which continued when, in a more detached manner, scientists and doctors of the positivist school intervened, applying the instruments of their new science, they too telling stories (clinical stories) to explain and exorcise Leopardi's black melancholy (diagnosing and classifying it).

For years we have been learning, even in school, to come to terms with Leopardi's thought. Now this book, whose purpose is not scholastic, suddenly confronts us with mean realities. Picchi registers, with the impassiveness of a good journalist, and with inevitable irony, the cultural scene in a provincial and old Italy. He writes with compassion: but he knows the art of bringing to light terrible details, even in the middle of well-known facts. We know that Giacomo's life was passed in conditions of poverty and charity: "he owned one coat or two in all his adult life, often turned over and inside out" (p. 5). We known that he was ill and deformed: the exhumation, in 1900, of what was little more than a few fragments of bones revealed "that Giacomo Leopardi's height, when upright, was about 1 meter 40 to 1 meter 45 (of which one meter is to be attributed to the lower limb, the rest to the trunk)" (p. 14). Having met him in Naples in 1834, the poet August von Platen wrote: "The first impression of Leopardi, to whom I was brought by Ranieri the very day in which we met, is in some ways absolutely horrible, when one has been led to imagine him otherwise through his poems" (p. 18). We too feel upset as we emerge from this book specially if we are attentive readers who are used to see Leopardi mainly through his "poetized thought".

(l.d.f.)
(translation by Donata Origo)

Music and Musicians: Te Deumm Laudamus!

by Alessandro Baricco

ALBERTO BASSO (Editor), *Dizionario Enciclopedico Universale della Musica e dei Musicisti*, section II, vols. I & II (A-BUR and BUS-FOX), UTET, Turin 1985, Lit. 240.000.

Te DEUMM laudamus! A mere coincidence, no doubt: but the initials of the Italian title of this "encyclopaedic dictionary of music and musicians" form the acronym DEUMM — as if in silent homage to the incontrovertible nature or its aims and its authoritativeness. Commenced by UTET of Turin in 1983, under the bâton of Alberto Basso, DEUMM marks a new epoch in the world of reference books for Italian music lovers, whether professionally concerned or not. Before its advent, the reader in search of works of similar breadth could only turn to *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* or to the *New Grove:* the former elephantine, getting on in years, and — alas — in German, the latter significantly more up-to-date, functional, and complete in its coverage. If confined by circumstances to Italian works, the choice lay between UTET's encyclopaedia *La Musica* (1968) much of whose material has now found its way into DEUMM, and the *Enciclopedia della Musica* published by Ricordi in 1963 and reissued jointly with Rizzoli in a family format some nine years later. Compared to these two compatriots, DEUMM, with its twelve volumes housing over 25,000 articles, is truly a new departure, and one which cannot be ignored.

DEUMM is split into two main sections: the first, a lexicon of over 5,000 entries in four volumes, has been available for some time now. Under review here are the first two volumes of the eight-volume section devoted to individual biographical entries (over 20,000 of them): 1,600 pages in all, covering the alphabet from Els Aarne, a composer, teacher, an pianist born in the Ukraine in the years of the Russian revolution, to Arthur Fox Strangways, an English scholar who was music critic of *The Times* and *The Observer,* and founder-editor of *Music and Letters* (and also, incidentally, a considerable contributor to the third edition of *Grove*).

It is a fascinating occupation to sift through these pages in the hunt for the secret inner machinery of the enterprise; and where better to begin than at the beginning, with the list of contributors, which constitutes the "identity card" of any encyclopaedia? One significant fact emerges at once: some 75% of the contributors are Italian (with a particularly massive group hailing from Turin). This is a curious U-turn compared to the majority of recent reference works, the *New Grove* not excepted, in which the international make-up of the team of authors is presented as a guarantee of efficiency and objectivity. It is far from easy to sit in judgment upon a decision of this kind, either way. Clearly, on the one hand (quite apart from an almost inevitable drop in overall standards) the "domestic" or "national" approach of DEUMM runs the risk of producing less incisive results in areas which are culturally and geographically far from the home base. The editors, however, seem willing to pay this price in return for that more cohesive quality which only a reltively restricted, easy-to-control group of contributors can ensure. And indeed, DEUMM does have a remarkably close-knit texture. At times one could almost believe it to be a one-man work, where the *New Grove,* in comparison, with its mosaic of contrasting methodological approaches, pays a heavy penalty in terms of balance and consistency.

Another general impression which emerges from the list of contributors to DEUMM is that they are all musicologists. Less obvious than it might perhaps appear, if one compares it with the lists of similar projects of the Fifties and Sixties, where one finds names of composers — Malipiero, Hindemith, Poulenc, Pizzetti, Ghedini — and of interpreters — Gavazzeni, Gui, Tito Gobbi, Boris Christoff, Laura Volpi. *Autres temps, autres moeurs.* In the Eighties, DEUMM seems to be saying, professional rigour and increasing specialization nave won the day, and the appeal of famous names is no longer what it was: musicology for the musicologists, indeed.

To turn to the list of entries, the spinal cord of any encyclopaedia, deciding as it does what is to be preserved for posterity and what is to be consigned to oblivion: it must be said at the outset that the DEUMM lexicon is of a very high level indeed. If one may extrapolate and project statistically on tne basis of these first two volumes of biographical entries, it would appear that the number of articles will probably be very little lower than that of the *New Grove,* almost double that of the Ricordi *Enciclopedia,* and a good 20% up on that of UTET's previous musical encyclopaedia. Obviously, it is the composers who have the lion's share; but there is no lack of musical theorists, interpreters, dancers and choreographers, writers, publishers, set-designers and directors, inventors and builders of instruments, philosophers, and so on. It is an interesting exercise to try to work out the editorial attitude to light music: one can well imagine the torture of having to decide whether this or that teenage idol of today merits a place in history or not. In this minefield DEUMM seems to have opted wisely for a middle course between the austere approach of the *New Grove* (which admits the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, but precious few others) and the get-up-and-go generosity of Garzanti's latest desk-top effort (1983) which abounds with crooners and rock groups and positively teams with jazz musicians. Here, the criterion seems to be to exclude passing fashions, however well-known, and to admit those musicians who have left a real mark: yes to Joan Baez, no to the Bee Gees (though admittedly this yardstick has been applied more flexibly in the case of home-grown musicians).

Turning to the structure and substance of DEUMM, the architecture of the work, one can hardly avoid making the comparison with UTET's earlier encyclopaedia of music and musicians, published in the Sixties under the same general editor, Alberto Basso. It is clear that the new enterprise has taken over the foundations of the old: much of the strictly biographical material, and most of the major articles from

Tullio Pericoli: *Igor Stravinsky*

Author in Search of the Detective

by Renato Nicolini

STEFANO BENNI, *Comici spaventati guerrieri,* Feltrinelli, Milan 1986, 200 pp., Lit. 16.000.

