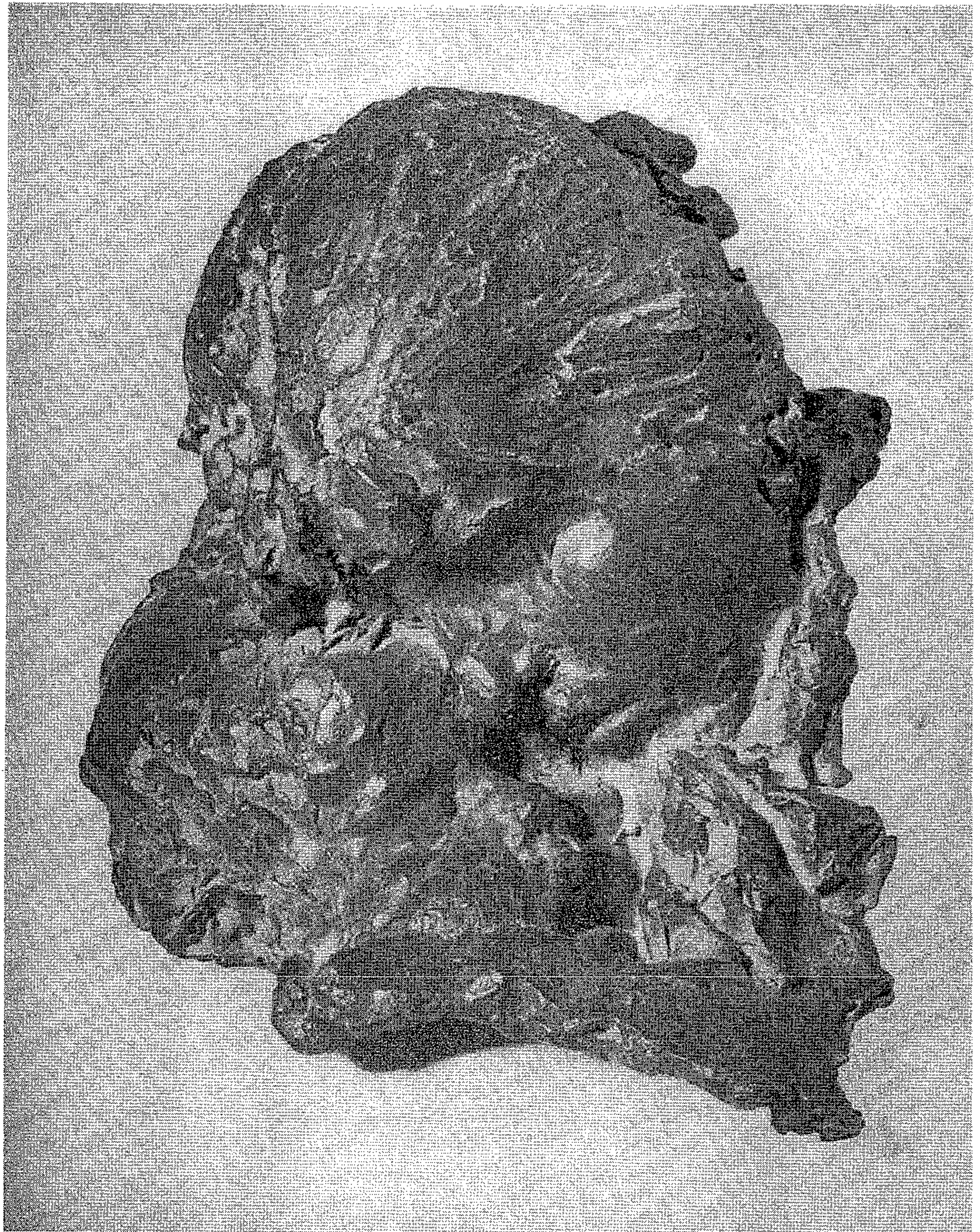
Cesare Barbieri Courier



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Editor: MICHAEL R. CAMPO

An Interview with Ignazio Silone

ETTORE DELLA GIOVANNA: It often happens that men of letters who achieve wide fame turn their attention to politics; it happens infrequently that men of politics at a certain point devote themselves to literature. This is the case of Ignazio Silone who, after having been very active in Italian and international political life and after having been forced to leave Italy in exile at thirty years of age, wrote his first novel which was and still is a great success of Italian literature. *Fontamara* has been followed by other books which have been translated into about thirty languages, two of them into Esperanto and *Wine and Bread* even into Braille. . . . All of Silone's novels are set in his own Abruzzo region, and more specifically in the Fucino plain and the villages of the Marsica area. His characters too are always the same, the poor peasants who work the land and, along with them, rebellious intellectuals.

How do you explain, Signor Silone, the steadfast influence of this native region on your spirit?

IGNAZIO SILONE: Young people growing up today who have numerous possibilities for distraction available to them (radio, TV, the movies, all kinds of color illustrated publications) can have no idea of how monotonous our childhood and adolescence were in the first decades of this century, especially in the mountain villages. Not only did we not have today's means of information and transmission of images, but we didn't even have such things as little children's books. Our only reading consisted of the *libro sussidario,* as it was called, used in the third grade of elementary school. We spent our evenings of the long winter months next to the hearth. While our parents and relatives or guests spoke of matters incomprehensible to us, we gazed at the fire. It wasn't a very stimulating way of life. You could even lose whatever brains you had, degenerate, or, depending, you could become a poet or acquire the taste for reflection or meditation. The rich poetic vein of provincial Italian life is well known. Nowadays mass culture, notwithstanding appearances, perhaps has rendered it more difficult along with other changes which have also taken place.

There is a memory which came to mind during the Christmas Holidays. I know that several old customs survive in Abruzzo as in other regions. At Christmas, for instance, instead of the Christmas tree which is of Nordic origin, they still are accustomed to burning a log in the fireplace. But I am afraid that tradition only survives in its external form, shorn of its primitive meaning. I do not know, for example, if there are any families that still explain this custom as they did in my day, in my childhood. The log of oak or beech was kindled so that it would burn throughout the night. On the table were spread out all the foodstuffs of the holiday, and the door was left open because, as our parents explained to us, on that night the Holy Family was about in the world, in flight, hunted and pursued by the authorities. You had to arrange it so that if by chance, passing down our alley, the Holy Family needed to rest, it might enter into any house, warm itself by the fire, have a bite to eat, and then hide.

The story was indeed convincing and exerted a strong influence on the mind of a child or susceptible boy. Imagine, then, what Christmas Eve must have been for us. Impossible to sleep. From one moment to the next the Holy Family could arrive at our house. Often the noises of the wind against the window frames and the unlocked door caused us to believe that they had. How does one forget such experiences? They instilled in us respect and solidarity for the persecuted. Moreover, they gave us a rather pessimistic image of the world we were about to enter. It was a world in which innocence was persecuted by the authorities themselves. I don't think it exaggerated to state that such a teaching would leave an indelible imprint on an impressionable mind. It is an integral part of what I have called our Christian heritage.

MARCO CESARINI SFORZA: You have spoken to us about the formative influences of your adolescence. For me, one of my formative influences was the reading of *Fontamara,* which I read in French soon after its publication. I have always wanted to know how this most successful novel came into being.

This interview was broadcast on the second channel of Italian television earlier this year and appeared in printed form in *La Fiera Letteraria.* Interviewers included: Ettore Della Giovanna, moderator, Enrico Falqui, Enzo Forcella, and Marco Cesarini Sforza.

SILONE: I wrote *Fontamara* in 1930 during the crisis which led me out of the Communist Party; that is, to a rather important turn in my life. I won't go into the causes and nature of that episode here. Perhaps it will suffice to say that it was, as far as Italian communism is concerned, the first repercussion of the appearance of the phenomenon of Stalinism in Russia and in the International.

When, on the occasion of my trip to Russia as one of the representatives of the Italian Communist Party, I was able to ascertain there that the Communist regime was exactly the opposite of what we dreamed it to be (a regime of complete freedom and of man's social emancipation) and, as a matter of fact, represented oppression, censorship, harsh tyranny and often senseless persecution; and when Stalin gave an additional twist of cruelty to the wicked system, a tragic dilemma was generated in the minds of many of us. It was impossible for us to remain subjected to such a policy and it was difficult for us to break with comrades and friends who were struggling against fascism in Italy.

It is now officially admitted by Russian leaders themselves what an infamy Stalinism was; the leaders of the Italian Communist Party echo that repudiation. But the horrors today deprecated by the leaders were all well known to us then, to Togliatti as well, at the very time they were being perpetrated!

For some of us, therefore, it became intolerable to remain in that movement and with real anguish – because among us Italian Communists, committed to clandestine action, there had never been personal clashes or animosities – the separation took place. The continuation of clandestine action on my own being pointless, I took refuge in Switzerland in a mountainous section of the Grisons region, at Davos, to be exact, inasmuch as my physical condition was run down.

I found myself in a situation of extreme solitude, penniless, without a passport (the one I had was false and not Italian), without friends. In those circumstances I began to write *Fontamara*. I had no illusions about the possibility of having it published; I was not even sure about being able to finish it. For me writing was a necessity, a means of conversing and of remembering: awakening within me the memories of my people, sharing a common suffering. The memories of childhood and adolescence were my only strength, since in them was a moral and, I would even say, religious resource with which to face the hardships of life. Subsequently life itself gained ascendancy and I was able to complete the manuscript.

For a short time it was held, along with some other poor personal objects, as security at the pensione where I had taken lodging, since I was unable upon departure to pay my bill in full.

DELLA GIOVANNA: It means that the proprietor of the pensione had already sensed that you were a writer of promise if he held the manuscript as a pledge.

SILONE: For a while in Zurich where I had moved, I performed a number of jobs: typist, teacher of Italian, translator. Once recovered, the manuscript of *Fontamara* fell by chance into the hands of Jacob Wasserman, who gave a flattering judgment of it and recommended it to his Berlin publisher, S. Fischer. It was then translated and was about to be published around the beginning of 1933 when Hitler's rise to power made it impossible. Back in Zurich the manuscript was offered in vain to various Swiss publishers who were easily intimidated by the admonitions of the Italian authorities.

It was a little print shop of Sciaffusa that published it, partially on credit, partially on the advance of a small sum collected through subscriptions. A bookseller, Emile Oprecht, accepted to act as publisher and to assure the sale of the book. If subsequently the book made its way through the world, it did so admittedly quite on its own.

ENZO FORCELLA: In connection with your experience in the Communist Party: I should like to recall one of your essays of which I am very fond in which you told of those experiences. I have always been struck by the following words: "The day I left the Communist Party was a very sad one for me, a day of mourning, the mourning for my lost youth. And I come from a region where mourning is worn longer than elsewhere. One does not free oneself easily from so intense an experience."

I have often thought about this remark because it seems to re-emphasize for me a certain way of approaching politics: politics as an absolute value, a religious, total value through which one's whole person is expressed. This is a theme touched upon in all your work: politics as a religious value, and at the same time as a certain detachment from this attitude. Here's what I would like to ask you: Do you still think about politics in these terms? Or, what are the relations between politics and religion, or rather between politics and the religious outlook?

SILONE: Religion is a reality which is quite vast. If it is not understood in its theological

Ignazio Silone *Herbert Mitgang*

sense, but rather in a sense of vision and purpose of life, obviously many distinctions become artificial. There are no watertight compartments in the life of the spirit. If a religious dimension is created in us by our rearing, it survives, whatever changes our relation with the Church may undergo. It may also survive simply as a moral exigency which is reflected in the judgments we are called upon to make of society and in our behaviour. It is a great resource when engaged in a political struggle to be sustained by a moral goad, but it is also the source of many inevitable difficulties. Politics is the art of the possible. If politics becomes turncoatism or an unscrupulous struggle for power, a break or disassociation on the part of those engaged in it is inevitable. When, in politics, one holds a concept based on an ethical and religious sense of life, a certain tension, a certain struggle, inevitably exists.

