

SEVGI DOĞAN

CAN WE TALK ABOUT NATIONAL  
PHILOSOPHIES? AN OVERVIEW THROUGH  
BERTRANDO SPAVENTA'S THOUGHT

ESTRATTO

da

LA FILOSOFIA ITALIANA  
Tradizioni, confronti, interpretazioni

A cura di  
Sophia Catalano e Fabrizio Meroi



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SEVGI DOĞAN

CAN WE TALK ABOUT NATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES?  
AN OVERVIEW THROUGH BERTRANDO SPAVENTA'S THOUGHT

The love of truth, faith in the power of mind,  
is the first condition in Philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Senza i filosofi, la coscienza del diritto non esisterebbe;  
il mondo sarebbe dominato o dal despotismo di pochi,  
o dal despotismo delle moltitudini. Coi filosofi  
comincia il regno della intelligenza.<sup>2</sup>

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the possibility of a national philosophy, a question already tackled by Bertrando Spaventa<sup>3</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, to a certain extent, by Antonio Gramsci<sup>4</sup> in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The issue at stake is not whether an Italian philosophy exists or not. The fundamental problem is whether it is possible to talk about a national philosophy; and if so, what features define its national character. In this light, a further question should be addressed: why is it difficult to talk about a national philosophy? In fact, the paper focuses on Italian philosophy but not on philosophy in Italy. The originality of a national philosophy is based on this division.

The paper will survey some of the most prominent approaches to the question regarding the possibility of a national and an international or uni-

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<sup>1</sup> G.W.F. HEGEL, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 1816: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hp/hpinaug.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *Rivoluzione e utopia. Articoli di Bertrando Spaventa su «Il Progresso»*, ed. by I. Cubeddu, «Giornale critico della filosofia italiana», 1963, pp. 66-90.

<sup>3</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, ed. by G. Gentile, Bari, Laterza 1908.

<sup>4</sup> Gramsci, in the *Prison Notebooks*, when discussing the relationship between the intellectuals, people and nation, when talking about the national literature, investigated if a national thinking was possible. Cf. A. GRAMSCI, *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, Torino, Einaudi 1953, pp. 58, 105.

versal philosophy, with a view towards establishing the need for an analysis of this possibility and establishing the universal intellectual who can be the bearer of universal values.

The main thesis supported by the present study is that it is not possible to define either a pure nationality of philosophy or a nationality in philosophy, as Spaventa called it, on account of the interaction between different ways of thinking in different nations. There can be a philosophy which has cultural values different from other philosophies. Culture and the manner of life lead a philosopher to create philosophical concepts peculiar to the nations. There are nations which are able to combine their cultural values with other philosophical postulations and in this way, they have been said to create their own philosophy and therefore can be called, for example, German, French, Italian, Arabic or Islamic philosophy. While crossing borders or exceeding the limits enables philosophers to encounter different ways of thinking and different philosophical concepts, there is always a risk that philosophers can exclude their own native philosophical dynamics and limit themselves within a philosophical system coming from 'outside'.

My interest in the problem of national philosophy or the relationship between nation and philosophy arises from my concern about the originality of philosophy in Turkey. I try to avoid calling it Turkish philosophy because it refers very much to Turkish nationality excluding other nationalities or ethnic groups or excluding the contributions of other ethnic groups to philosophy. As Remo Bodei claims, Italian philosophy has many elements that develop together.<sup>5</sup> In Turkey, and probably also in many countries, there are many different elements that are in contradiction with each other and develop together. I will call it 'philosophical-culture' in a country.