Stefano Benni almost literally burst into my life in June 1979, during the First International Poets' Festival at Castelporziano near Rome. He had the audacity to publish in *Il manifesto* a parody of a "mantra" by me, alleging it to be the work of no other than Allen Ginsberg. So credible was it that the Rome daily *Il messaggero* reprinted it as the authentic work of Ginsberg himself. So it came about that my mother read it, and so did my Uncle Giorgio, and before you could say Jack Robinson the telephone was ringing urgently, for the "Ginsberg" poem claimed that "Nicolini shoots it all the time", and the reference to hard drugs seemed only too clear.

I make no apology for retailing this personal anecdote because it seems to me as economical a method as any of pointing out Benni's characteristics as a writer. Above all, his extraordinary gift for mimicry — anything but superficial in times like ours, conditioned inevitably by the mass media. If language is indeed becoming daily more conventional, there can be little point in hunting for non-existent profundities: thus the work of a writer such as Benni consists rather in bringing about almost imperceptible shifts in tone which cause the basic euphoria of superficial to change register and take on a new, alienated, ironic, almost surrealist look.

After nearly ten years of writing, Benni like others has felt the need to try some new experiments, in particular to see what he could do with a more complex type of narrative, the long-distance test of a real novel. Am I wrong in feeling that behind this new book *Comici spaventati guerrieri* the model is the extremely difficult one of Carlo Emilio Gadda's *Quer pasticciaccio brutto di Via Merulana* (1957)? Both are in a sense "detective novels" during whose development the traditional machinery of the crime story — the search for the murderer — gradually loses its hold, not so much on the reader (who may still be interested) as on the author himself. Again, there is no real point in knowing who killed Leone l'Allegro, (a "happy Jack" who got on the nerves of the bosses by continually smiling for no apparent reason) for it could just as well have been the arms-dealer as the drug-pusher, or even the *concièrge,* infuriated because "he trod on her lawn". Like Gadda, Stefano Benni puts on the cloak of the moralist, distinctly out of fashion these days, to express his fidelity to a world-view which, clearly, is far from that of Gadda, but rather similar to that which was in fashion in the far-off days of 1968.

The implict reference to the structure of Gadda's masterpiece is all the more interesting in that it is free of all merely imitative elements. For Benni's style is at the opposite end of the spectrum from that of Gadda, allusive and immaterial. Benni tends to mask all realism behind the semblance of a fable. In this, I get the feeling that he is harking back to certain Latin American writers, and perhaps in particular to the Adolfo Bioy Casares of *Diario,* to which the protagonist Lucio Lucertola, a retired schoolteacher, explicitly refers: for he too, like the "hero" of Bioy Casares' novel, is elderly, and feels threatened, driven to his death by society's oppression of the old. Equally pertinent are the "detective stories" of H. Bustos Domecq, written jointly by Borges and Bioy Casares.

All these "influences" notwithstanding, the fact remains that Benni finds his principal sources within himself; and Benni is of course a writer who remains a *newspaper* writer, something which he himself would be the last to deny. At the beginning of this novel he contrives an extraordinary impression of distance: our present is seen as if from way into the future, by people who call it the "age of the Old Man with the Coffee Machine" (because that is the most ancient artifact they have been able to dig up). "The countryside was very different from ours. In enormous conglomerations of buildings, called cities, there lived millions of people, in houses that were very tall, and all exactly the same".

Clementi to Beethoven, for example. In general, such material has been taken over word for word, but not invariably, and never automatically: there has clearly been a great deal of discreet revision, updating, and smoothing of rough edges. Certain minor entries have actually been suppressed altogether, a sign that DEUMM sees itself not only as a radical extension but also as a partial critical rethinking of the earlier work. Where the articles dealing with major figures have been resigned, the choice of the new author usually respects accepted international authority and reputation: thus Bellini goes to Walter Lippmann, Berg to Petruzzi, Tchaikovsky to David Brown, and so on. Among the old entries which have remained — and they are not always as fresh as they were — are Massimo Mila on Bartók and De Falla, Fedele D'Amico on Berlioz, Willi Hess on Beethoven, Gastone Bellotti on Chopin, Alfred Dürr on J.S. Bach.

DEUMM's real strength lies in the professionalism of the critical notes to the biographies, which rescue literally hundreds of individuals from the snadowy limbo of bare sequences of dates, filling out the entries with that exhaustive detail which only a truly large-scale reference work can offer. Particularly happy are the painstaking bibliographies and the catalogues of works: indeed, in this regard DEUMM perhaps even beats the *New Grove* in precision and completeness, offering a service without parallel for scholars the world over.

One final point: style. In general, DEUMM's language is clear and direct, and eschews the superfluous. Asperities of terminology are relatively infrequent and almost invariably inevitable; while irritating examples of an old-fashioned style are to be found only in those major articles which have been taken over lock, stock, and barrell from the earlier work. All the rest has an unmistakable tone of modernity and efficiency. I have, indeed, only one real complaint: DEUMM is *boring*. Not always, but often. The false equation between the scholarly and the impersonal leads the contributors to write in terms which are at times bureaucratic, monotonous, and aseptic: a sort of "referencese", its syntactic structures locked onto a bare minimum of basic variants. The changes are rarely rung, and flashes of irony are conspicuous by their absence. Of course, it may be objected that an encyclopaedia is not a work of literature; but neither, I submit, need it resemble a stuffy official circular.

Towards a "Capitalism Without Qualities"

by Riccardo Bellofiore

GIORGIO RUFFOLO, *La qualità sociale. Le vie dello sviluppo*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1985, 291 pp. Lit. 24.000

There is an American novel of the early Seventies in which the hero, Fredo, muses on the reasons for the ugliness of modern technology, for clearly this ugliness is not an intrinsic part of the technology itself, or of the materials employed, or even of the manufacturers and the consumers. He eventually concludes that the answer must lie in the relationship between the producers of technology and the products they make: in short, that those who create technology feel no particular sense of identity with it. What is missing is Quality with a capital "Q", the absence of any separation between a man and his work, the true harmony between human values and technological requirements.

Tullio Pericoli: *Giorgio Ruffolo*

It is basically to this same knotty problem that the author of this book addresses himself. Giorgio Ruffolo is well known as an economist: he is also a leading member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and chairman of the Finance Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. In *La qualità sociale* the current ongoing situation is seen as a crisis in growth, quantitative and commercial. The alternative which Ruffolo proposes is a reform based on development: a searching reform of capitalism which would maintain the environmental equilibrium, reducing the area of production of commodities in favour of direct *human*2 activities — the spread of cultural "commodities" and communications, the freeing of time, and the de-reification of labour. An answer, in other words, to the frequent cries for a greater degree of equity and participation in the political process, by improving overall performance? A "qualitative option", in fact, with a basis that is not just rational and scientific, but also ethical.

The volume falls into two parts. The first presents a synthetical account of the reasons underlying the crisis in the economy and the decline of the Welfare State; the second offers Ruffolo's answers to the "present discontents" (and both parts, indeed, are full of references to earlier controversies in economics and the social sciences). The crisis, says Ruffolo, is itself the fruit of prosperity: material welfare has been achieved at the expense of natural resources, and has created demands which simply cannot expect satisfaction on a global scale. Intervention of a Keynsian kind reduces the asymmetry of power to the detriment of the labour force ("thinking goods"), and causes the system to become politicized, with increasing calls for equality all round.