CESARINI SFORZA: There is an episode in your early life which is very beautiful and which relates to this basic problem. Would you be so kind as to tell us of your encounter with Don Orione?

SILONE: You are referring undoubtedly to a chapter which I have published on my meeting with Don Orione and which took place on a long night trip from Rome to San Remo during the first World War.

The trip lasted about fourteen hours and was almost entirely taken up by a conversation between the two of us. This may seem absurd and paradoxical to anyone considering the difference in our ages. I was barely sixteen, Don Orione about three times older and, what is more, he was the founder and head of a new religious order. How were such an exchange of thought and a frank and spontaneous meeting of minds possible? It is a question that has been asked by all those who have read that chapter of my memoirs.

I don't have to pretend to be modest in saying that it certainly didn't depend on me but on the truly exceptional man that Don Orione was. He seemed to have the gift of making himself the contemporary of the person with whom he was talking, even a child. He possessed a perspicacity which made conversation easy, eliminated misunderstandings, timidity, pretense. Only very much later did I understand certain things that he told me and which I noted down the following day. Then and there, in fact, they had had no meaning for me. I was a secondary school student who although restive was still immersed in tradition. "In whatever difficult situation you find yourself in the future," he told me, "you mustn't get discouraged. God is everywhere and not only in Church. He is the Father of us all, even those who do not go to Church, even of atheists."

I'll say this much for myself, that perhaps another boy, overcome by fatigue, would probably have fallen off to sleep. For me, rather, it was like Christmas Eve, impossible to sleep. Along with my many frailties, fears, cowardices (which were then, and still are the raw material of my remorses), there dwelled within me a dimension, drawn from the very depths of my being and my earliest years, upon which every one of the words uttered by Don Orione struck a responsive chord. Thence derives that nostalgia for the Word in its purity and original daring, and that intolerance of mine for institutional compromises.

ENRICO FALQUI: Don't you believe that to establish a harmony between this religious outlook, which has always been considered latent in your work, and the political mainspring which motivates and directs it, we could refer to what Luigi Russo has called "higher political consciousness"? In fact, he spoke of "lofty political consciousness" which is native to every artist who has a message to transmit.

SILONE: Yes, generally speaking you are right. But I should like to insist on a more specific form of religious outlook. Consider for a moment the Abruzzese tradition.

The Abruzzo region, compared to other Italian regions, has been poor in political history. Its glories are for the most part religious. Only recently we have had a Spaventa, or Croce, or D'Annunzio. Before these, aside from worthy craftsmen, we have had only saints. The men who succeeded in rising above the ordinary level knew no other way of elevation than the religious one. In its Franciscan form, the most widespread and persistent in our villages, it implied a need for social service.

Even the mystics and the anchorites in their time, in the grottoes of the Maiella,* professed the Utopia of Gioachino da Fiore and awaited the advent of the Kingdom of God *hinc et nunc.*

FORCELLA: It seems to me we are beginning to look upon "politics" and "religious outlook" almost as synonymous terms, and doing so by attenuating that which seems to be very much alive in your work: the sense of dramatic conflict between two values, between one that is relative and the other that is absolute. It's

*A mountainous area of the Abruzzo.

not just fortuitous, it seems to me, that you have almost without awareness slipped into or crossed over to literature. It's as if a political disappointment had been resolved into a literary achievement, as if your true expression could only be realized in a literary and not a political dimension. Or am I mistaken?

SILONE: No. If you'll permit, I consider it an evolution not a rejection; not a step backward, but a conquest. And this is so in that those demands that ultimately focused on the political struggle – but were not at home there – at a certain point discovered another form which was freer, more coherent, more lasting.

Even as a writer, in fact, I remain strongly involved in the social life of my time. I would prescribe this for all writers. But I follow my own calling. I mean that I have always felt a sense of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. I still believe that the elimination of harsh economic and social determinism that limits man's freedom is historically timely and morally necessary. In other words I have always remained a socialist even if not a card-carrying one.

Moreover, I don't believe that political struggle finds its ultimate expression in parliament. I don't believe that parliament is the goal or end point of political life. In fact I consider this excessive importance given to elections a sign of the decadence of democracy.

FORCELLA: But you still believe in political activity?

SILONE: Certainly. What I think of the tyranny of parties and excessive state worship and of the heavy strictures placed on personal freedom in our time, I have already fully explained in my *School for Dictators.* But as of the present moment I believe that a democracy without a multiplicity of parties is impossible and on election day I too fulfil my duty as a voter.

CESARINI SFORZA: Does there really exist a "caso Silone" in the literary world, in the sense that there was (and may still be) a certain difficulty for Italian literary circles to welcome or accept Silone when he returned among us? I should like to know precisely if Silone himself recognizes the existence of his literary "case."

SILONE: Ah, yes; although I have not been excessively aggrieved by it because I have grown up among differences of opinion. As I have said before I did not begin writing on the urgings of publishers. I began to write without even knowing whether or not my book would ever be published. Therefore, I became accustomed to working not like a narcissus, not like someone enclosed in his ivory tower, but rather, always responsive to urgings of a social character, and never to the requirements of immediate literary circles.

Therefore, this so-called "caso Silone" in which various factors come into play (my background of exile and a certain persistent censure by communists who, as is well known, occupy influential positions of control in the Italian "republic of letters": in publishing houses, in the juries for literary prizes, etc., etc.), this so-called "caso Silone" is a phenomenon whose effects I have often had occasion to feel without, however, I repeat, its upsetting me excessively.

FALQUI: By and large how do you account for the existence and persistence of a "caso Silone"? Is it for literary, aesthetic, or political reasons?

SILONE: Perhaps it's for all those reasons, don't you think? My manner of writing is not sophisticated; my literary ancestors are not easily identified. I am an anti-fascist who does not exploit his political past; moreover I am in conflict with the communist party which, though riddled with ex-fascists and also with ex-republicans, claims to have the monopoly of anti-fascism. Isn't that enough to create a "caso"?

But let's leave aside the ridiculous aspects of the question. I acknowledge that it is the literary critic's task to track down the literary sources of any new writer. In my case, this is difficult. In fact, I read Verga only after having written *Fontamara.* Until that time my readings were limited to scholastic ones. Committed to political action since the age of seventeen, I had only read books of science, economics and history.

Since the foreign critics, who were perforce the first to examine *Fontamara,* mentioned the names of Verga and Faulkner, I hurried to track down books of these two distinguished authors. They illuminated me on the mentality of the critics but I found that they had nothing in common with me: neither their vision of life nor their way of representing it.

FALQUI: There are relationships and ideal affinities which exist both in the form and content of authors; thus one can very well be unfamiliar with an author and still in an ideal sense derive from and continue his work. A curious question which perhaps you have never been asked: in your biography the first work recorded is *Fontamara* of 1930, a novel; then comes an essay, entitled *Fascism* dated 1934. And now I ask you: how did you manage

to start out as a novelist? Did you suddenly become a novelist or had you made other narrative attempts before? Because *Fontamara,* although criticized, because of certain aesthetic features, especially in Italy (I must say much less so abroad) is still a most valid novel. Did you write it suddenly, out of a clear blue sky, so to speak?

SILONE: I had never written any narrative work. However, I believe that for anyone who has an inclination to write, a literary apprenticeship may very well be extra-literary, especially as regards social criticism or psychological analysis. I repeat, I had not written short stories but only articles or reports on Southern Italy. In my opinion it is most helpful in writing a novel to have a critical judgment of the society which it represents and to know its secrets.

FORCELLA: Thinking of the people that know you only through your books and who look upon you as an idol, I would like to invite you to tell us a little bit about how you spend your day.

SILONE: I remain out of the so-called literary life and not out of misanthropy, for sure. Those who know me are aware that I am very sociable. But there is a kind of hubbub, a kind of continuous carnival in literary life, from which I take great pains to remain aloof. The publishing industry, the literary prize merry-go-round, the cinema, have created an unhealthy atmosphere in Italy in recent years which I consider harmful, to young writers especially.

I am convinced that beyond the noise and stupid popularity polls, the highest and most dignified ambition that a writer can cultivate is that of being and remaining himself, of not changing his own voice, of not singing in falsetto, and of not wishing to appear what he isn't. A writer who succeeds in doing this in whatever type of society or order he may live, gives the most that one can expect of him. Of course, writers do number among my friends as well as persons of other walks of life. My readings are quite varied because of my persistent interest in economic and social questions. Every year I take a long trip. This year I have been in Brazil and Argentina. I work very irregularly. I have never accepted to write by pre-arrangement.

DELLA GIOVANNI: I should like to ask you finally what are your present relations with the Abruzzo and with the Abruzzesi?

SILONE: Let's leave out of consideration literary Abruzzesi of whom there are quite a number – talented too – living in the region as well as in Rome and Milan. The ordinary Abruzzesi, for reasons already observed, are readily proud of their fellow countrymen who gain a certain notoriety. This needn't be philosophical, artistic or literary; they are proud even if one of their bicycle racers wins a race. Therefore, in general, my relations with the Abruzzesi are cordial. Some of them consider me a bit strange ("he has always been an anti-fascist," they say, "and when he is supposed to reap the fruits, he withdraws from politics"). But I have heard others complain of something else and I feel obliged to say something about it.

In their judgment the Abruzzese landscape that appears in my books comes off rather harshly treated. I must say that the criticism is perfectly justified. Abruzzo is a very beautiful region, it has superb mountains, almost Alpine lakes, enchanting shorelines, and the National Park. However, it is an error to attribute to the landscape of a novel the naturalistic significance of a photograph album or of a documentary film. In a novel the landscape is an integral part of the characters, of the situations, and of the problems represented. The compactness of a narration derives precisely from the integration of the character and the setting. In my opinion, Pietro Spina, the hero of *Bread and Wine* and of *The Seed Beneath the Snow,* can move only in that given landscape and in no other. But I became fully aware of this discrepancy between the landscape of my novels and that of Abruzzo during a trip undertaken last year with my wife.

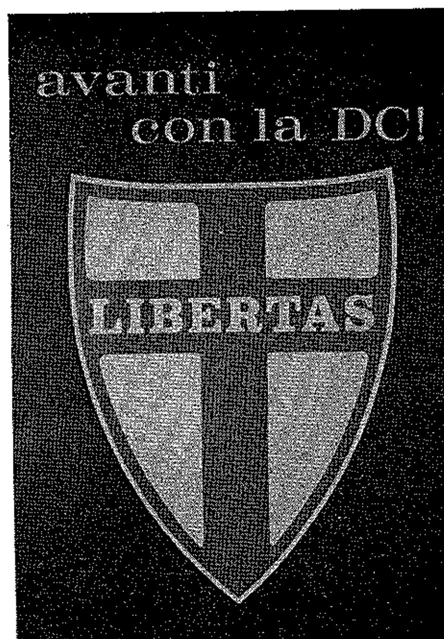
We travelled to a part of Palestine which at present belongs to Jordan and we were driving one afternoon on the road that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho passing near Bethlehem. It's a valley which is altogether barren, dry, dusty. You don't see a single tree, a blade of grass, not a trace of a brook, of a spring. That day there wasn't even a passerby on the road; except, near Bethlehem we met a woman dressed in black with a child in her arms, seated on a dusty donkey, who passed us by without even looking at us. As we progressed through that valley I was seized by a rather strange state of mind. It was the first time that I had ever visited that land and yet I had the impression of something already seen and lived. I wasn't able to speak or make conversation. Until, at a certain moment, my wife broke the silence to say: "But this is the landscape of your novels." That was enough to clarify my state of awe and amazement.

I was seeing something outside of me which for many years, perhaps since birth, I had been carrying within me, the landscape of my soul. Perhaps the only landscape in which I can place characters who move and are alive.