Spaventa's idea of national philosophy suggests a relationship between nation and philosophy. The concept of 'philosophical-culture' contains the universal and particular in itself. While philosophy refers always to universal, culture refers to particular. With this proposed concept, the limitations of a national philosophy can be avoided because while nation signifies also particular as culture, a culture might involve only one culture or can refer to multiple cultures. While the concept of 'national philosophy' introduces or reveals nationalist feelings or sentiments, the concept of 'philosophi-

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<sup>5</sup> According to Bodei, in Italy a philosophy of the concrete develops from Renaissance but it is not pure. He defines the Latin origin of concrete; *cum-crescere* refers to that which has many reasons that grow together. It signifies that Italian philosophy has many elements that develop together. Cf. R. BODEI, *Una filosofia della ragione impura: il pensiero italiano*, in *Effetto Italian Thought*, ed. by E. Lisciani-Petrini and G. Strummiello, Macerata, Quodlibet 2017, p. 59.

cal-culture' is far from these feelings and does not risk falling into nationalism. Even though Spaventa tries to avoid such a risk, his conception of national philosophy still lies on the edge of it.

On the one hand, it is possible to talk about a national philosophy, on the other hand, it is difficult to affirm that there is a national philosophy because of its eclectic form. The question is as follows: what does make a philosophy or a philosophical claim a national one? It is a difficult question to answer. This specific question was asked by Spaventa in *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, in which he investigates the originality of Italian philosophy. Is there a French, English, or German philosophy? Why do we claim that there was a Greek philosophy which was essentially different from the Indian philosophy?<sup>6</sup> These are still actual questions, which have been recently asked by Roberto Esposito in *Da fuori: Una filosofia per l'Europa*.

Esposito points out that the character of Italian philosophy or Italian thought is the relationship between theory and praxis: the thought of praxis is with a practice of thought.<sup>7</sup> This means that the philosophy in Italy is created because of political events. Without taking into consideration the peculiar political situation of Italy, a country which has been characterized, for a long period of time, by a lack of political unity, it is difficult to comprehend the origin of Italian thought. For example, Dante and Machiavelli were exiled; Bruno was burned; Galilei and Campanella were imprisoned; Gramsci died after a long life in prison. For Esposito, the power or repression produces the resistance.<sup>8</sup> He talks about two elements of Italian thought: 1) the influence of political atmosphere that leads the creation of philosophy as thought of praxis, practice of thought; 2) the contamination, or interaction with other paradigms (*paradigmi*). Here there are some similarities with Spaventa's ideas. When Spaventa tries to reveal the originality and identity of Italian philosophy he first scrutinizes the Italian philosophical culture and then its relation to other national philosophies. Both Spaventa and Esposito try to define Italian philosophy through its relationship with the concepts of 'inside' and 'outside'.

Esposito defines Italian thought as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *Prefazione dell'autore*, in ID., *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> R. ESPOSITO, *German Philosophy, French Theory, Italian Thought*, in *Differenze italiane. Politica e filosofia: mappe e sconfinamenti*, ed. by D. Gentili and E. Stimilli, Roma, DeriveApprodi 2015, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



Si può dire che tutto il pensiero italiano sia stato un pensiero della vita nella sua tensione con la politica e la storia. La nostra non è stata né una filosofia della coscienza, come quella classica francese, né una elaborazione metafisica come la tedesca. Ma non è stata neanche una filosofia della logica e del linguaggio, come nei Paesi anglosassoni.<sup>9</sup>

The problem in Spaventa and Esposito is the limitation of philosophy within Europe: therefore, this sort of view remains ultimately 'Eurocentric'.

In short, for Esposito, the important thing is the knowledge or consciousness of life, body and world. German Philosophy is based on the concept of 'negation' (*negazione*), French Theory relies upon 'neutralization' (*neutralizzazione*) and Italian Thought depends on 'affirmation' (*affermazione*): i.e. a sort of 'affirmative thought'.<sup>10</sup> Italian thought is not reactive but it is active, affirmative, and productive. Esposito refers very much to culture to explain the character of Italian philosophy.

## 2. SOME ASPECTS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

First I would like to begin with some different aspects of national philosophy in different countries.