This is where the difficulties of a welfare state really begin: with an intolerable burden of demand. The answer of the New Right involves re-establishing the primacy of market factors, via recession and the consequent de-politicization of society. Ruffolo suggests a new liberal socialism as an alternative to the present cocktail of neo-monetarism and neo-authoritarianism. Refusing to accept either that the halt in growth is a passing accident, or that it is a symptom of a total catastrophic breakdown, he is equally concerned to combat any future recovery which might simply ride rough-shod over environmental, social, and moral limitations, creating a mechanical society in which men would of necessity adapt to their artifacts and behaviour would have to comply with the automated requirements of the System.

Capitalism, for Ruffolo, must be "pinioned" or "hobbled" to some extent so as to use technologies which tend to enhance the productivity of the resources exploited (recycling, long-life materials, biotechnical processes and informatics). Production should be organized and directed by selective, as well as macroeconomic, planning, including an active policy favouring greater flexibility of the labour supply. Working hours could well be reduced — not overall, but in an optional, varied manner — by the creation of a "third system" of activities producing and using information, social services, and so on. The book ends with a discussion of the possibility of reconciling the requirements of efficiency with those of equality (there is a rigorous comparison with neo-utilitarianism and neo-contractualism), and a proposal for a greater diffusion of politics throughout society: the idea is that qualitative development could stimulate a change in the human personality from privatized conformism to socialized individualism.

Clearly, this is a fascinating, far-reaching and wide-ranging book, though at times the proposals put forward, however well-argued, are of a somewhat generic nature (inevitably, perhaps, given the degree of abstraction of the thesis as a whole). Ruffolo makes no bones about where his heart lies: "Ideally, the reader I am addressing is of the Left. In the political party sense, of course, but also in the wider sense of a greater Left, scattered throughout institutions and society as a whole: that Left which calls for material welfare, certainly, but which also feels the need for solidarity and a sort of meaningfulness" (p. 331). A Left, which, as the author says, has no idea where it has come from, but knows where it is going.

It remains to be seen, however, whether so ambitious a strategy can possibly be viable today. Ruffolo's retort — and one can see his point — is that "by dint of ritually repeating that ideas don't count unless one has the strength to back them up, the Left has got stuck without any ideas at all, and runs the risk of finding itself without any strength, either" (p. 333). And yet one cannot easily guess at the social forces which might put life into Ruffolo's reformist project: it thus looks like being just another pipe-dream (rather like the planning of the Sixties, though in a way for quite the opposite reason). This is not to imply that the Left has no need of reformism, however unworkable. What would really come in useful, though, is not so much an organic proposal for a "new society", as a selective group of practical proposals attacking crucial points in the system. For an organic, global project stands a chance of becoming reality only if one has the reins of government firmly in one's hand; whereas a workable cluster of proposals could still be forced into being by the opposition — or could at least help to hold in check the current economic and social restoration.

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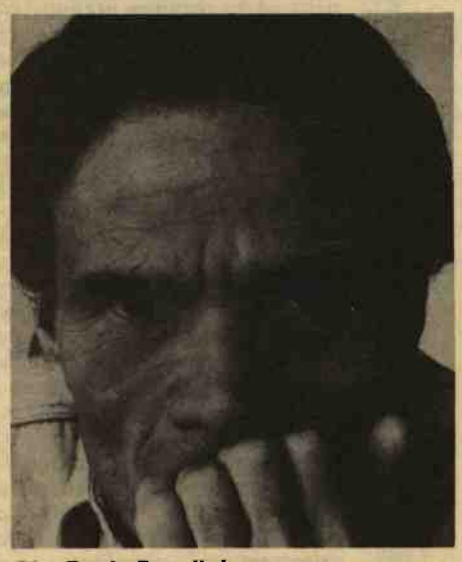

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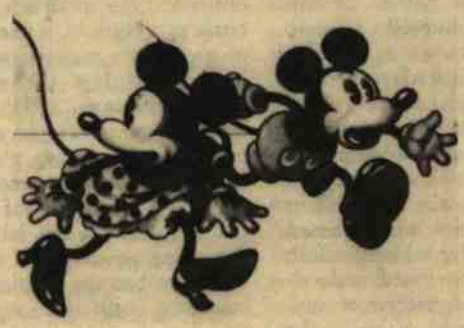

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The Enlightenment of Franco Venturi

by Francis Haskell

L'Età dei Lumi. Studi storici sul Settecento europeo in onore di Franco Venturi, 2 vols., Jovene, Naples 1985, XXXII-1184 pp., Lit. 82.000.

Franco Venturi belongs — with Croce, Salvemini, Momigliano, and, more recently, Carlo Ginzburg — to that relatively small, but extremely heterogeneous, group of twentieth-century Italian historians who are at least as well known outside as inside Italy; and this is reflected in the strikingly international flavour of the two volumes of essays which have been produced to honour his seventieth birthday (On a more frivolous note, it may even account for the fact that a foreigner has been invited to review these volumes for an Italian journal). Venturi is exceptional also in the range of his own interests and achievements: the bibliography of his 164 publications is a daunting as well as an inspiring document — and only Franco Venturi himself would be capable of doing adequate justice to the essays whicn have been collected here. And this is in spite of the fact that, of the two vast fields of historical research to which he has made essential contributions — nineteenth-century Russia and eighteenth-century Europe — only the latter is represented in *L'Età dei Lumi*. For this reason an art historian, such as myself, while inevitably struck by the absence of any study of the arts either in these volumes or among Venturi's own publications (and this despite the fact that both his father and grandfather produced works of great importance in the history of art) can at least disguise his own ignorance as detachment and approach this *Festschrift* with an innocent and uncommitted curiosity about the present state of Enlightenment historiography.

What such a reviewer will first be confronted with is doubt-doubt about the very identity of the topic under discussion. The first three essays, by Crocker, Lough and Vernière (an American, an Englishman and a Frenchman), all, in different ways, raise the issue as to whether the "Età dei lumi" can still be characterised by those aspects of self-conscious progress and a break with the past which used to be taken as self-evident; or rather, (for naturally all historians agree that *something* decisive occurred in the eighteenth century) all express uncertainty as to when this decisive something occurred: the tone of the enquiries will not be unfamiliar to those who have investigated the historiography of the Renaissance. It needs to be emphasised that none of these three authors (and indeed none of the contributors to the book as a whole) is challenging the validity or desirability of the changes brought about by the Enlightenment — as has often been done by the opponents of rationalism and freedom ever since the end of the eighteenth century itself, and as is particularly fashionable to-day among proponents of the "new right"; though as Furio Diaz emphasises in a powerful essay, the "Left" has often been no less committed to belittling, even to deriding, the achievements of the *philosophes*. Nonetheless, an element of uncertainty and of hesitation in the very terms such as "Enlightenment" makes itself felt, and this is particularly striking because hesitation and doubt are not features which one associates with the crusading authors of the eighteenth century — or with Franco Venturi.