A Search for Political Stability

The Italian General Elections of 1963

by Sondra Z. and Stephen P. Koff



Thirty-four million Italians went to the polls April 28 and 29 to elect 630 deputies and 315 senators in this nation's fourth postwar parliamentary election. In a country which has had difficulty maintaining cabinet stability, supporters of a stable parliamentary democracy were optimistic. Optimism stemmed from the economic boom, the high rate of employment, and the fact that all the constitutional parties, with the exception of a small one on the right, were prepared to join forces after the election to establish a government of reform.

The coalition was to range from the Christian Democratic Party to the Socialists (PSI), and include the Social Democrats (PSDI) and the Republicans (PRI). Together these parties, which received 62.5% of the total vote in the 1958 election, were to engineer Italy's "New Deal." Contrary to the American experience, the New Deal was not to be the consequence of a depression. Instead it was to be the product of the Italian economic miracle, a miracle no less visible and equally as impressive as the German economic boom.

The main objective of this new orientation, called *Centro-Sinistra*, was to divide the fruits of the recent economic development among a much greater segment of the population than was sharing them. Industrialists and *commercianti* subscribing to the "trickle-down" theory of economic development were convinced that, as long as their gains were great, enough would trickle down to the masses to keep them happy. In this approach followers of *Centro-Sinistra* saw a threat to reborn Italian liberal democracy. Thus, it was promised that if *Centro-Sinistra* were supported, not only would there be significant changes in the tax structure, southern economic development, and social services, but also such areas as education and administration would be reformed. This very attractive package offered to the electorate seemed to justify the guarded optimism of the leaders of *Centro-Sinistra.* Yet, when the electoral results were made known, it was clear that although a victory was achieved, it was hardly an overwhelming one. The proposed reforms had not attracted as many of the voters as expected.

Centro-Sinistra was not a new idea. Some observers indicate that the leaders of the Christian Democratic Party did not want to repeat what they considered a fundamental mistake of the party's forerunner, the *Partito Popolare,* which refused to collaborate with the Socialists in 1920–1922. It is possible that collaboration might have forestalled or even halted the coming of Fascism. Moreover, during the difficult days of the resistance to Mussolini and the Nazis, the Christian Democrats fought alongside those of the political left.

The *Centro-Sinistra* idea was given impetus with the dissolution of the rapprochement between the Socialists and the Communists (PCI). The common front of these two parties, dating from the renewal of their unity of action pact of 1934 in Paris, had already been

weakened by the Socialists' dissatisfaction with the junior role that they were obliged to play and by their dislike of the Communist practice of democratic centralism and allegiance to the Kremlin. With their separation, precipitated by the Hungarian uprising and later by de-Stalinization, the Christian Democratic leaders, especially those in the Christian trade unions and others on the left of the party, saw the possibility of working with the Socialists to offer the nation an alternative to either left or right-wing extremism.

The *Centro-Sinistra* experiment was formally begun in February 1962 when Amintore Fanfani formed a government which promised sweeping reforms. The Christian Democrats, the Republicans, and the Social Democrats were represented in the coalition. The PSI did not join the government but it offered parliamentary support.

Opposition to this scheme was clear. The Communists feared that they might be isolated on the extreme left. Therefore, they attacked the experiment as a façade of reform by which reactionary forces hoped to fool the workers. They claimed that *Centro-Sinistra* called for too little reform too late, and that the Christian Democrats could not be trusted because they were motivated by opportunistic vote-getting slogans rather than by a deep dedication to the welfare of the masses. On the extreme right the *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), a neo-fascist party, likened *Centro-Sinistra* to Communism or, at least, the first step in that direction. The Liberals (PLI) who currently represent the conservative business interests were the most significant constitutional force which opposed the idea. Opposition came also from a group within the Premier's party, which, although bridled by parliamentary discipline, viewed *Centro-Sinistra* with disfavour. The opposition came to a head when the government passed legislation nationalizing the electric industry. This was part of the price paid for the support of the PSI. However, aside from this factor, the nationalization showed the country that the government meant business.

All parties recognized that decisions would have to be taken as to electoral stands in 1962 because, by constitutional regulation, the life of the Parliament was to terminate during the following year. In Naples during November, the National Council of the Christian Democratic Party was convened to study the issue of whether the party should continue or discontinue its support of *Centro-Sinistra*. In the negotiations Amintore Fanfani was joined by Party Secretary Aldo Moro. Although Moro was a close collaborator of Fanfani, he was not fully identified with the left wing of the Party. This factor proved useful and the center elements were brought into line to support the *Centro-Sinistra* experiment. The right wing of the party, led by Mario Scelba and Giuseppe Pella, remained strongly opposed to *Centro-Sinistra,* but it was overwhelmed by other factions.

Although the exact election date had not been fixed, the campaign itself began in a sense, as the parties maneuvered for favorable positions on important issues. In this early period two major points emerged: that the election would be fought almost entirely on domestic issues, and that many viewed the coming vote as a referendum on *Centro-Sinistra.* In connection with the first point it should be noted that most of Italy's post-war parliamentary elections had been extensively marked by controversies concerning external policy. For example, in 1948 a major issue was the emerging cold war in general, and specifically the Marshall Plan. In 1953 much debated was the election law supported by the Christian Democrats with a hope to reduce opposition of what they considered foreign elements – i.e., the Communists and the Socialists. Also the Trieste issue was lurking in the background. The 1958 election followed de-Stalinization in Russia and the Hungarian revolt. Both items had a bearing on a nation with a large and influential Communist Party.

In 1963 the fundamental question centered on what each party could offer the voter in terms of managing the internal economic miracle. For some, the general managerial function of the government was bad in itself and they became staunch opponents of *Centro-Sinistra.* Others, such as the Communists, disagreed with the methods of the governmental experiment. The Christian Democrats, the Republicans, the Social Democrats, and the Socialists all focused on the great possibilities of *Centro-Sinistra* and reform within a democratic framework.

It soon became evident that one of the most highly controversial issues would be the *Centro-Sinistra* proposal to decentralize the state's authority by creating regional governments. In some respects it was strange that this ques-

tion caused so much discussion because the Republican Constitution provides that Italy be divided into regions and that each one possess some autonomy. (cf. Articles 114–133). However, the Constitution also stipulated that the Parliament would have to pass enabling legislation and in this case, as in others, such legislation has never been approved.

Two significant issues concern the regions – one political and the other administrative. During the Risorgimento when the state was created, Italy borrowed from the French experience. Thus a highly centralized administrative apparatus was established. When the Christian Democrats controlled the state apparatus, which had been even more highly centralized under fascism, the party was loath to do anything to support decentralization which would undoubtedly mean a loss of power.

The Communists and the Socialists believed, and most astute critics concurred, that certain of the proposed regions would come under Communist and/or Socialist control. The Left asserted that the framers of the constitution called for regional government as a safeguard for democracy. It was argued that decentralization would forestall a seizure of power such as that which took place in 1922. The *Centro-Sinistra* promise of regional divisions unquestionably meant that the Christian Democrats were gambling that not too many voters fearing Communist domination of regional government would defect.

The second point of controversy about the creation of regions involved a long-time debate about Italy's "bureaucratic jungle." Many critics, who otherwise agreed with much of what *Centro-Sinistra* was doing, argued that regions would only add another layer on an administrative structure that badly needed to be reduced. Promises of serious reform of the bureaucracy were advocated by the leaders of *Centro-Sinistra* in order to counteract this argument.

The battle for votes was also fought on questions related to the "transformation of the advantages of the economic miracle into advantages capable of initiating the social miracle." The issues ranged from change in the tax structure and the handling of credit to greater state aid in the South. Further nationalization was played down by the Christian Democrats and emphasized by the PSI. The Communists called for extensive nationalization without payment to the current owners.

Some issues outside the economic realm caused stress between the parties supporting *Centro-Sinistra*. Typical was the question of education. The democratization of the educational system was demanded by the Socialists along with revised curricula, more scholarships, classrooms, technical schools, and better teacher training. The strain came because the Christian Democrats had always viewed the area of education as one in which it maintained the Christian conscience of the nation; if it were to agree with the Socialist demands, its "clerical" position would have to be revised.

In the area of agricultural policy the supporters of *Centro-Sinistra* urged further land reform. The old, landed class bitterly opposed this plan arguing that the great estates that had been divided up were less productive. Others saw that something had to be done for the small farmer and day labourers, because many were leaving the land for better pay, regular hours, and more security in the city.

Questions of foreign policy took a back seat in the election. The Communists could not make the Common Market a major issue because Italian membership seemed to contribute to the economic miracle. Also, the PSI had come around to a position where the party accepted the Common Market although it noted the dangers of domination by a De Gaulle led France and Germany.

The possibility of Polaris missile bases in Italian territory received some attention, but mostly from the Communists. The PSI paid some lip service to the issue but it was careful because its three partners in *Centro-Sinistra* were all supporters of the Western alliance. Also, it can be said, generally, that the thaw in the cold war and Pope John's efforts for international good will were influential in the lesser role of foreign policy.

The campaign proper, which formally began February 18, 1963, with the dissolution of Parliament, must be considered a turning point in Italian electioneering. It was definitely a mixture of old techniques and new ones fitted to a television-oriented population.

Political leaders filled the *piazze* from north to south. The old demagogic oratory in which Mussolini excelled still thrilled the crowds. Once again some were caught up in the carefully planned "spontaneous" enthusiasm of the Communist rallies as groups of marching youth carrying banners chanted in unison. Also, many were uneasy as they viewed MSI rallies which featured burning torches and other theatrics so reminiscent of the Fascist era. Numbers at these MSI gatherings seemed large only because curious by-standers remained to watch transfixed or apparently shocked by the level of the MSI campaign.

These street rallies definitely began to have competition from television. Phrases like "American-type campaign" were heard. There

were no debates like those of Kennedy and Nixon, but the government-owned television station had extensive election coverage, especially on its major program called *Tribuna Elettorale*. It soon became evident that the outstanding campaigners of the *piazza* era would not necessarily be successful in the new medium. Thus, a new type of campaign would have to be developed for future electoral battles.

By Italian standards the campaign was unquestionably the cleanest of any in the history of this nation. Some saw this "clean campaign" as a mark of apathy which supposedly resulted from the fact that employment was high and "Italy never had it so good." Still, 92.9% of the electorate went to the polls.

Large numbers took advantage of special train fares and travelled from the industrial North to the overpopulated South from which they had migrated. Many also came from Belgian mine areas, Switzerland, and Germany. Thousands of good citizens enjoyed a weekend at home and did their civic duty.

As the campaign drew to a close, pundits were ready with predictions. Generally, it seemed accepted that the Christian Democrats would be returned as the leading party and would not show great fluctuation in their vote. However, it was recognized that some disgruntled right-wing supporters would defect to the rejuvenated Liberal party. It was also predicted that the latter would gain a significant number of votes. As far as the Monarchists were concerned, it was thought that their votes would probably decrease by the natural attrition of a party composed mostly of older people. No major change was expected in the national position of the MSI.

On the Left the same was held true for the Republicans and the PSDI. However, it was noted that there was a possibility that the latter would draw votes from left-wing Christian Democrats who might feel free to vote right-wing socialist since they would be voting for *Centro-Sinistra* and at the same time informing the Christian Democrats that they had to move to the Left.

Early in the campaign it was seen that the PSI was the hinge of the *Centro-Sinistra* experiment. It was the party which was making the direct challenge to the Communists for votes in the "Red Belts." Thus it had to attract a significant number of class-conscious workers to the banner of the reform government. It was expected that the PSI would hold its position nationally and would lose some votes to the Communists who could count on a hard core of supporters that would not be swayed by *Centro-Sinistra* reform promises. As far as the floating vote on the left was concerned, it was thought that it would probably not cause any significant increase in the Communist numbers. All in all, such predictions added up to a mandate for *Centro-Sinistra.*

When the returns were analysed, an immediate reaction was to see a serious setback for the *Centro-Sinistra* experiment. The major parties in the coalition, the PSI and the Christian Democrats lost 4.4% compared to their 1958 showing, while the major opponents of the proposed regime, the PCI, PLI, and the MSI, gained 6.5%. However, preliminary estimates led to a certain misreading of the results.