Onésimo Teotónio Almeida, a Brazilian thinker, in *On the Diversity of Brazilian Philosophical Expression*, claims that the Brazilian philosophers or thinkers create their own perspectives and ideas by taking some thought from the authors outside Brazil and adapting them to «the unique context of their cultural mediation».<sup>11</sup> This is what makes Brazilian philosophy «pluralist and cosmopolitan».<sup>12</sup> But, according to this idea, Brazilian philosophy does «not follow the path of a national tradition». This means that in Brazil there are not any conflicting philosophical schools, because Brazilian philosophy generally follows the paths of the Western philosophical tradition: French structuralism, phenomenology, analytical philosophy, and others.<sup>13</sup> In short, when Latin American thinkers talk about a Latin

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15. His idea of affirmation or affirmative thought refers to the immanent philosophy.

<sup>11</sup> O.T. ALMEIDA, *On the Diversity of Brazilian Philosophical Expression*, in *Philosophy and Literature in Latin America: A Critical Assessment of the Current Situation*, ed. by J.J.E. Gracia and M. Camurati, New York, State University of New York Press 1989, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

American philosophy, they refer to the originality which corresponds to the spiritual characteristic of Latin Americans. But the general view is that Latin American philosophy is a sort of combination of different philosophical problems originating from the Western world. Since eclecticism can be found in every national philosophy, it would be unfair to claim that only some philosophical schools, the majority of which from Europe, possess originality.

The idea of national philosophy is related to politics, because every nation at its foundation talks about national values, which hold the state together. In this regard, for example, the founder of Indian Republic and the first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, believed that every state needs a national philosophy in order to hold the nation together and to «give it coherence and a sense of direction and purpose».<sup>14</sup> The need for a national philosophy particularly for such countries such as India, which is comprised of different languages, ethnicities, and religious groups, and which is socially based on different economic classes, comes from the idea that a national philosophy or a national ideology unites these differences into one identity. This national philosophy or ideology would define their national goals and objectives.<sup>15</sup>

But the question of this paper is also how these national and universal values coincide. The aim is to find some national and universal elements in the philosophy of Italian philosophers, like Spaventa. When Spaventa talks about national philosophy, actually he remains between national identity and universal value. In Spaventa in fact we find the idea and explanation of inter-cultural relations because of the interaction between Western philosophy, or rather between German idealism, and Italian thought. Spaventa's investigation first begins with a question about the possibility of a national philosophy – in other words, with the 'identity problem' – and then the question turns into the problem of the 'universality of philosophy'.<sup>16</sup>

Spaventa asks if there is a philosophy which can be said to be distinctively Italian and different from or opposite to other national philosophies. Another important question regarding the issue is where we can find this philosophy. Commonly one believes that «British philosophy is empiricist» or analytical, «German philosophy is idealist, and French philosophy ratio-

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<sup>14</sup> B. PAREKH, *Nehru and the National Philosophy of India*, «Economic and Political Weekly», XXVI, s. I/II, 5-12 January 1991, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> L.A. MACOR, review to *Identità nazionale e valori universali nella moderna storiografia filosofica*, ed. by G. Piaia and R. Pozzo, «Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica», CI, 1, 2009, pp. 470-472.

nalist, philosophers in various countries decided that philosophy could not be universal». <sup>17</sup> So if philosophy is not universal, then each culture has its own particular philosophy. Every country has its own history and culture, therefore its own sociology. But still, on a theoretical level in different fields of social sciences basic concepts and theories are performed in order to analyze different cultures and societies, and these concepts and theories are generally the same. Here the same questions appear again: is there a national philosophy? Is there a universal philosophy?

In 1915, Henri Bergson wrote an essay titled *French Philosophy* in which he discusses a possibility of national philosophy. Since this was the period in which the nationalist idea strongly dominated, questioning the existence of a national philosophy and culture was a common and normal approach. Bergson in this article claims that the source of modern Western philosophy can be found in French philosophy. He described the history of French philosophy from Descartes to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. <sup>18</sup> «The purpose of many philosophical, literary, and scientific essays of these years is to support the nationalist ideology, asserting their nation's intellectual primacy and the purity of their own philosophical identity, erasing any debt to the enemy's cultural tradition». <sup>19</sup> Bergson evaluates French philosophy as an initiator of modern philosophy.