The first item in Venturi's bibliography is devoted to Diderot, the most open, humane, refreshing and appealing of all the *philosophes;* and it appeared in 1937 — at a time when the lenthening, dark, sinister shadows of Franco and Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini were blocking out the "lumières" all over Europe and making a mockery of everything that Diderot had championed. Ever since then Venturi has, to a large extent, used the reception of enlightened ideas as a kind of thermometer to gauge the moral health of Europe: the impact, for instance, of Beccaria or of the principles of the American Revolution can be found reflected not only in the policies of the governments of Russia or the states of Italy, but also in theoretical treatises and provincial newspapers of the most obscure as well as of the most distinguished kind. Perhaps it is not surprising that arts play so inconspicuous a part in a vision of history conceived in this manner, for the eighteenth century itself was often alarmed that its ideals and beliefs could conflict with demands of the imagination.

Though profoundly aware of the setbacks and failures which the propagators of light have all too often suffered at the hands of their enemies — and, thus, far removed from the callow optimism which so often has, and still sometimes does, colour histories of the eighteenth century — Venturi has nonetheless seen the battle between them in fairly straightforward terms of good and bad. Too much sympathy for the tormenting complexities of human nature, the half-conscious seductions of failure or even treachery, would distort his view of the world. In all this, his attitude differs emphatically from that of Robert Darnton, who — more than any other recent historian — has affected the manner in which we look at the driving forces of the eighteenth century, turning our attention away from the high ideals professed by the virtuous (and usually well-placed) *philosophes* towards the dangerous corruption of those ideals by the vicious pamphleteers and porno-graphers who were excluded from respectable society. In a well-known essay — whose very title, *A Spy in Grub Street*, is indicative of its content — Darnton unravelled the twisted activities of Jacques-Pierre Brissot, who had been widely regarded (in the words of Daniel Mornet) as "the complete image of all the aspirations of a generation". Darnton — partly stimulated surely by sensational relevations concerning the concealed behaviour of certain apparently high-minded figures of our own century — cunningly used the evidence at his disposal to show that before the Revolution Brissot really was, as his enemies claimed, in the pay of the secret police; and yet for Darnton this makes him more real, more alive than the noble image which Brissot successfully managed to project of himself. Dare one say that this "new" Brissot would at times appear to be more at home among the secret revolutionary societies and double agents so powerfully recorded in Franco Venturi's *Il Populismo Russo?*

But Venturi, author of *Settecento Riformatore*, refuses to accept the implication that there was something almost inevitable in the transition from frustrated idealism to the activities of "a hack pamphleteer and *mouche*", and he asks only "Accettò di servire in qualche modo la polizia parigina? È possibile, anche se non certo". For Venturi the importance of Brissot lies in the fact that "era riuscito, malgrado tutto, ad esprimere idee originali e significative"; but for Darnton it was Brissot's failure, and not his success, that constituted his significance: "Brissot's fellow pamphleteers in the 1780s probably hated the social system and made necessary compromises with it as he did. They were men of flesh and blood who needed to support families, satisfy ambitions, and pursue pleasures. Their failures and frustrations in the old order may serve as a measure of their dedication to the new, and the Revolution may be understood, from their point of view, as a career".

There could hardly be two more conflicting ways of studying those deep forces which (in retrospect) seemed to be driving society towards the Revolution — of 1789 and of 1793 alike. On the one hand there is Venturi's extraordinarily sensitive ear, carefully tuned to pick up even the most hushed, the most confused, signals of enlightened thinking, whether in Stockholm or Naples, St. Petersburg or Lisbon. On the other hand, there is Darnton's suggestion that such thinking remained limited in its impact — mere shimmering froth on the surface of a cauldron at the bottom of which thwarted ambitions and the ruthless pursuit of business interests and vendettas were turbidly reaching boiling point. In *L'Età dei Lumi* Darnton, in a similar but much less disturbing way, again draws on police reports in a fascinating essay oin the problem of how the "man of letters" was viewed in mid-eighteenth-century France. Once again, it is the "system" — the patronage and protection — rather than the ideas which intrigue both him and the contemporary observer from whom he draws his information.

Darnton's contribution is — as one would expect — uncharacteristic of most of those to be found in these volumes, which tend to be concerned with those inspiring advocates of reason and freedom and humanity who stand at the centre of Venturi's own interests and who combine to make the study of eighteenth-century thought so heartening as well as, now, so poignant. Looking back from our own times of far too much treachery and far too little reason, the values proclaimed by the *philosophes* and their followers appear rather as did the "age of faith" to distraught Christian intellectuals in England, France and Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century. The issues are still with us, and to read about them must be refreshing, but to single out further individual articles from *L'Età dei Lumi* (which includes offerings from some of the most interesting Italian, French, English and American historians of our time) would not be feasible in a rapid survey such as this, which aims only to indicate the significance of the tribute paid to Venturi. For what does need to be said is that even to a layman it is clear that almost every contributor has managed to avoid that besetting weakness all too often encouraged by the very concept of the *Festschrift:* the production of a hasty piece designed to give temporary relief to a guilty conscience on the understanding that it need not thereafter attract serious consideration. *L'Età dei Lumi* has been well edited and forms a coherent whole: the high standard obviously reflects the esteem rightly felt for the towering stature of Franco Venturi who, for so long now, has demonstrated his unparallelled mastery of eighteenth-century history. Not all writers will accept his view of that century; but none can escape — or, indeed, will want to escape — the essential guidance which he has given to its exploration. Of that fact these admirable volumes provide ample and telling proof.

Terrorism and Stability

by Gian Giacomo Migone

GIORGIO GALLI, Storia del partito armato, 1968-1982, *Rizzoli, Milan 1986, 356 pp., Lit. 22.000.*

Right-wing terrorism in Italy has a considerable literature devoted to it, and has generated scholarly discussion of a high standard. Where the terrorism of the left is concerned, on the other hand, the books published so far are mostly interviews, memoirs, and biographies of individual figures in the "armed struggle". Thus Galli's new book is a welcome departure.

Giorgio Galli is (together with Giovanni Sartori) perhaps the most authoritative political scientist writing in Italian today, despite the fact that he remains an outsider where the academic world is concerned. The influence on practical politics of his definitions, such as "imperfect dual-partyism", has been profound.

Storia del partito armato *marks a return to "straight" history, and in particular to one of the author's pet themes, "invisible government". It is based on a painstaking reconstruction of fifteen years of left-wing terrorism — not just the atrocities themselves, but also the repression, or rather lack of it — set firmly in the overall context of major political events (sometimes Galli tends to underplay economic and social developments.)*

The conclusions may be summed up as follows:

1. Left-wing terrorism was an authentic political and social phenomenon, born of an inadequate assimilation of an old extremist and militarist tradition which is part of the Communist heritage, but above all of the relegation to the sidelines of many thousands of young people, against the background of an "affluent society". It was also hardly hindered by the lack of a strong democratic opposition for which the policy of the Italian Communist Party (Pci) was responsible, particularly in the yars of "National unity" (or "historical compromise"), 1976 to 1979.

2. Left-wing terrorism would never have spread as it did if it had not been manipulated and practically encouraged by Italy's various police forces and more or less secret services, and by a degree of non-opposition from that part of the establishment which had everything to gain from its expansion. The "manipulation" was brought about mainly through sins of omission: from the outset the authorities could have stamped out the phenomenon, but at a number of critical junctures they chose not to use their considerable repressive power, whose deployment would have been justified by the intelligence at their disposal.