Most analysts focused on the significant gains of the Communists and the Liberals. But more important was the fact that for the first time since the creation of the Republic, the forces supporting the government received 59.6% of the vote. Furthermore, as noted by Professor John Clarke Adams in a letter to *The New York Times,* the PSI reversed its policy of non-governmental cooperation for the first time, and the constitutional parties (those of *Centro-Sinistra* and the Liberals) received approximately two-thirds of the vote. The other one-third was divided among the Communists, the Monarchists, and the MSI. Minor parties received 1.3% of the total vote.

1963 ELECTION:
CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Party	*Votes*		*Percentage*	
	1958	1963	1958	1963
DC	12,494,391	11,763,418	42.3	38.3
PSI	4,208,111	4,251,966	14.2	13.8
PSDI	1,345,750	1,874,379	4.6	6.1
PRI	405,574	420,746	1.4	1.4
PCI	6,704,706	7,763,854	22.7	25.3
PLI	1,046,939	2,142,053	3.5	7.0
MSI	1,406,358	1,569,202	4.7	5.1
PDIUM	1,436,807	536,652	4.8	1.7
OTHERS	514,997	407,999	1.8	1.3

The election results show evidence of factors which are fundamentally changing the Italian political scene. For instance, the process of internal migration and the concomitant acceleration of urbanism have radically changed Italian living and voting habits. Large numbers of southern Italians who lived in small villages have moved northward to find new work and new lives in industrial and commercial centers. No longer do the parish priests and their relatives strongly influence their voting habits. Previously, many of these people voted for the Christian Democrats or one of the right-wing parties. However, in their

new location they develop an identification with co-workers, and a proletarian mentality brings votes for the PSI and the PCI.

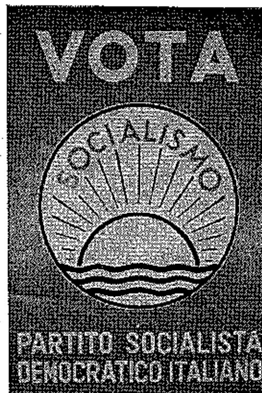
The election carried the stamp of Pope John XXIII. The enormous changes wrought in the Catholic world by the late Pope were evident in the Italian political realm. Until this election Catholics were forbidden to associate with atheistic Marxism. Although Pope John did not directly say anything on the subject, he changed all this. His contacts with the Communist world, including his meeting with Prime Minister Khrushchev's son-in-law, Adzhubei, indicated to many that the established political attitude towards the PCI might need reconsideration. Also in the minds of many, the Pope's acceptance of the Bolzan Peace Prize furthered this image.

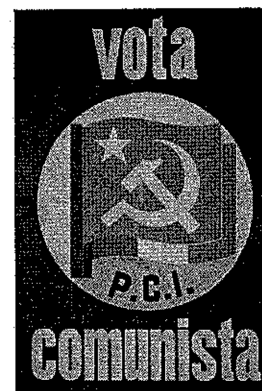
His encyclical, which was a forceful statement in favor of social reform, contributed to an environment in which reform was paramount. It was generally believed that the Pope had given his tacit approval to *Centro-Sinistra* and had indicated that the most active political groups in the Vatican, which are very conservative, should not interfere in the elections. The Church was much less active than in any other campaign. It has been stated that because of the change on the Catholic scene many women voters who usually did not vote on the Left with their husbands now defected from the Christian Democratic Party.

Centro-Sinistra's lack of visible accomplishments had an impact on the voters who saw all issues as black or red. The black, a symbol of fascism and reaction with which some church leaders had been identified, led many to believe that the Christian Democrats were not to be trusted; that *Centro-Sinistra* talked a lot but did little. Furthermore, people on the left disliked Fanfani's spring meeting with President Kennedy because they felt it fully committed *Centro-Sinistra* to the Western alliance in spite of PSI hedging on the subject. The Communists asked: "Why gamble on these groups for reform when we are available?" Many youths who voted for the first time responded to this question with a vote for the PCI. There has been much conjecture that large numbers of youths voted either for the extreme right or the extreme left.

The PCI increase was related to factors cited above. However, it should be remembered that in any nation the Communist Party is one of the best organized. During the campaign it took advantage of its organizational powers, particularly in the industrial centers, and put aside the divisions of recent years, especially those resulting from de-Stalinization. Also, the PCI benefitted from the vote of people who, while not party supporters, felt that the most radical vote possible would stimulate any government established after the election to bring about further reform.

Some militants in the PSI cast their vote for the PCI because they felt that the party was becoming bourgeois by associating with the Christian Democrats. On the other hand, the Socialists gained votes from people who felt that the time had come for the party to assume governmental responsibility so that some of its program could be enacted. It should be noted that the history of the Italian Socialist Party, like that of other West European nations, has been marked by a struggle between those who were willing to associate with bourgeois parties to bring about reform and those who would not do so.



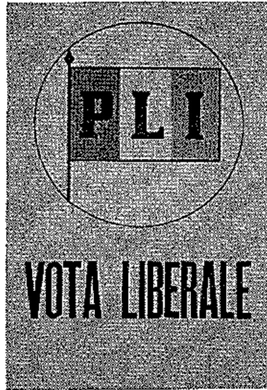


The PSDI was among the most optimistic of the parties during the campaign. Its pro-American leader, Giuseppe Saragat, predicted that the party would double its vote with gains from the left of the Christian Democratic Party and some right-wing Nenni Socialists. Saragat's balloon was deflated when his party only increased its vote by 1.5%.

The Republicans, a lay and non-Marxist party of the democratic left, increased their popular vote but their percentage of the total vote remained the same. This in itself was an accomplishment. Italians from the center to the non-extreme left hold great respect for this party but feel that it is relegated to the role of a minor party amid the powerful ideological forces of the Italian political scene.

In recent years the Liberal Party's name has seemed inappropriate. Under the leadership of Giovanni F. Malagodi, the party became the rallying point not only for business interests but also for persons who believed in a responsible constitutional right. As predicted, the party took many votes from the anti-*Centro-Sinistra* group of the Christian Democratic Party. In addition, votes were obtained from the Monarchists and the MSI. In

the case of the latter, some of the more thoughtful supporters saw the Liberals as a more effective opponent of socialism and communism. The Liberal Party, which has a strong voice for a small one, doubled its vote but it still is not large enough to be very important in Parliament.



The Monarchists, who experienced a drastic decrease in votes (–3.1%), provided one of the major surprises of the election. They lost significantly in their greatest areas of strength. Splits in the party and desertion from Achilles Lauro, a wealthy ship-building magnate who was always able to marshall votes of the poor, caused a loss of votes which apparently went to the Socialists and the Communists. The election demonstrated that the anachronistic Monarchist Party was a party with a past but little future.

The main sources of strength for the MSI remain among the ardent Fascists, the functionaries and pensioners of the Mussolini period, and extremists who cannot be attracted to communism. In spite of the economic miracle, the party of the dissatisfied still received 1,569,202 votes and 5.1% of the total vote. It was clear that it made inroads among the youth and that it was receiving financial support from wealthy families and industries who believed that the MSI was the only bulwark against communism.

* * *

When it came time to form a government, its was evident that *Centro-Sinistra* was still the ideal to be considered. There was no other meaningful alternative. The right and center of the Christian Democratic Party refused to accept the loss of votes without a showing of dissatisfaction. Amintore Fanfani became the scapegoat for the electoral loss and he was passed over in the selection of another leader to form a new government. Aldo Moro was called upon to do so but he was thwarted when the PSI refused to agree with its leader Pietro Nenni in his support of a Moro government. The Socialists argued that the reforms they expected in return for their support were not all promised or fully defined.

Moro's failure to form a government and the ensuing crisis led President Segni to call upon Giovanni Leone, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, to create a government of technicians. His is a government, composed entirely of Christian Democrats, which has promised not to undertake any major changes in policy. This stop-gap solution is supposed to last until the forces of *Centro-Sinistra* can settle their differences.

During August the *Fanfaniani* in the Christian Democratic Party worked hard to get the party to support a progressive government. The National Council of the Party, in a majority motion, affirmed the validity of the decisions made at the Congress of Naples in January, 1962, and advocated that another attempt to form a *Centro-Sinistra* government be made in November after the Socialist Congress.

If the PSI was a critical agent to *Centro-Sinistra* before the election, its role is even more important months after. When the party's Central Committee refused to support a Moro government, divisions within the party were clarified. The left, led by Lelio Basso and Vittorio Foà, was hesitant to become bourgeois and give up association with the Communists because such action might mean loss of the industrial workers' support. On the right, Nenni and his supporters felt that the Socialists should assume governmental responsibility and prove that they were the most effective party for the betterment of the working class. They argued that a successful *Centro-Sinistra* would increase the socialist vote in the next election. A third group, known as the *Gregoriani*, led by Riccardo Lombardi and Tristano Codignola, claimed that *Centro-Sinistra* was necessary but that Moro's promises, especially in the fields of education, agriculture, and urbanism, left a great deal to be desired. This faction felt that the Christian Democrats must pay a high price for Socialist support. If they were unwilling to do so, then the PSI should pass to the opposition.

The summer months have been marked by intensive warfare among the political parties. All are trying to win adherents for their position prior to the Socialist Congress to be held in Rome at the end of October. The future of the *Centro-Sinistra* experiment, Italian political stability, and Italian liberal democracy all probably depend on this congress.

The Antonioni Trilogy

A Gauge of the Modern Sensibility

by Parker Tyler

Antonioni is not merely one of the film-makers with the new spirit; he is one who has rightfully earned the reputation of being "new" in the best sense of the word. As might be expected, he has achieved his novelty through re-emphasizing an old, and true, trait of the film; if today we can call this trait "advanced," it is because, at an historic moment, the visual strength of the film was adulterated – or at least complicated and theoretically compromised – by the introduction of sound dialogue as an integral part of the form. Antonioni's style – best visible in the trilogy, *L'Avventura*, *La Notte* and *L'Eclisse* – is a return to the visual as the medium's prime instrument.

Let us consider this proposition. Suppose none of the above three films had a soundtrack, that the dialogue was quite missing, either as spoken words or subtitles. Isn't it true that each film, certainly *L'Avventura* and *L'Eclisse*, would still come across with basic significance intact? I don't mean that the dialogue between the actors does not, in all cases, enrich the meaning. In *La Notte* the dialogue is especially important toward the end. All the same, while speech is an integral part of each film, the eye of the camera has always been charged with telling an eloquent story, unusually meaningful for the hour in which we live.

What the camera in each film relates is an articulate skeleton for Antonioni's incidental message. Each film thus has a plot made exclusively of visible action in the ordinary physical and human sense, and this action remains foremost in meaning beyond what is said by the dialogue.

Take *L'Avventura*. Assuming we were to ignore the dialogue, we would still be well aware of the relationship between a man and a woman, Sandro and Anna, and that a second woman, Claudia, is a friend of Anna's, perhaps (ironically) her best friend. Actually, at first, the dialogue hinders rather than helps. Through the mere pantomime of Anna and Sandro in the house while Claudia waits outside, we guess an odd tension between a pair of lovers. Then the three go on to the yachting party. Obviously these are well-to-do upper-class people, rather frivolous, rather bored, taking it easy while they try to enjoy an outing on the water and give their more private urges an airing. Again, pantomime alone is sufficient when Anna makes a gift of a dress to Claudia – a symbolic anticipation of her replacement, by Claudia, as Sandro's lover. Anna's subsequent disappearance, the search for her, the anxious gloom of everyone, are all very much on the visible surface. Sandro's attraction to Claudia, her resistance, her suspicion of him – all this is conveyed by the pantomime alone. There are many wordless stretches where only musical motifs or fragmentary speech reflect the quality and meaning of the physical action. The rest of the plot is structured just as optically.