All these aforementioned aspects try to combine the 'territory' with the 'philosophy'. But the main concern is to protect the originality of the philosophy; the concern is about defending the 'culture' and 'tradition'. In this regard, the concept of 'philosophical-culture' can explain the originality of this or that philosophy, instead of the concept of 'national philosophy'.

### 3. SPAVENTA AND THE NATIONALITY OF PHILOSOPHY

Francesca Menegoni writes about the importance of Spaventa, whose influence on Italian philosophy is still noticeable. She points out that Spaventa's reflection is extraordinarily relevant even today, not only for those who wish to overcome the national philosophy in the direction of super-national philosophy, but also due to the current debates on Hegel. Hegel in his inaugural speech for *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* claims that «in

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<sup>17</sup> ALMEIDA, *On the Diversity of Brazilian Philosophy Expression*, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> C. ZANFI, *National Philosophy and Human Genius: An Introduction to Bergson's Essay on French Philosophy*, «Philosophical Inquiries», II, 1, 2014, pp. 193-194.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

other European countries [...] Philosophy [...] has sunk from memory, and that it is in the German nation that it has been retained as a peculiar possession».<sup>20</sup> Hegel believed that the German nation had advanced to a higher level. Therefore, according to Hegel, it is the philosophical-culture of the German nation that keeps philosophy alive. In this regard, Hegel attempted to define the relationship between philosophy and nationality or nation – what may be called its philosophical-culture. But he did not do so in a nationalist or chauvinist way. Spaventa finds the key sources in German philosophy to make an Italian national consciousness possible. For him, philosophy was the driving force to develop the ‘consciousness of a nation’.

Alessandro Savorelli in *Revisioni politiche e riforma dell’hegelismo nel giovane Spaventa* asks: «Spaventa è essenzialmente ‘filosofo italiano’ o ‘nazionale’, o piuttosto ‘filosofo hegeliano’, o filosofo *tout court*?».<sup>21</sup> According to Savorelli, a philosopher like Spaventa does not need that sort of label to be classified. The important thing is that Spaventa has a significant role in the reform of modern Italian philosophy. As being an exponent of Hegelian philosophy, Spaventa also establishes an original perspective between Italian philosophy or Italian thought and European thought. Spaventa demonstrates that the modernity is not a creation of one national philosophy but is created by a European philosophy.

Spaventa tries to identify nation with philosophy. But while he identifies nationality with philosophy, he is also aware of its universal character. In his short article, *False accuse contro l’hegelismo*, he writes that «fra le diverse sfere della cognizione, quella nella quale meno si dimostra l’elemento naturale della nazionalità d’un popolo è la filosofia [...] la filosofia rappresenta nella forma più elevata quella parte intima e sostanziale della vita nazionale».<sup>22</sup> This highest form is its universal character, that is super-national form. The aim of Spaventa is twofold; on the one hand, he wants to overcome the national character of philosophy to gain a super-national form; on the other hand, he still tries to identify the national character of a philosophy. Where can be found the originality of Italian philosophy?

In a letter (25 January 1858) to his brother Spaventa writes that he continues to work on Italian philosophers and he believes that many interest-

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<sup>20</sup> HEGEL, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 1816: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hp/hpinaug.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> A. SAVORELLI, *Revisioni politiche e riforma dell’hegelismo nel giovane Spaventa*, in *Filosofia e coscienza nazionale in Bertrando Spaventa*, ed. by G. Oldrini, Urbino, QuattroVenti 1988, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *False accuse contro l’hegelismo*, in *Id., Opere*, ed. by G. Gentile, Firenze, Sansoni 1972, p. 632.

ing things can be found in their work. After a long critique of Gioberti's philosophy, in another letter (8 March 1858) he writes:

Come è possibile lo spirito? Rispondono: è possibile perché così l'ha fatto Dio. Come vedi non è una risposta. Io domando da capo: com'è possibile lo spirito (cioè Dio)? Questo è il problema nuovo della filosofia: il problema della filosofia tedesca. E mi pare che sinora la migliore soluzione è l'hegeliana... Non so se quello che ho scritto va bene interamente; in certi punti mi sono incontrato con Hegel; in certi altri non so bene ancora se sì o no.<sup>23</sup>

According to Giovanni Gentile, Spaventa in Hegel's *Phenomenology* finds a philosophy of history, in other words, «[la] dimostrazione della razionalità dell'intero processo storico dello spirito umano (*Weltgeist*)».<sup>24</sup> Hegel maintains that every moment in civilization, every system is a necessary moment through which the spirit passes to achieve the consciousness of its creative activity. Spaventa develops his idea of 'national consciousness' starting from this theory of Hegel: the idea of *Weltgeist*. The possibility of philosophy lies behind the consciousness and free thought of a nation. Here there is the priority of theory.

Spaventa emphasizes the creativity or originality of a new philosophy. In this regard, Nietzsche in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* argues that from Thales to Socrates philosophy was one-sided, while, on the contrary, the philosophy of their followers (including Plato) was many-sided.<sup>25</sup> After Socrates, philosophy becomes mixed, while, according to Nietzsche, before Socrates it was pure, not eclectic, one-sided. Plato's philosophy, for example, is considered a fusion of Socratic, Pythagorean, and Heraclitic elements. Spaventa is also aware of this eclecticism and recognizes that no such thing as 'pure' philosophy can be had in his times, at least not of the kind that Nietzsche finds in Greek thinkers before Socrates. But Spaventa believes that with this eclecticism a new philosophy appears. In this regard Spaventa writes as follows:

Nei filosofi, ne' veri filosofi, ci è sempre qualcosa sotto, che è più di loro medesimi, e di cui essi non hanno coscienza; e questo è il germe di una nuova vita. Ripetere macchinalmente i filosofi, è soffocare questo germe, impedire che si sviluppi e diventi un nuovo e più perfetto sistema. Se Platone non avesse fatto altro

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<sup>23</sup> G. GENTILE, *Prefazione*, in B. SPAVENTA, *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, p. XI.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. XV.

<sup>25</sup> F. NIETZSCHE, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, translated by M. Cowan, Washington, Regnery 1962, pp. 34-35.

che ripetere Socrate, non avremmo avuto il mondo delle idee. Se Aristotele avesse ripetuto Platone, non avremmo avuto il primo concetto della sostanza, della individualità. Se Spinoza non avesse fatto altro che ripetere Cartesio, non avremmo avuto il primo concetto di Dio come semplice causalità, come identità che è causa. Se Fichte avesse ripetuto Kant, non avremmo avuto il concetto dell'autocoscienza, della mentalità. Se Schelling avesse ripetuto Fichte, non avremmo avuto il concetto della identità (di essere e di pensiero), come mentalità, come ragione.<sup>26</sup>

Spaventa argues that it is necessary to understand generally the meaning of nationality in the life of philosophy in order to discover the nationality of Italian philosophy.<sup>27</sup> It would not be sufficient to claim that philosophy is the clearest expression of the life of a people. He found this sort of definition abstract. This definition was needed to be clarified through its historical existence.<sup>28</sup> Before everything else, nationality is not a simple geographical phenomenon but «nazionalità è per noi unità: unità viva, libera e potente come Stato. E perché noi vogliamo questa unità come libero Stato? Perché noi sappiamo che solo nella unità come libero Stato possono spiegarsi liberamente tutte le potenze della nostra vita; solo in quello noi possiamo essere e saperci veramente noi».<sup>29</sup> Through these statements in fact Spaventa explains the possibility of a national philosophy, which is contingent upon the existence of a free State leading a unity of a nation.