3. The effects of terrorism on the Italian political system have almost all been in the direction of enhanced stability — precisely the reverse of what is generally assumed. Indeed, the growth of left-wing terrorism (a genuine phenomenon, but a limited one if left to itself) was an essential factor in that general return to moderation which has liquidated mass protest, mortally wounded the trade unions, and excluded the Pci from the parliamentary majority.

Of course, to state publicly that terrorism was actually assisted by the police and others, and to affirm that in the last analysis its effect on the overall balance of power has been of a stabilizing nature, is no laughing matter. The conclusions of this book cry out for responsible and far-reaching discussion: though it is to be feared that few people, for reasons only too easy to appreciate, will be prepared to join in the debate.

The Origin of Snobbery

by Ronald Witt

SERGIO BERTELLI, FRANCO CARDINI, ELVIRA GARBERO ZORZI, (Eds.), *Le corti italiane del Rinascimento*, Mondadori, Milan 1985, 278 pp., Lit. 75.000.

SERGIO BERTELLI and GIULIANO CRIFÒ, (Eds.), *Rituale cerimoniale etichetta*, Bompiani, Milan 1985, 356 pp., Lit. 36.000.

Coming from a background of historical studies oriented around English and French history, Americans approaching the field of Italian history have to learn to think in a different way. Rather than finding the neat scheme of political development centered on the rise of the monarchy as in France, or that of the king-in-parliament, as in England, they are confronted with the arduous task of following changes in myriads of political centres into the last half of the fifteenth century and, if after that the number diminishes, still a disconcerting multitude remain for study. Italian history is a good antidote to the teleological approach to history.

The authors of *Le corti italiane del Rinascimento* were faced with this perennial problem: to write a history of Italian court life from the Quattrocento to the late Seicento which (1) would not be simply a separate account of the evolution of each court; (2) would not be so generalized as to reduce the experience of individual courts to examples proving or illustrating abstract conclusions; and (3) would permit — as fine historical writing can do — generalizations on court life as such, based on the admittedly peculiar situation prevailing in Italy. Rarely has a work so successfully solved these problems.

It must be said that the clarity of the exposition balanced with the wealth of illustrations, activates not only an intellectual, but also an aesthetic response in the reader. (Indeed, the word "illustration" distorts the rôle of the visual material, so vital is the relationship between word and picture in conveying the experience of court life). As in the case of the *ingegni* developed for the theatre of the court (where the wheels were hidden) the authors have appropriately avoided for reasons of economy and effect detailed presentation of the conceptual background out of which their discussion arises. For this background the reader should turn to a second work publised almost simultaneously, *Rituale Cerimoniale Etichetta*, a collection of papers from a seminar conducted by Sergio Bertelli centering on Norbert Elias' *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, whose first edition appeared in 1939, with revised editions in 1969 and 1976. In *Rituale Cerimoniale Etichetta*, one sees emerging from the introductory essay and the detailed analyses of aspects of Elias' position, the interpretative principles which lend such cohesion to *Le corti italiane del Rinascimento*. While the two books can be read separately, together they permit a view of the archeology of the authors' thoughts.

Although dated by its bias towards Western values, its simplified conception of social relationship, and its bold use of Freudian psychology, Elias' work was pioneering in its effort to move beyond the description of gestures and manners to an understanding of their underlying function in human society. Following Weber's theory of the gradual strengthening of the state's claim to a monopoly on violence in the period from the Middle Ages to early modern times, Elias sees the court playing a major rôle in civilizing the warrior. Through the restraints of court life, the barbarian warrior, whose instincts to violence had been out of control, was constrained. Those who successfully adapted to the situation took pride in their new-found self-control and became awake to the opportunities it offered: we are dealing, as Cristiano Grottanelli points out in his *Cibo, Istinti, Divieti* in *Rituale Cerimoniale Etichetta*, (pp. 31-2) with the creation of the Freudian super-ego in the individual. Elements of this civilizing process can be found early, but its serious beginnings are located in the fifteenth century; and by degrees the rules of etiquette evolved by the upper class became diffused to ambitious members of the upper bourgeoisie. With the exclusivity of their conduct under attack, the nobility responded by further refining their own way of life, thus initiating a continuous process of "raising the level of shame and repugnance". Elitist in approach, Elias sees the eventual civilizing of Western society as a movement from top to bottom.

A major problem with this position, according to Sergio Bertelli and Giulia Calvi (*Rituale Cerimoniale Etichetta*, p. 14) is that, whereas Elias conceives of the comportment of courtiers as *external* activity — i.e. as etiquette in the narrow sense — it must be seen as functioning within the court and closely related to court rituals (for example, royal coronations) and to cerimonies like banquets and receptions of ambassadors. Particularly in the period of concern for Elias, the Renaissance and the early modern period when princes were considered *divus* or *Christomimetes*, comportment derived much of its significance from the sacral context in which it was perfomed. Given the intimate link between ritual, ceremony, and etiquette, the last, taken in the form of standards of comportment, could be assimilated only by other courts. Outside that restricted circle, standards could be borrowed only with the loss of their "messaggio più profondo" (p. 15).

Pace Elias the process of borrowing was a reciprocal one: assimilation accompanied by a similar loss of significance can work just as well from bottom to top.

The Italian focus of the Bertelli équipe constrasts with Elias' distinctly northern orientation and illustrates the precocious Italian development of court life, which he largely neglects. As opposed to the Spanish, English or French courts, which aimed at becoming models for an entire territory and whose manners were described in countless manuals designed for a wider audience reaching beyond the court, the regional Italian courts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries inspired no such literature. Writers like Castiglione and della Casa addressed their treatises to "regioni chiuse quali le corti rinascimentali italiane" (p. 12). Although some circulation of rules of comportment did occur in Italy during these centuries, the kind of assimilation described by Elias happened (as Gabriella Turnaturi's *Signori si nasce e si diventa* shows) only in the years after Italian unification.

Six of the eleven essays in *Rituale Cerimoniale Etichetta* concentrate on the tie between ritual, cerimony and etiquette in Italian court life. Cristiano Grottanelli's *Cibo, Istitinti, Divieti*, Elisa Acanfora's *La tavola*, and Elvira Garbero Zorzi's *Cerimoniale e spettacolarità. Il tovagliolo sulla tavola del principe* focus on table service and eating habits. Ileana Florescu's *Gli spazi del quotidiano: la reggia*, discusses the arrangement and furnishing of the palace; Giuliana Chesne Dauphiné Griffo's *Le regole della moda*, the importance of clothing at the court; and Marcello Fantoni's *Feticci di prestigio: il dono alla corte medicea*, the role of the gift in the internal life of the court and in its relationship with outside powers. On the other hand, Achille Olivieri's *Giuoco, gerarchie e immaginario tra quattro e cinquecento* demonstrates the borrowing by the court of games of chance developed by merchants; while Gabriella Turnaturi's *Signori si nasce e si diventa* deals with the rôle of books on manners for ambitious bourgeois in post-unification Italy. In *"Messieurs les anglais" ovvero l'educazione di Marte* Franco Cardini analyzes the changing forms of warfare in the light of Elias' "civilizing process". The relationship between space and ritual in private urban dwellings forms the topic of Vittorio Franchetti Pardo's *Gli spazi del quotidiano: l'abitazione privata;* and a specific violation of the etiquette of painting in eighteenth-century France that of Daniel Arasse's *L'etiquette dello sguardo.*

Taking the general conclusions on ritual, ceremony and etiquette developed in this book, *Le corti italiane del Rinascimento* utilizes them to present an integrated view of Italian court life in the period of the Ranaissance and the early modern area. Divided into seven essays written by five different authors, the volume has as its integrating theme the sacral character of court life, in which gestures and comportment serve to enhance the hierarchical character of society and religious associations with princely power.