Much the same is true of *La Notte*. Of course, without the dialogue at the start, we would not learn the dying man's very special relation to the married couple, Lidia and Giovanni. But we would know Giovanni's manner of being unfaithful to his wife (as in his encounter with the nymphomaniac being treated at the hospital) and that this denotes a rising crisis in the marital relationship. It is even arguable whether the dialogue, though interesting and revealing, adds very much to the serious depth of the situation. That Giovanni is an author, we learn at the party for his new book. All remarkably "optical" for a film issued in 1960! The lavish party at the rich magnate's home is self-explanatory, to say the least; again, we find Giovanni philandering as the tone gets sexy, though in this case the ladies resist: the magnate's daughter, Valentina, won't be seduced by the husband, Giovanni, and his wife, Lidia, won't let a roving Don Juan seduce her. All is said with a crystalline camera. However, at the end we do need the dialogue between Lidia and Giovanni to receive the full flavor of ambiguity in their emotional crisis; still, if we lacked it, we might well assume that the sudden fit of love-making after their little scene at dawn may be a stop-gap for a lifetime of infirm, quarrelsome togetherness.

I think our third film ought to be considered just as specifically. In *L'Eclisse* two lovers have just quarreled, and at one point

we realize they have stayed up all night to do so; most of this first stretch is, significantly, quite wordless. What is said when this couple, Vittoria and Riccardo, do converse, clinches the matter. She is breaking off their affair. She doesn't say exactly why, for there is often no reasonable explanation when love comes and goes. We see, rather than hear, how apathetic she is; she conveys a certain "modern" feeling. He is very unwilling and does not "understand," but she disengages herself, won't see him again. The days go on; she scarcely knows what to do with her life. . . . There is nothing the camera has not been effectual in telling.

Vittoria seems not to want a new lover. But then she meets the young man at the Stock Exchange. The Stock Exchange needs no sound mechanism to let us know what *it* is, although its sounds make it more exciting, more itself. Its mad, monotonous music goes with it as song goes with sexual longing. Step by step, we see the new couple, Piero and Vittoria, getting together as he starts persuading her to make it an affair; he has not quite succeeded when a crucial rendezvous is scheduled. Antonioni now brings off a striking anticlimax. There is a stretch of the simplest action – and it is altogether background action. It is the general scene of the rendezvous, which neither keeps, the particular street corner where they have held hands, languished at each other, hesitated, brooded, kissed; at least Vittoria has hesitated. Though Piero seems finally to have won her consent, it is *her* mood which prevails. Shot after shot shows us the familiar street corner and other things we have seen, a nursemaid, a horseman, some playing boys; as twilight comes, a bus emptying itself of commuters from the city . . . That is all.

I have sketched out Antonioni's three films this way not merely to draw attention to their highly filmic nature but also to lead to a comprehension of their significance and of the film-maker's views of modern life and love. Antonioni has become one of the most intellectual film makers in history. He used to write scripts for Fellini but now directs as well as writes his films, the latter with script-collaborators. He has been induced by interviewers to talk at length about his films – his approach to their technical problems, his motives, the conceptions he wished to express. What he has said is enlightening yet, I should say, not enlightening enough. A concrete reading of the films themselves, as corroborated by Antonioni, will serve us better, I think, in grasping them objectively.

Antonioni's views, the substance of what he has said to interviewers, is actually not very startling to those already initiated into modern novels and modern thought in general. Without affectation, this film-maker is saturated in the contemporary mood and viewpoint we know as Existentialist. Unfortunately, his reasoning, while provocative and full of cues, is not nearly so concise and lucid as his films themselves. What stands out most clearly in his ideas, seen through his work, is a direct grasp of men and women in relation to a landscape: what amounts to an interpretation of modern love through actual environmental symbols.

Consider our trilogy as suites of fluid, panoramic pictures. Of course, one remembers them as more intricate than the versions just outlined. The main impression, surely, is of *figures in a landscape,* just such as exist conventionally in landscape painting. It is rewarding to glance at the large tradition of landscape painting. Even the most conventional and insipid romantic painting, or academic painting, is more than just decorative, does a little more than utilize human beings as mere details of a large pictorial pattern. Figures are present in landscape painting not just to diversify a vista or humanize unpeopled nature; they are there to point up a certain relationship between humanity and its environments. True, in the Western World until Renaissance times, nature might have been called only "background" in painting. But then men began to appreciate "picturesque" nature for its own sake: a nature where man was a mere spectator, included for the sake of "documenting" his own presence, a nature that (though man might be absent) imitated one of the vistas he had begun to consider aesthetic.

By and large, in all pictures of nature *and* man, their relationship to each other is somehow implied. *L'Avventura* is a perfect illustration. How crucially vivid is the relation of the wild island of volcanic rock to the party which invades the waters around it, how crucially vivid is the island as a symbol of desolation in regard to the lost girl Anna! This volcanic island is *barren* nature – a kind of open, unattractive labyrinth without clues, frightening, causing the searchers to seem alien nomads. Antonioni, discussing his films with students and teachers at an experimental film school in Rome in 1961, mentioned something vital and central to his method and his source of inspiration. He said that in making his first film, *Cronaca di un Amore,* he found it interesting, spontaneously, to keep the camera going on his actors after a scene had ended; in short, he filmed them behaving "out of character" while in the same fictitious en-

vironment. It was a psychological inspiration to be expected of the race that had produced the playright Pirandello. The interesting element was that the actors had become detached from *any* environment, momentarily, and walked as it were in a no-man's land, a special sort of moral vacuum, being not wholly out of character and yet not in their own lives.

A director's passing impulse became a creed. Antonioni would make a style, a moral way of life, by showing men and women detached from their environment – something in the manner of actors as they work themselves out of a role while remaining in the environment that has been responsible, so to speak, for creating their roles. One can see how in this director's four later films, *Il Grido* and our trilogy, a lone person or two lovers wandering about become an integral part of the story: a part of its *suspense.* The image of individuals mentally detached from their surroundings constitutes a typical and telling concept of modern society.

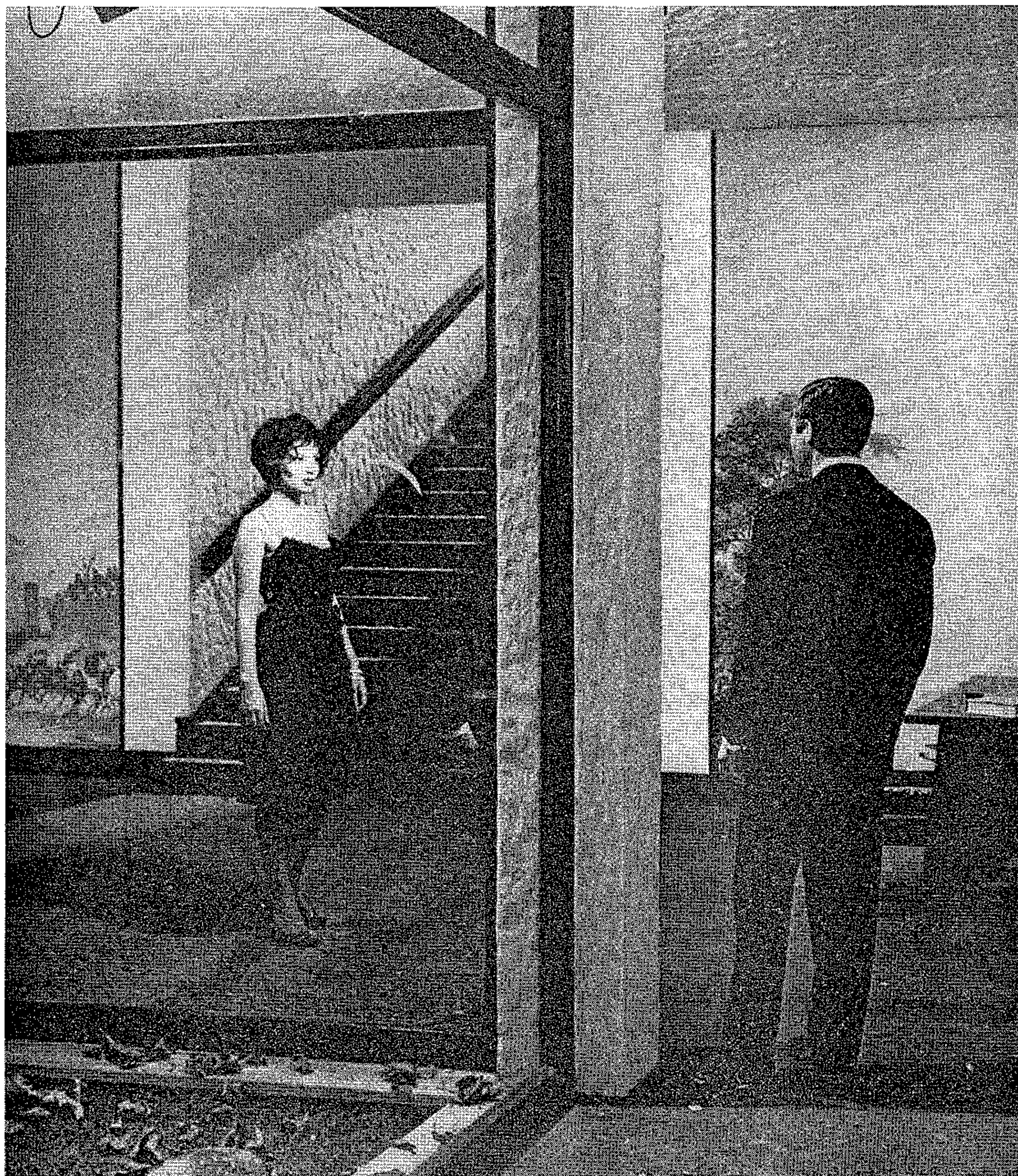
Apparently on the other hand, Antonioni has never drawn any very definite or satisfying conclusions from his subject, preferring to investigate it as a motif of modern behavior. The hero's vain, unhappy odyssey in *Il Grido* shows it in a rather primitive form, being only a long prelude to his suicide. It is equally visible, and more complex, in Anna's disappearance in *L'Avventura* and the unsuccessful search for her; in the wife's lengthy wandering in *La Notte* and the prolonged, wistful pursuit of consummation by the pair of lovers in *L'Eclisse,* ending with the anticlimax of an unkept rendezvous: scenes showing *only* the environment.

To Antonioni the typical situation of his loving couples lies in what he calls their "irrational and desperate attempt to make physical contact." That is radical wording; in fact, I think, a bit wild. As for physical contact, we can assume lots of it in the trilogy. So it would be precise to revise Antonioni's wording even if we have to assume a deal of speculativeness as to why two people, as it were, find it so difficult, in his films, to "get together." It could be a matter, as seems true in *La Notte,* of *re*-establishing physical contact between a wife and a husband; then it could be a matter of physical contact as a purely moral value: a morally sanctioned contact; then, too, it might be a complex sexual problem of contact: sexual consummation as thoroughly satisfying. Yet just because Antonioni's stories leave us to speculate about the nature of his lovers' contact, what he really seems to be after is a quality for which none of the foregoing definitions would be an adequate explanation. What he is pointing to is an indefinable vacuum in which it is easy to make love, any kind of love, but that once this vacuum is attached to reality and enters an order beyond vacuums, it is hard to fall in love – to make the contact Antonioni basically means.