In his opening essay Bertelli lays out a typology of Italian courts based on three models: (1) the sovereign court; (2) the signorile court whose lord, while recognizing a superior, governs his own territory; and (3) the court of a prince or cardinal, which is located within the domain of a sovereign or a signorial ruler. Although his approach nere is principally synchronic, Bertelli's account does not ignore the changes occurring in the period. If the state was never identical with the court, the growing separation between the two led eventually to a collision of the court with the civil society on which it rested.

Having dealt generically with the Italian court in the first essay, in the second, *Da una corte all'altra* — a real *tour de force* — Bertelli takes up one by one the major Italian courts in these centuries, tracing the history of each. His narration at the same time assumes cohesiveness from his underlying thesis that from Renaissance times, Italy was moving toward unity, but at different rates, in three broad areas: the Papal States, the Kingdom of Naples, and the signorial states of Northern Italy.

The residence of the prince and his courtiers forms the subject of the third essay, *Un bellissimo ordine di servire* by Franco Cardini. Beginning with a discussion of the development of the princely residence, the author defines its relationship to the dwellings built by lesser members of the ruling class, and describes the expansion of the palace to the countryside, made possible by the construction of villas.

Elvira Garbero Zorzi's *La scena di corte* constitutes a richly woven account of court ceremonies from funerals to the theatre and the hunt. The distinction between the categories of court life covered in this essay and the next, *Vita di cortigiano* by Elisa Acanfora and Marcello Fantoni, is not, however, clear: although in part concerned with the behaviour of courts in relation to one another, *Vita di cortigiano* contains sections on behaviour at table and in the villa which are intimately related to Zorzi's discussion.

The volume appropriately closes with two short pieces, Franco Carini's *Amici di dio, amici delle stelle*, and Sergio Bertelli's *Le congiure*, the one dealing with the court's link with the supernatural and the other with the ritual involved in destroying the prince.

The authors of *Le corti italiane del Rinascimento* have no intention of claiming, as does Elias, that court life is equivalent to "civilization" in this period. Yet by their skilful blending of text, pictures and commentary they have made it possible for the reader to experience the society they present. Both works by Bertelli and his colleagues have application far beyond the confines of Italy and the range of time they encompass. □

The Importance of Being Original

by Salvatore Settis

Due bronzi di Riace. Ritrovamento, restauro, analisi ed ipotesi di interpretazione, Art Bulletin of the Italian Ministry for the Cultural Heritage and the Environment, Special series 3, Poligrafico dello Stato, Rome 1985, 2 vols., 340 pp., 106 plates, Lit. 150.000.

From that lucky day in August 1972, when two nude male bronzes were retrieved from the Ionian Sea at Riace, in Calabria, until the autumn of 1980, when they were at last put on show in Florence, few people suspected much about what turned out to be some of the very finest masterpieces of ancient Greek art. The Florence exhibition was a deliberately modest affair, intended basically as just one of the many activities of the local *Soprintendenza* (though clearly of some importance, given the beauty of the artefacts and the quality of the restoration work); yet it somehow triggered off a sort of nationwide fever which is still with us. A mass phenomenon, which in its turn has generated a wealth of superficial comment, together with a mere handful of really acute observations.

That practically nobody had seen the two statues for some eight years is perhaps natural enough: the cleaning and restoration of bronzes of such dimensions is clearly no laughing matter. What is incredible — so much so that it was deplored publicly by many almost as soon as the Florence exhibition opened its doors — is that the two "heroes from the sea" were put on show without so much as a perfunctory nod in the direction of "communications". There was no advance information, giving experts preliminary data on which to work, and offering the public a conceptual framework within which to visualize these almost miraculous apparitions. Clearly, in internal museum terms, the cycle had worked well enough, from the actual finding of the bronzes to their putting on view: what failed to get off the ground was the external relations job. Anyone who recalls the first week of the exhibition — when the visitor could quite easily remain alone for hours on end with the pair of bronzes in the suggestive semi-darkness — and then compares this with the subsequent boom, will be only too well aware that the specialists proved lamentably incapable of envisaging any such public success. Not a few archaelogists, annoyed by the entire business, have since blamed the mass media.

These two volumes published in the *Serie speciale* of the Ministry of Culture's own *Bollettino d'Arte,* a journal which Evelina Borea and Paola Pelagatti have refurbished with great intelligence and much hard work, offers a belated remedy for a typically Italian deficiency (it is not easy to imagine any other country in which works of art of such singular significance and instant public appeal could languish unpublished for years on end). *Due bronzi di Riace* is divided into two main sections, followed by a useful bibliography and a wealth of plates in black and white and in colour (fifty-three for each of the statues). Part I offers a series of reports on the story of the bronzes from their rediscovery up to the exhibition. Particularly worthy of note are the precise analyses of the casting earths (T. Mannoni, N. Cipriani, *et al.*), of the potsherds found in the vicinity (C. Panella), and the casting techniques employed (E. Fornigli), not to mention the photogrammetric projections (by C. Sena); the most extensive contribution, however, is the extremely detailed anatomical description of the bronzes by Claudio Sabbione (clearly using as a basis the now remote model of *Nudo nell'arte* by Alessandro Della Seta, 1930). The literally hundreds of illustrations, measurements, and other data build up a uniquely rich overall picture.