Love as an instinct, the Eros of mythical culture, has failed. In romance, in poetry, even in magical religion, the emotion of love, its ecstasy, has stood warrant beyond any everyday, secular sanction such as that of marriage or what we call fidelity in love. Antonioni does bring something into drastic and unavoidable question: the erotic ecstasy itself. What has seemed supreme to poets, to the heroes and heroines of love tragedies, seems to have lost all credit in the world evoked by Antonioni. His films show simple eroticism as base, as in the incidental seduction of the young painter in *L'Avventura,* or psychopathic, as in the hospital incident in *La Notte.* In the world of sane and serious men and women, says Antonioni, making physical contact is a great problem. Sandro and the girl, Claudia, who has supplanted the lost girl, Anna, try to make contact in this spirit, their failure and desperation reducing them to tears at the end. Making love to a fancy whore has been easy for Sandro; what is hard is for him to have a serious affair. Asking how true is this viewpoint is the same as asking how true, how wide and how valid, is Existentialist philosophy.

On this ground very large issues must be considered. Regardless of wars, for example, regardless of national hatreds and national rivalries, nature, as such, does go on. Men and women are duly attracted to each other, they mate and produce their kind: mankind. For the present purpose, we can assume the same is true of the rest of nature: the lower orders and their reproduction. Yet man – man alone – is conscious, it would seem, of an obstacle to the satisfying achievement of this supposedly eternal and properly natural process. His fears and doubts, in general, have made him lose faith in every aspect of it – even in love – as a great physical experience: the heroic moment of ecstasy. Antonioni's own term for the moral situation of lovers is stalemate. Good enough. The description is even true of the less believable lovers in *Last Year at Marienbad.* Antonioni has made an interesting statement in connection with his avowed theme. While morally conscious, man today, he declares, "has no fear of the scientific unknown," he is "afraid of the moral unknown."

As Antonioni's specific explanation of the stalemate in *L'Avventura,* this gets him in very deep water, far over the heads of his characters in their conscious concerns. But what does the



Valentina and Giovanni illusively separated by a pillar, illusively joined by an indistinct reflection in the glass wall.

statement in itself signify? Man, I suppose, is to be considered unafraid of the scientific unknown because he is invading far space so dauntlessly and defying the moral consequences of opening some of nature's deepest secrets and harnessing them. Ah, but the moral unknown! This he is thought to fear, and his fear leads him, if we believe Antonioni, to stalemate. What is striking about this formulation is its assumption that human morality is an "unknown." The future is necessarily implied by the term *unknown*. To some extent, the future is by its nature unknown. On the other hand, in terms of life, the future also contains a program established by two things: natural facts and human morality. There are orders, systems, of both. For many thousands of years, human morality has been an accumulation of wise, that is to say, practical agenda governed by social and religious rules. Why should morality therefore appear as a bogeyman of the "unknown"? Why indeed? This much, Antonioni has established: his characters are rendered helpless, and eventually defeated, by fear. But why should they be so afraid? Like children, they seem afraid of – *la notte*.

Perhaps Antonioni, I suggest, has placed a greater burden of concern on their shoulders than average human experience justifies. Be that as it may, I think they appear credible and valid if we assume they represent a certain modern kind of fable: they suffer from a certain pathological condition of mind whose explanation can be found in Freud, who called it paranoia. (Although I do not fasten on Antonioni's characters – or on Antonioni, for that matter – the technical straitjacket of being paranoiacs.) They simply illustrate this type of emotional imbalance and mental disorientation. Antonioni lets them loose in a moral landscape – the landscape of the agoraphobe where openness is the sinister, the frightening element. Why should these "figures in a landscape" be so relevant, so much a part of our problems as a race today? Precisely because the "sinister" element in open places today is the element of radioactivity. In the moral sense, the threat of extinction by atomic explosion or fallout becomes latent and is easily transferred to symbols. As certain films in the recent New York Film Festival told us, tranquilizers, sleeping pills and drugs are associated threats as things also undermining human health and capable of destroying it.

One film at the New York Festival made drugs into a moral necessity in the world of the future where atomic war had driven the surviving remnant of humanity into a miserable underground existence with no hope for individuals then alive. Thus drugs and other stimulants are no longer voluptuous vices, aids to sexual ecstasy and the refuge of aesthetes and eccentrics, but the very last resort of humanity made desperate. I refer to the existence of a psychic milieu, a milieu that encompasses the scare of a drug such as thalidomide, with its threat to human generation, and of insecticide on a massive scale when it becomes potentially harmful to men and animals as well as insects.

I don't think I exaggerate by filling out the psychological factors that go to make up the overwhelming fear of the future – the moral unknown to which I believe Antonioni refers. One might protest that after all, in the case of Antonioni's films, the troubled people (who apparently have no recourse to drugs) seem well-adjusted, leisured types, and high in the professional world; attractive, with a better than average chance, one might say, for ordinary happiness. Why should *they* fear the moral unknown so much as to be radically stalemated by it? As I say, Freud's paranoia supplies the answer. The roots of paranoia are not on the surface; we can only guess and identify it by its manifestations.

Paranoia is a psychological affliction manifesting itself in extreme fear or delusion of grandeur, so that the sufferer is detached, at last, from the actual conditions of life surrounding him. This state can originate only in some early experience of shock, some major dislocation of natural desire or drastic assault on the self-esteem – some hopelessly frustrated yet impassioned need. The hero of *Il Grido* is a perfect example. The insult given his sexual ego by the loss of a woman's love is something from which he never recovers. This woman has given him an erotic delusion of grandeur; no other woman thereafter can fulfill his need, with the result that he destroys himself out of prolonged hopelessness. Antonioni had not found his true stride in *Il Grido:* its hero is too obviously a maladjusted individual to partake of the agoraphobia of the *moral landscape.* Yet his sexual temperament suggests that of Anna in *L'Avventura.* At first Anna strikes us as a sort of nymphomaniac, unable to let a private moment with her lover go by without the impulse to make love. Nymphomania is a state inspired by various fears: fear of impotence, fear of losing a lover, fear of injury to the self-esteem. Maybe Anna senses the ebbing of Sandro's love, not specifically because Claudia has won it away, but perhaps because of her own overdeveloped eroticism, her own delusion of sexual grandeur, vulnerable to the first whisper of suspicion.

Freud pointedly, and I think truly, says

that to the paranoid personality, nothing seems indifferent; everyone and everything seems involved: the world itself is in a conspiracy to exalt or damn the paranoid individual. This is an auto-intoxicated state familiar to modern thought and profusely verified by phenomena quite outside Antonioni's films. The morally starved, lonely paranoiac, guiltless of crime, imagines that detectives follow him everywhere. Sex-starved, unstable women visualize rapists in every dark corner of house and street. Any shadowy, unseemly or ambiguous aspect of nature is apt to arouse a paranoid sort of fear. May not the huge island rock, desolate and forbidding, symbolize to Anna the ultimate desert of her fate as a sexual being – that is, unsatisfied yearning, the humiliation of desertion or desolation? Thus, getting lost, she contrives suddenly to abandon all struggle. She falls or deliberately drops to her death; or, what would be more significant, she may have allowed herself to be kidnapped by a stray band of smugglers, committing herself at last to prostitution.

According to this scheme, what Sandro and Claudia then come to fear is the shadow of paranoia which Anna's disappearance has obscurely thrown over their lives in the tragic search for her into which the pair are drawn. They step cautiously and encounter unexpected, ominous things: the closed "ghost town" where they knock in vain, the roaring train that passes so close to their embraces. Antonioni mentions the symbolism of Mount Aetna in the far distance of the last shot in *L'Avventura:* Aetna is a sleeping threat, its eruptive power a symbol of sex as delusion of grandeur. The sex impulse has been taken into a vast landscape beyond its local habitation in men and women.

Antonioni is important because the human predicament he evokes is profound. We should not be facile in judging his version of that predicament, either its principles or its facts, if only because around his work a certain vagueness, a fog of motive, hovers. A moot aesthetic question is how mysterious one can be about what is already mysterious, how vague one can be about what is already vague. Antonioni's heroes and heroines (however decisively we might classify them as paranoid) are mystified, hesitant persons, and characteristically vague in communicating themselves. The conclusion of each film of the trilogy is, one might say, suggestively vague. That of *La Notte* is the least vague because, however desperately, it throws in its lot with the act of sex as something definite, at least externally.

Suppose we were to rate Antonioni's distinguished trilogy as an inspired begging of a great question. He does not show his characters as actually psychopathological but models them to intimate the presence of the danger, the total perversion and alienation from the reality of sex. This is his note, his mood, his music – this threat, this forecast of doom. We can see how individual Antonioni is by comparing him with his countryman, Pirandello. The latter was much more excited about the same sort of moral problem; he made human doubt and indecision root itself in individual identity and its moral drive. Pirandello, however, came before the age of the threat of racial extinction. The deepest moral problem affecting human beings, in the age to which we have come, would not be the identity of the *individual,* his specific and organic and functional personality, but the identity of the *race,* which may become extinct before it has perfected itself, before it learns just what man is, how much "god," so to speak, is in him. We could term this problem that of man's universal identity, his identity with time and space and all other beings. Many religions, of course, are supposed to have solved this question; on the other hand, however content men have been to live by the rules of religion and philosophy, war is a great human hurt which has never been eliminated.

Tentatively, Antonioni may well have this same issue in mind, this "atmosphere" of question and inescapable peril, and so his vagueness might be thought proper. When other people, such as those represented by his characters, become aware of this perilous atmosphere and cannot explain it, they merely register the quandary of it, the embarrassment, the risk. They come to know much about its terms, its circumstances, its way-stations; about its identity, they know nothing – it is as if they dared not look. . . . They can only suffer and perhaps give up. Is the situation not merely hopeless, but also hopelessly paradoxical? Perhaps not. Antonioni's consciously held views may give us a useful clue. He says that he means to represent people hopelessly "detached from their environment," while Freud, we recall, takes his analysis of paranoia a big step further: the paranoid personality becomes *de*tached from the real environment, from what is immediate and actual, only to become *at*tached, through psychological delusion, to the whole universe (nature, society, individuals) which he assumes is involved with his private affairs. Good. But under what precise aspect does the universe "concern" itself? Only under a delusive aspect. All the while, the universe is not really involved, concerned – not its men, its

animals, its stars, its winds, its rain, its earth. Underneath his delusion, the paranoid knows this and it bothers him a great deal. Freud's and Antonioni's interpretations of modern society in its paranoid motives exactly complement each other. Antonioni is really carrying out a necessary implication of Freud's hypothesis. The paranoid's inner desires are not being fulfilled; moreover, his condition is the direct result of his belief that they can never be fulfilled. But this vision is so terrible that he refuses to believe it. He evokes the very skies and total strangers to help him prove it untrue; the proof of world phenomena is entirely delusive but he accepts it, in nightmarish fear or delusion of grandeur, as positive and final.

As I have implied, this is not Antonioni's explicit formulation when questioned as to the meanings of his films. He imagines his people have got at the reality of things, and that this means alienation from the world that seems made for them. The upshot for his characters would seem to be: how true, how typical, is the conviction of civilized beings that one is apt to be alienated from personal love today? The answer to that, I think, is that it depends upon the response of individuals to the aggression of external conditions in the world; this aggression tends to create a general insecurity in the individual, to promote all his moral fears. Granting the truth of the moral situation between two lovers in Antonioni's trilogy, there is a sensible effort in lovers, today, to escape from the problem with dignity, to yield to its insolubility, but not without being aware of its crucial importance.

In the climactic *L'Eclisse*, the enemy of love is understood by the heroine as signified by the Stock Exchange; the inward and spiritual luxury of the senses is opposed, and fatally, by the outward and materialistic luxury of money and animal appetite. The most insidious danger, as Vittoria in her long hesitation seems to realize, is that the symbol replaces that for which it stands. Sensibility is finally ruled out; luxury becomes the desert that is suggested by the wild party at the industrialist's home in *La Notte*. When the collapse of the market takes place, Vittoria observes how a "ruined man" behaves, being struck by his "hygienic" mildness under the blow. Virtually bankrupt, he takes it philosophically, has an alka-seltzer and occupies his mind with doodling at a café table. I think that at this moment, Vittoria realizes that she, too, as a lover, is bankrupt and that her flirtation with Piero is, probably, a form of erotic doodling.

The erotic fatality hinted here would be an Existentialist despair in love without making visible all its inward struggles but showing them as if documentarily. On the philosophic level, we are obliged to refer to myth and its moral significance in human history. It could be argued, with Antonioni's trilogy as proof, that man is in permanent exile from happiness, not that we are merely passing through a bad phase in this era. In short, Adam has permanently been driven from the Garden of Eden.

It is interesting to note, in an issue of the *Cesare Barbieri Courier*, (Vol. III, No. 2) however, the opposing Existentialist stand taken by the Italian school of philosophers in modern times. This is an optimistic rather than a pessimistic Existentialism. Despair may exist but it does not automatically develop as paranoia or as a confirmed philosophy of pessimism. Professor Abbagnano says that the Italian school rests its hope on possibility, that is, on changes possible in the future. In other words, the idea of the perfectibility of man is not dead but vital. This Existentialism, says Abbagnano, views the human situation from a scientific viewpoint. Social morality is a laboratory where experiments will be followed through on the premise that improvements can be made – general improvement in moral and physical health that will affect individuals.

I did not want to close without offering this larger light in which we can estimate and further think about Antonioni's trilogy. Cannot we suppose that, accordingly, these good-looking people, so eligible in most ways, might have more courage, a better education one might say, and shake off the contagion of the Atomic Age of paranoia and its ambiguous landscape? Maybe it is possible to make the best of the worst of all possible worlds by doing a little better than Kierkegaard's successors, provided we can take them seriously in their despair. In effect, we find men and women stranded in a kind of mythological country in Antonioni's films. This country, if it be only psychopathological territory and not Existentialist territory, might be "saved" for better things. How deliberately fashionable is Antonioni being as a teller of tales? His sensibility, in any case, is a most interesting gauge, a veritable barometer and seismograph. Antonioni's filmic genius may have "vamped" us a little into imagining we have more in common with his human situations than is necessary, or than we really have. Yet, just in putting the question before us in so rich and competent a way, this Italian film director's achievement is a major one from any view.

Spoleto: The Festival of Two Worlds

by Virginia Kent

You can hear the cicadas from the piazza in Spoleto, and see the pairs of white oxen in the fields from your bedroom window, pale gold, thirsty fields rising from the plain and scattered with olive trees towards the mountain scrub. You can walk from one side of Spoleto to the other in a few minutes, zigzagging through the narrow streets, up or down the old steps under the arches – tall arches that lift your eye to the taller towers. And looking out over the tip-tilted roofs and up to the Rocca, the fortress Lucrezia Borgia owned, you might have slipped back five hundred years to when Fra Filippo Lippi was painting in the town.

This is the setting Gian Carlo Menotti chose six years ago for his *Festival dei Due Mondi.* And certainly, he has brought a new world to Spoleto: such a concentration of artistic activity that any peasant of this town could attend in one day a mid-day concert, an afternoon ballet, a seven o'clock play, a 9 o'clock opera and as many art, craft and other exhibitions as he could fit on the side. But, of course, no native of Spoleto, or indeed of Rome, could conceive of such non-stop and energetic dedication to the muses; this enthusiasm is surely Anglo-Saxon. For the tall fair invaders the cafés have spilt their tables out onto the pavements, even to the extent of making the main street one-way; and the austerity of the *Piazza del Duomo* has been relieved by wicker chairs and tables outside the theatre, so that actors and musicians can stay within earshot of the rehearsal with their *granita di caffè* or their *Campari soda.*

I forestieri, the strangers, with their long hair and casual dress, are in every alleyway and every tiny piazza; and yet the contrast is not garish. Gradually, as the days of their sojourn turn to weeks, they are accepted by the old-timers and the raw young waiters as their pink skins turn to brown and they learn to order coffee without halting; for these are the least gaudy and best-mannered tourists in Italy.

They have come from all over Europe and America, in the wake of the great directors, actors, singers and musicians that Menotti has invited to his cultural feast. Some, the students, are here to work. Most of them come from Italy and the United States, from drama and music schools and from universities. And here, too, they are 'on the campus,' talking, listening, experimenting, watching, asking questions and suggesting answers, meeting their heroes and discovering they are people. For this is a meeting ground and working place for people of all stations who love music and the theatre. It is so small that one can scarcely go for a day without bumping into Jerome Robbins in a back street picture gallery or discovering that the gentle man discussing the sculpture in the piazza was Michael Cacoyannis; any one, given a minimum of initial courage, can accost Carlo Mazzone in the café and be told his Off-Broadway plans for the autumn, or ask Luchino Visconti just where and how he filmed *The Leopard.*

The students, however, do much more than talk with the great; they work under them and alongside them, and not just as spear-carriers or chorus. This year an American girl, Judith Blegen, was given an important soprano role, *Il Lago,* in Stanley Hollingsworth's opera *La Madre.* Another, Carol Ann McGroder, was given the part of Helen in Cacoyannis' production of *The Trojan Women.* In the concerts, too, a student will frequently play in a trio or quartet with world famous soloists. And the small parts of almost every play are cast from the ranks of students or near students, unknown and untried.

This wide variety of opportunity for the students is achieved by a precarious flexibility in the program. Only the main shows and the main artists are planned in advance. This year the Ballet Rambert from England and Jean Erdman's *Coach with the Six Insides* from New York both arrived complete, ready to give their performances and depart; but these are the exceptions. The general rule is for shows to arrive for rehearsal in Spoleto a few weeks before the festival begins, usually with an incomplete cast which is then padded out on the spot by students and sometimes other people's artists. As we have seen, this is true to a small extent even of the Italian operas – this year *La Traviata* and *Il Signor Bruschino* were performed as well as Hollingsworth's *La Madre* – but it is especially true of the concerts, whose programs seem to be planned or replanned almost daily, and of the dramatic and semi-dramatic ventures. Carlo Mazzone, for in-

stance, told me that he had arrived with only six out of a final cast of twenty for his *Barca di Venezia per Padova.*

On top of all this, there was an innovation this year which multiplied student opportunities several times. *Theater at Seven* was a get-together of actors, dancers and pantomimists, led by Jerome Robbins, Mildred Dunnock and Carlo Mazzone. They rehearsed and performed in a cellar that was probably more primitive than the barest boards of Off Broadway, and, at seven o'clock every evening, presented a short experimental program which varied daily with the availability of the actors concerned. It might be a one act play in English or Italian, a newly created ballet, or a mime sequence. It might be a piece wholly conceived and directed by a student; most of the plays were performed partly by students working with or under the direction of the professional actors and directors.

Sometimes, it is true, performances did suffer from this generosity to the students. Cacoyannis' production of *The Trojan Women* was an important example, which, to me, stood for all the greatness and weakness of this festival.

It suffered not only from insufficient experience or talent in some of the actors, but also it was handicapped by the characteristic Spoleto chaos. Cacoyannis was originally intended to direct some extracts from Greek tragedy for *Theater at Seven,* but they never appeared on the program. Instead, in mid-festival, it was announced that *The Trojan Women* would be performed on the last two nights of the festival. Well, imagine having to find a cast of eighteen in this town where every one is fully-employed already and train a highly disciplined chorus, as well as six principles and a child, all in what cannot have been much more than a fortnight. The result was, of course, patchy and imperfect: the chorus of Trojan women sounded marvellous, but one or two of the girls looked all wrong – angular, Anglo-Saxon, cross, instead of tragic; none of the actors, even Claire Bloom, whose Andromache was so unrelievedly self-pitying, could stand up to Mildred Dunnock's dignity and contained heartbreak as Hecuba; some of the performances are certainly better forgotten. And yet the whole thing was a triumph. Why? Because it was the first play of true dramatic quality to be put on in the whole festival; because the audience could feel the greatness of conception through the uneven execution; because when it was good it was very, very good.

There is probably no one who saw it who would be willing to exchange it for an assorted selection, on different nights, of half-hour bits from Greek tragedies, most of which one would not manage to attend. Yet this is what was originally intended, and no so-called efficient and organized festival would have let him change it.

And this brings me to the next virtue of Spoleto: the opportunity it allows established artists to break out of the pattern their success has imposed on them. This is truly a town of freedom in which anybody can do anything with no questions asked. Jerome Robbins, for instance, is famous as a choreographer, but this year he directed not only ballet but one of the *Theatre at Seven*'s most successful dramatic sketches. It is hard to tell whether this happily permissive atmosphere is a result of Menotti's genius for non-organization, or of the festival's chronic penury.

The funds simply will not stretch to high professional fees, so the great 'names' come to Spoleto as guests, not employed but invited, expecting no more than a place to stay and to eat, and the fun of being able to create what they want to. For here being unpaid, they are responsible to no one; even the bogey of the box office disappears as there is a sitting audience and a charitable one. So they are free to have fun, to try out long-cherished ideas, to make mistakes, to find new approaches. And what more stimulating company and what better help-mates could they have than the students with all their eagerness and inexperience? Certainly the mixture works; we seem to be transported to some new Arcadia, to have returned to an age of artistic innocence, of heightened awareness and activity. The spell is such that many artists return year after year, as though to refresh themselves at this new Pierian spring. And all romanticism apart, it is certain that for many, Spoleto is the beginning of a career, and for others it is a turning point.

Such is the achievement of the festival that it would be ungrateful to harp on its defects; and indeed it does not have defects so much as blank spaces. One of these small voids, of course, is the one where other people, other festivals anyway, have organization. This lack was apparently worse than usual this year because of a late start due to near bankruptcy, and I'm afraid, if too much were done about it, the festival's more positive qualities might be endangered. But still, it would be nice if visitors to the festival had some means of finding out what the amended day's program was *on the day,* instead of finding out what they'd missed in the next morning's papers. After all, small though the place is, not everybody has access to the grapevine.

A more important defect is the lack of any

true Italian identification with the festival. It was perhaps a mistake to call it *The Festival of Two Worlds* because the title emphasizes the very separateness of the worlds that it aims to bring together, rather as though an inter-racial society were to call itself "The Black and White Club." Certainly it was disappointing to find so many cultured Italians outside Spoleto regarding the Festival more as an American gimmick than a serious artistic event. This is perhaps understandable. After all, what would be the general reaction in the United States to an American-born Frenchman effecting a yearly cultural invasion of a back-woods town in the Appalachians?

There are a few things which, even without much money, could be done about this unfortunate alienation. First, touring the most successful items in the festival around the Italian provincial capitals would establish that Spoleto productions were for Italians too, not just for cultural snobs and tourists. It would also help to remove the only serious frustration of Spoleto performers: the knowledge that, however good their production, it cannot last more than its allotted two to six performances.

Secondly, the festival could adopt a more constructive attitude towards the Italian cultural world. Instead of merely taking what the country has to offer ready-made, which is mainly good opera singers, the festival could play an important role in stimulating art forms which need encouragement, such as the Italian theatre. Certainly the dearth of Italian theatre at Spoleto this year was appalling. Apart from an afterthought on the very last night, there was not a single original Italian play performed; everything was in translation. If next year there could only be, say, a play competition for Italian dramatists, the winning play or plays to be performed at the festival, the Italians might begin to feel there was something for them in Spoleto.

Lastly, there is the question of language. The festival is known as an American one because the language most heard in the streets and the cafés is English. If the American students only knew what a richness of Italian experience they were missing by sticking in their own little working cliques, they would apply themselves and learn the language overnight. The provision of some festival Italian lessons might help to awaken or support their resolution; but the responsibility for learning or lazing must be theirs.