Part II is quite different. It gives the opinions of seven specialists on Greek art, four of whom are Italian (P.E. Arias, A. Di Vita, A. Giuliano, E. Paribeni), one American (B. Sismondo Ridgway), one Greek (G. Dontas), and one French (C. Rolley), each of whom has followed his own mental itinerary, reaching conclusions which at times are radically opposed. In their brief introduction, L. Vlad Borrelli and Paola Pelagatti write that there is no presumption here of offering anything approaching an *editio princeps* of two hitherto unpublished statues, however well-known. Clearly this is a case of paraleipsis, for what we have is undoubtedly a classic of its kind — not just because it is the first in the field but because it has striven to offer all possible objective data plus comprehensive photographic documentation. If anything, what may be called into question is this very rigid separation of data (assembled and processed by Claudio Sabbione, the director of the Museum in Reggio Calabria where the bronzes are now housed) and the discussion of these same data, left to archaeologists from the universities; for description, however neutral it would wish to be, is invariably interpretative to some extent, while interpretation cannot exist without a description. To the specialist, these two volumes will be indispensable. But they will be equally welcome to the armchair archaeologist and to the art lover, thanks to the superb photography and to the comparisons they invite between a diversity of opinions. Indeed, the main questions asked by the man in the street from the very beginning (given that the specialists were conspicuous by their absence) are really the same as those posed here by the specialists: 1) where do the bronzes really come from? 2) when did the shipwreck off the Italian coast actually occur? 3) when were the statues made? 4) who made them? 5) who do they represent? That the bronzes come from a wreck off Riace would seem beyond doubt (the far-fetched tale that they were fished up off Pesaro and somehow trailed around the heel of Italy in the nets of a boat is hardly worth considering): one would dearly love to know, however, where they came from and just where they were bound for, something which only firm contextual data (the wreck itself, with other, datable artefacts) could tell us for certain. That they were torn from their original bases is clear enough, for the marks are there for all to see: presumably, they were transported from some Greek locality in the direction of Rome, whose progressive Hellenization was accompanied by the "transfer" of a fair number of statues from the sanctuaries of Greece. Alas, the available "data" tell us precious little else: neither the analysis of the casting earth, nor the composition of the potsherds (whose relation to the vessel carrying the statues is anyway far from clear) has given the objective solution one might reasonably have hoped for. Just as well, perhaps, rather than invite false hopes: the recent Modigliani episode shows how confidently scientists and art historians can look for confirmation in each others' fields, of whose methodology they may have only the barest idea.

Provenance, attribution, and date must thus be left to conjecture, using the methods of the art historian. The range of opinions expressed in these two volumes is already wide enough, and it becomes wider still if one adds in the views expounded in other publications. The most solid agreement (though not without nuances) is on dating: with the sole exceptions of Linnekamp and Sismondo Ridgway — the latter repeating with no new arguments the frankly unfounded theses of her *Fifth Century Styles in Greek Sculpture,* Princeton 1981 — both statues are assigned to around the middle of the 5th century B.C. or shortly after. Even Sismondo's thesis, claiming the statues as classicistic throwbacks of between the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., is understandable in its way: for centuries the lack of genuine Greek originals has accustomed archaeologists on the one hand to study late classical copies and imitations with almost painful *Sehnsucht,* or longing, vis-à-vis the lost original, and on the other hand to deny authenticity to the original should they ever have the luck to come face to face with it. Thus Linnekamp and Sismond are here unwittingly playing the rôle of Richard Payne Knight who, after the arrival of the Elgin marbles in London, scornfully assigned them to the reign of the Emperor Hadrian! But among all the other scholars there is substantial agreement as to the chronological succession: statue A (the helmetless one) dates from 460-450 B.C., the other from twenty or at most thirty years later (Paribeni's authoritative proposal, assigning it to the beginning of the 4th century, is a voice crying in the wilderness).

The dance of the attributionists offers greater variety. Phidias, declares Fuchs (the first to say so, followed by Giuliano); Miron (statue A) and perhaps Alcmene (B) suggests Dontas; both P. Bol and G. Hafner (the latter in Reggio Calabrias's own journal *Klearchos*) propose the unfortunately faded name of Onatas. Are both the bronzes Attic, or is one (A) Attic, the other from the Peloponnese? Or could B be "eastern Greek", as Arias suggests? Or might A not be from the Peloponnese too (Paribeni)? Are they heroes (from Athens, according to Fuchs and to Giuliano, or Tarentum, according to Hafner, or from Achaea, as Bol suggests)? Or are they *hoplitodromoi* (Pavese and Di Vita)? Do they come from Athens (Dontas) or from Olimpia (Bol, Torelli), or Delphi? And if they *are* from Delphi, are they part of the *donario* of the Tarentines (Hafner) or of that of the Athenians after Marathon (Fuchs, Giuliano)?

On other points, for example the extensive ancient restoration work on statue B, these two volumes manage to offer clear answers; but most of the vital questions remain open, as was perhaps fatal. The final impression is that even after centuries of study the overall image of classical Greek art is still somewhat out of focus — and this precisely because of the lack of originals such as the Riace bronzes, for so much of the critical effort has had to be expended on copies, models, descriptions. On the one hand, we have the basic chronology mapped out by scholars over the years; on the other the surprise of the new finds. Around another such discovery, less popular but no less significant than those of Riace — a splendid bronze portrait found off Reggio, this time with the entire wreck — a new and lively controversy has already started: the materials of the ship undoubtedly place the date of the wreck between c. 400 and c. 380 B.C., and most scholars, including both E. Voutiras and J. Frel, date the portrait itself to c. 400, but Paribeni (who published it recently, with superb photographs, in no. 24 of the *Bollettino d'Arte*) claims against all the contextual evidence that stylistic criteria must take priority, and assigns it firmly to a date some hundred years later than the wreck.

Interest in the finds which have made Reggio Calabria one of the capitals of classical sculpture is unlikely to wane, so these two precious volumes will be indispensable for years to come. One last plea, however: how long will we have to wait before the Poligrafico dello Stato brings out a clear, straightforward little guide which the tourist can buy instead of being forced to resort to the abominable brochures peddled by street-hawkers outside the museum in Reggio?

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Mathematics With a Vengeance

by Corrado Mangione

GABRIELE LOLLI, *Le ragioni fisiche e le dimostrazioni matematiche*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1985, 364 pp., Lit. 30.000.

The author has assembled in this volume a series of essays on ideas developed over the five-year period from 1980 to 1985 for a considerable number of contexts and occasions: lectures, papers read at conferences and congresses, book reviews, and so forth. The result is an unusually valuable panoramic view, perhaps unique in the literature of tne philosophy of science, at least in Italy — and even as I add this proviso, I am struck by the fact that I haven't recently come across anything similar elsewhere, either.

It is a vigorously polemical collection, which expounds with exemplary clarity both the personal theses and theories of the author himself, and those with which he takes issue — whether he is dealing with models of the Lakatosian type, Kreisel's ideas on the philosophy of mathematics, the alleged superiority of so-called intuitive mathematics over so-called formal mathematics, a discussion of the significance of the axiomatic method, or an analysis of various theories about the "foundation of mathematics". And so on. The polemic is conducted with firmess, and few holds are barred; but there is also a considerable sense of style. Lolli's acquaintance with, and mastery of, mathematical and philosophical categories is truly breathtaking, and he sticks closely to his terms of reference, using a close reading of pertinent historical documents as the basis of his discussion: indeed, it is really history — above all the recent history of mathematics and logic — which acts as the focal point for most of the twelve chapters. The basically historical approach makes the fleeting moments of irony all the more telling. Equally noteworthy is a certain pleasing lack of academic hauteur: a near-miracle in so erudite and well-informed a work as this.

What has prompted Lolli to publish this collection? He makes no bones about telling us (in the preface) that he has "had to turn historian and philosopher in something of a hurry, such was my increasing impatience with the literature on the disciplines which interested me, i.e. mathematics and logic. (...) The best one can find are alleged laws of development which extrapolate from the past and thus do no more than propose a repetition of it" (p. 7). What history ought to be doing is "giving us a sense of being projected towards the future", though still "taking the various 'presents' seriously as important and indeed decisive moments for those who have lived through them" (p. 8). Moreover, intrigued that "wherever I turned I kept coming across facts and ideas which have never been told" (p. 10), Lolli determined "to get first-hand knowledge of the historical material so as to see what has actually happened over the last hundred years, and to polemize with those philosophers, fashionable or otherwise, who rely on ready-made solutions" (p. 10). Again: "The various ways of doing mathematics, its various incarnations, may be seen not just in terms of the results obtained, but in the research of mathematicians into the central question of the nature of proof, which is what really makes the difference between one epoch and another".

To give even a summary notion of the richness of the contents of this volume with any fidelity would take at least three times the space available to me here. For though the basic concepts and arguments are crystal clear, there is such a wealth of significant and subtle detail that all the reviewer can do is give an overview of the various cnapters, pausing here and there; and this, of course, can give no idea of the scope and the fascinating atmosphere of the book as a whole. The first chapter, which gives the book its title, is about the nature of histories of mathematics in the last century. Lolli attacks the received idea underlying most accounts, which treat mathematics as a cumulative continuum (in contrast to the situation in the physical sciences: he sees a true break during the nineteenth century with the introduction of a genuinely new mathematics, in particular pure mathematics.

Chapters II *(Quasi alphabetum: logica ed enciclopedia in G. Peano)*, III *(Saccheri e le dimostrazioni "filiae plurium demonstrationum")* and IV *(Le forme della logica: G. Vailati)* amount to a new reading of the work of the Italian school of logicians at the end of the last century, firmly centred on the specific contribution of the three major figures named, and the significance of their relation to Leibniz. Chapters V *(Georg Cantor)*, VI *(L'assioma di scelta)*, VII *(Da Zermelo a Zermelo)*, and VIII *(La fondazione insiemistica)* all deal with the development of set theory, and are perhaps the finest and most enjoyable part of the book. I will deal briefly with VII, given its somewhat cryptic title. This refers to two articles published by Zermelo, one dating from 1908, presenting the first axiomatization of set theory, the other from 1930, based on the idea of the cumulative hierarchy of sets. Lolli attacks Kreisel's thesis of the "historical and epistemological priority of the intuition of structures, of the informal analysis of notions on the formulation of the axioms of theories" (p. 176), relying on the lack of influence of the "countless pages of 'technical work' which appeared between the first article and the second" (p. 177). He offers in its stead a jewel of epistemological and historical analysis of events — a story which has already been told, by Casari in 1964 and by the present writer some ten years later, but which is here put under the microscope, revealing a quite unprecedented wealth of connections, relationships, and false starts. The clarity and the cohesion of the account are such as to make it perfectly accessible even to the non-specialist. One hardly knows which to admire more: the enormous quantity of spadework involved in getting so close to the underlying structure of the period, or the almost impudent ease of presentation.

Chapter IX *(Godel, Church, Turing: decidibile e idecidibile)* also touches on the question of the relationship between man and machine, and the alleged limitations of formal svstems. Chapter X *(Logica e fondamenti della matematica)* casts light on the mutual relationships, interconnections and autonomies of logic, the foundation of mathematics, and the philosophy of mathematics, and Chapter XI *(Astrazioni, formule, afasie)* returns to the idea that "when one is in posession of a powerful instrument such as mathematical logic it is a wise policy to use it, rather than search for illusory short cuts" (p. 314): a further confutation of tne idea of mathematics as merely "cumulative".

Finally *(Dimostrazioni ed esperienza matematica)* Lolli takes as his starting point *The Mathematical Experience* by P.J. Davis and R. Hersh (1981). In this last chapter, many of the basic theories and theses of the book are given a second airing, in particular the idea of the centrality of the concept of proof, and the attack on the alleged superiority of "good" (i.e. intuitive) mathematics over the "bad" (i.e. formal). As Lolli points out scathingly, in Davis and Hersh (whose work, incidentally, has just appeared in Italian) the latter distinction assumes the form of a contrast between analytical knowledge and analogical knowledge (which the authors relate to heuristics). "As a demonstration that analogical knowledge does not correspond to the heuristic kind, and indeed is unscientific, simply dulling the wits, one need look no further than the last example proposed: to evaluate the quantity of liquid in a container, analytical knowledge suggests the laborious method of calculating the volume... analogical knowledge suggests that one tips the contents into a measuring vessel! Thus those students who have assimilated analogical philosophy will simply solve the problem by looking up the answer in the back of the textbook!" (p. 343).

Christmas is some way off; but I can honestly think of no better gift than this stimulating collection of essays, especially perhaps for students in the mathematics or philosphy faculties, and also for secondary school teachers of mathematics.

Whose Mental Hygiene?

by Luigi Tavolaccini

MICHELE TANSELLA (Ed.), *L'approccio epidemiologico in psichiatria*, Boringhieri, Torino 1985, 254 pp. Lit. 75.000.

This book, an anthology on the utilization of epidemiology and the existant relationship between epidemiology and psychiatry, expresses an innovation in the situation of Italian psychiatric publications. Indeed it fills in a large gap in our editorial scope, not only by making "internal" cuts *within individual themes (such as schizophrenic syndromes, the use of psychodrugs, depressive syndromes), but also by stimulating reflexion on the more general euristic (and consequently methodological) value of this approach to psychiatry. As the editor rightly underlines, epidemiology does not only offer a partial technical contribution (by applying statistics to psychiatrical data), but it confronts the specialist with logical concatenation: documentation — evaluation — ends and purposes of the intervention (see the good essay by Castelfranchi). In the present Italian situation after the passing of law n. 180 (promoting the need for the activation of territorial services), this is absolutely basic and is also a question of mental hygiene (so to speak) of the services of mental health. Indeed the success of psychiatry — without — mental hospitals will surely be conditioned by the capability to correlate therapeutic projects on the individual patient to the overall prospect of the territorial services. And at the present moment the capability of the specialists in this field to correlate the individual therapeutic techniques with the planning and administrative techniques of the entire Service (which are yet to be practically invented, apart from some sporadic ambulatorial assistance) is far from widespread. The practical instruments and the theoretical reflection suggested by the epidemiological approach when it becomes part of everyday specialistic practice (both at a individual clinical level and that of a general planning verification) are without doubt a* condi-tio-sine-qua-non *for the establishment of the kind of knowledgeable feedback (at present practically unheard of within the organization of social-sanitary services, and particularly of the psychiatric ones) which binds the intervention to its verification, the everyday assistance to the projects for the future, the well-being of the individual patient to that of the entire population, not to mention the relationship between quantity and quality of the intervention, and finally the difficult relationship concerning the homogeneity (and not the identity!) of language and purposes between specialists and public administrators.*

A warm welcome, therefore, for this anthology which both proposes stimulating reflections about the above mentioned logical and administrative "impasses", and offers stimulating examples of past experiences in this direction. For example see T. Fryer's and K. Wooff's report on a British service, and also the report from the SPT in Verona-Sud where the editor of this anthology offers his services. Accordino to his affinities the individual reader will find in this wide-ranging collection (about 20 articles) some more precise contributions to the organization of epidemiological research (such as A. Dupont's articles on the Psychiatric Register, or that of D. De Salvia on the theory and utilization of this kind of data), as well as some more consolidated and classical themes (such as emigration, social class... by H. Häfner).

(translation by Donata Origo)

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