It is impossible to forecast the future of the Spoleto Festival. One can only hope that it will go on from strength to strength without falling into either complacency or weariness. So much depends on personalities, or rather on *the* personality, Gian Carlo Menotti, who is jokingly known as "the king" of Spoleto. The festival this year was dependent on him to an extent that was scarcely fair to him, his health, or his autumn deadlines for commissioned operas.

His concern for the festival is that of a mother for a delicate, only child. He will spare no personal effort to persuade the rich to give money and the talented to give time to it, and when either are found wanting, he will fill the breach himself. But like many doting mothers and great artists, he finds it difficult to delegate; so all decisions must be referred to him, even if he is too busy or over-tired to deal with them properly. In festival time, as well as before it, he drives himself mercilessly: not only does he attend every first night and probably every concert, but also he makes a point of visiting every one of the mushrooming little boutiques that spring up to sell pots, paintings, hand-printed dresses or hand-made jewelry to the visitors. In addition to this, he is constantly entertaining, receiving important visitors, worried artists, possible donors, town officials, and attending public functions in the town. It is he who must do everything, and it is only he whom people with questions want to see. What is more, none of his executive committee seems prepared to take any responsibility for his policy. It is never, "We think," but always, "Gian Carlo says . . .," or "We must ask Maestro Menotti." He remains separate, looked-up-to, the still point in a turning town.

Indeed, there is something of a latter day Lorenzo de' Medici in his position, poet and patron and popular hero; for he has brought such prosperity to the town that the grateful Spoletines have evolved a complicated ritual to honor him on his birthday, complete with a flaming torchlight procession. There are now so many tourists that he is talking of turning Lucrezia Borgia's Rocca, now used as a prison, into a luxury hotel. The year-round employment this would bring to the area would make it as much an economic event as a cultural one.

There are signs, too, that Menotti has awaked in the Spoletines a sense of pride in their own cultural heritage. The town is contributing substantially to the cost of the festival, and intermittently, whenever there is money to spare, the commune is pushing work forward on the old Roman amphitheatre which clings to the side of the piazza at the edge of the town. The director of the tourist office is confident that Cacoyannis will use it one day, even though the popular bar beside

it would have to be closed, and traffic barred from a section of the town, to keep the noise of motor-bikes, juke boxes, and other twentieth-century obtrusions to the minimum.

Looking at what has been done, and what still cries out to be done, one can guess why Menotti gives his festival first place. Here he is creating more than operas. He is providing an escape from commercialism in art, coaxing a new spirit into existence, creating a new artistic community, even if it is an impermanent one which exists for only two months a year. This is something that can be of radical importance in many different ways in the lives of millions; and this his operas could never be. It may be that someone else could have created the festival as well as he; it may be that some one with less individual creativity could take it over now and still lose none of its character and sacrifice none of its potential. But with such a unique and delicate child of his mind and heart, this is a risk Menotti may not be willing to take.

VIRGINIA KENT
London

A Poem *by Gabriele D'Annunzio*

I pastori

Settembre, andiamo. E tempo di migrare.
Ora in terra d'Abruzzi i miei pastori
lascian gli stazzi e vanno verso il mare:
scendono all 'Adriatico selvaggio
che verde è come i pascoli dei monti.

Han bevuto profondamente ai fonti
alpestri, che sapor d'acqua natia
rimanga ne' cuori esuli a conforto,
che lungo illuda da lor sete in via.
Rinnovato hanno verga d'avellano.

E vanno pel tratturo antico al piano,
quasi per un erbal fiume silente,
su le vestigia degli antichi padri.
O voce di colui che primamente
conosce il tremolar della marina!

Ora lungh'esso il litoral cammina
la greggia. Senza mutamento è l'aria.
Il sole imbionda sì la viva lana
che quasi dalla sabbia non divaria.
Isciaquío, calpestío, dolci rumori.

Ah, perché non son io co' miei pastori?

The Shepherds

September. Let us go. It's time to migrate.
Now in the land of Abruzzi my shepherds
are leaving the folds and go toward the sea;
they descend to the wild Adriatic
as green as the highland pastures.

They have drunk deeply at the Alpine springs;
may the taste of native water
remain a comfort in their pilgrim hearts,
may it long delude their thirst on route.
They have whittled anew their nutwood crook.

They pass over ancient grazing paths to the plain.
as if by a silent grassy river,
upon the tracks of ancient fathers.
Oh the cry of him who first
perceives the shimmering of the shore!

Now along the shore line walks
the flock. Without a stir is the air.
The sun so bleaches the living wool
that it hardly differs from the sand.
Shattering surf, pattering hooves, sweet sounds.

Ah, why am I not with my shepherds?

Translated by Michael R. Campo

Exhibition of the Piedmontese Baroque

No one who was so fortunate as to visit the Exhibition of the Piedmontese Baroque held this past summer in Turin will want to quarrel with the statement that it was *the* cultural event of the season. Housed in three magnificent palaces – the *Palazzo Reale*, built in the mid-seventeenth century and for over two hundred years constantly embellished by the work of first-rate artists and craftsmen, the *Palazzo Madama*, medieval castle – fortress turned into a splendid royal residence in the second half of the same century, and the hunting lodge *Stupinigi*, eighteenth-century masterpiece of the architect Filippo Juvarra, – the Exhibition brought together thousands of objects that illustrated the production of Piedmontese artists in painting and architecture, cabinet-making and ceramics, leather-work and embroidery, engraving and stage design. Using the term Baroque in its widest meaning, the organizers of the Exhibition made it coincide with the two-hundred-year period (1550–1750) that witnessed the growth of Turin from the small town described by Montaigne as neither well-built nor pleasant to the aristocratic city of the Savoias, a model of urban planning.

It is for the specialist to decide to what extent any new major figures were revealed by the Exhibition, or whether its principal merit lay instead in the rich and ample documentation of the artistic expression of a period, well-defined in its chronological limits and studied exhaustively within the confines of a provincial locality. For the average visitor the range of discoveries was almost endless, from Pietro Piffetti's elegant ivory-inlaid eighteenth-century desks and cabinets to Ferdinando Bibbiena's grandiose designs for the court theater, from "bandera" embroidery in multi-colored wools to Vinovo porcelains and Bodoni editions.

The architectural documentation was one of the high points of the exhibit. The first floor of Palazzo Madama, to which access is gained by Juvarra's renowned grand staircase, was filled with enormous free-standing photographs that reproduced façades of dozens of churches, public buildings, and palaces still standing in the small towns and villages of the Piedmontese countryside. Walking among these was to enjoy ever-changing vistas of concave and convex surfaces set off against vertical and horizontal lines, creating a total impression of amazing stylistic unity and coherence.

The truly unique aspect of the Exhibition was the perfect harmony that existed between the areas where objects were formally on view and the larger background in which they were set. As an Italian art city Turin ranks low; the Turinese themselves are apologetic, content with the reputation of their city as an industrial capital, the first to be dazzled by the greater wealth of famous centers such as Rome, Florence, or Venice. Visitors to Turin have been known to pass unfavorably on the monotony of its rectilinear streets, the heaviness of its porticoes, the prudent unimaginativeness of its inhabitants.

But it is lack of familiarity that dictates such judgements rather than facts. The city is rich in architectural monuments, two of which would by themselves be worth a trip: Guarino Guarini's *Palazzo Carignano* and the same architect's *Cappella della SS. Sindone*. In the first instance, humble red brick was turned into a vibrant undulating surface that sweeps from one end of a narrow square to the other and is repeated in the unusual detail of a tower-like structure in the courtyard. In the second, a wave-like staircase leads to a small chapel where the eye is drawn irresistibly upward into the volutes of a never-ending cupola, "a mesh of light that can be likened only to Bach's counterpoint," as one commentator has described it. Turin is also the home of a beautiful picture gallery, the *Galleria Sabauda*, a model museum recently renovated, whose important collection of Dutch and Flemish painting is unmatched in Italy. And it is, of course, the city where the memory of the nineteenth-century struggle for unity and independence is most alive.

The Exhibition of the Piedmontese Baroque thus served to call attention not only to a style and period of Italian art history, but to a city abounding in tradition and visual delights.

Olga Ragusa
Columbia University

EDITOR'S NOTES

• Ignazio Silone is one of Italy's best known writers and hardly needs an introduction to our readers. He is, of course, the author of such well-known works as *Fontamara, Bread and Wine, The Seed Beneath the Snow, A Handful of Blackberries, The Secret of Luca* and *The Fox and the Camellias.* He has also written numerous essays including the remarkable "Uscita di sicurezza" referred to in the present interview and published in translation in the volume *The God That Failed* (Harper). Silone is also co-editor of the journal, *Tempo Presente.* He lives in Rome.

• Parker Tyler is one of this country's most perceptive film critics and one of the first to focus attention upon the cinema as a serious and valid art form. He has published several books of poems and the following volumes dealing with the cinema: *The Hollywood Hallucination, Magic and Myth in the Movies, Chaplin: The Last of the Clowns, The Three Faces of the Film* and *Classics of the Foreign Film.* He is at present working on a biography of the Russian painter Paul Tchelitchew for which he has received a Ford Foundation grant.

• Virginia Kent is a free-lance writer who lives in London. Her article "Working in Sicily for Danilo Dolci" appeared in the *CBC* (Vol. IV, no. 2).

• Art lovers were given last year several opportunities to view some splendid exhibitions of Italian art including the monumental Genoese Masters show that toured the country. The opportunities are no less in 1963. On tour this year is an exhibition of 120 Venetian master drawings on loan from the Correr Museum of Venice. The exhibition is currently at the National Gallery in Washington and will travel to Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Also touring the country is an exhibition by the nineteenth-century Macchiaioli, arranged under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts. It opened with considerable success in September in New York City, then moved on to the Rhode Island School of Design and now is at the Fry Museum in Seattle.

On view at the Museum of Modern Art is a small but truly remarkable exhibition of sculpture by Medardo Rosso (see cover) presented in collaboration with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The exhibition provides a splendid occasion for reappraising the qualities and importance of this very original and relatively neglected artist. The monograph, *Medardo Rosso,* written by Margaret Scolari Barr especially for the exhibition, is a handsome, lucid and authoritative publication.

Other major Italian art events in New York City: an exhibition of famous portraits by Modigliani at the Perls Gallery; "Tuscan Art": Florentine and Sienese paintings from Giotto to about 1500, at Duveen's; an exhibition of Venetian artists of the High Renaissance at Finch College.

• The Barbieri Center entertained as its guests this past summer several Italian scholars of American literature: Agostino Lombardo, editor of *Studi americani,* Claudio Gorlier, Glauco Cambon, and Mario Praz, Professor of English and American Literatures at the University of Rome and author of *The Romantic Agony, The Flaming Heart* and other important works. Professor Praz lectured to the students of the Summer Session at Trinity College on the subject: "The Nineteenth Century in Perspective."

• In the last issue of *CBC* the name of the translator of the leading article, "The Diary of a Resistance Fighter," by Pietro Chiodi, was inadvertently omitted. His name is Nino Langiulli. He teaches at St. Francis College and is presently completing his dissertation on the subject of Italian Existentialism at New York University. He has studied under a Fulbright Grant at Torino with Nicola Abbagnano, some of whose work he has translated into English (*CBC*, Vol. III, No. 2).

• The poem by D'Annunzio so soon after the appearance of other D'Annunzio poems in the *CBC* (Vol. V, No. 1) is included because it suggests some of the atmosphere of the region discussed by Silone in his interview and to remind us of the one hundredth anniversary of D'Annunzio's birth this year.

• Stephen P. Koff was Director of the Syracuse Semester in Italy program in Florence, 1961–1963, and teaches political science in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. Sondra Z. Koff, his wife, is a doctoral candidate in political science at Syracuse.