The idea of nationality is not always the same in different nations and throughout history. He defines nationality as «prodotto assolutamente spirituale»,<sup>30</sup> which means that nationality is not a natural and immediate thing. Nationality is not exclusion or assimilation of other nations but it rather signifies the autonomy of a people in the common life of peoples. He particularly refers to two great ancient philosophies: Indian and Greek philosophy, which, according to Spaventa, are able to express a national spirit. The character of Indian philosophy is religious. Not only Indian life and nationality have religious character, but the speculative thought is also based on religious thinking or has a religious character, which should

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<sup>26</sup> SPAVENTA, *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. B. SPAVENTA, *Della nazionalità della filosofia*, in ID., *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, pp. 5-41. This title was not given by Spaventa but by Gentile because he found it very general. The title originally given by Spaventa was: *Prolusione e introduzione alle lezioni di filosofia nella Università di Napoli, 23 novembre-23 dicembre 1861*.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

be also true for European philosophy. For example, Hegel's philosophy is based on very Christian faith but what makes them different is their approach to theology; one way is intuition, feeling and other way is reason, intellect. According to Spaventa, Indian philosophy does not separate itself from the theological reflection, and therefore remains in abstraction. Indian philosophy does not relate itself to the concrete material through intellect, but it always remains spiritual.

In his *Prolusione*, Spaventa points out that modern philosophy is not a product of just one nation but of different nations, that is of all nations. In this sense, he affirms that «la filosofia moderna non è dunque né inglese, né francese, né italiana né alemanna solamente, ma europea».<sup>31</sup>

#### 4. GRAMSCI AND THE UNIVERSAL INTELLECTUAL IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

National philosophy is a question of culture, which leads us to Antonio Gramsci. The question on the nationality of philosophy seems sometimes to be related to the one regarding the possibility of the universal intellectual. The latter seems a much simpler question than the former. When Gramsci in the *Prison Notebooks* talks about Italian culture and philosophy, he seems to believe that, during the Risorgimento, there were some intellectuals who developed an original, even a national philosophy. In this regard, Gramsci mentions Gioberti, who offered a philosophy which appears original and, at the same time, national.<sup>32</sup> Gioberti's philosophy, according to Gramsci, gave a new dignity to Italian thought; for this reason, Gramsci differentiates Gioberti from Mazzini. It seems that Gramsci, like Spaventa, also believes that a national philosophy is possible. For Gramsci, the cosmopolitan role and function of Italian intellectuals wanes or comes to an end in eighteenth century (1700s).<sup>33</sup>

Gramsci in *Prison Notebooks* writes that Italian intellectuals are not national but cosmopolitan.<sup>34</sup> For him, Italian national culture follows the medieval cosmopolitanism connected to the Church and the Roman Empire, which are conceived as universal, but are geographically located in Italy.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>32</sup> A. GRAMSCI, *Quaderni del carcere*, ed. by V. Gerratana, Torino, Einaudi 1977, Q 19, § 27, pp. 2046-2047. From now always 'Q' followed by the notebook's number, paragraph and page (e.g.: GRAMSCI, Q 19, § 27, p. 2046).

<sup>33</sup> V. GERRATANA, *Intellettuali italiani del XX secolo: il problema del postfascismo*, «Studi Storici», III s., XV, July-September 1974, p. 704.

<sup>34</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 1, § 150, p. 133.



The originality of a philosophy, according to Gramsci, also depends on the relation between philosophy and culture.

Gramsci writes that Benedetto Croce is the last man of Renaissance, because he represents the international and cosmopolite relations. But Croce also expresses a national element.<sup>35</sup> Gramsci calls Croce the last man of Renaissance because according to Gramsci Renaissance has an international or cosmopolite character. He does not ignore the national element in Croce: «Il Croce è riuscito a ricreare nella sua personalità e nella sua posizione di leader mondiale della cultura quella funzione di intellettuale cosmopolita che è stata svolta quasi collegialmente dagli intellettuali del Medio Evo fino alla fine del 600».<sup>36</sup>

When Gramsci compares Croce's view of the intellectual with French philosophers' approach to the matter, even if both philosophers are liberal, they are culturally and traditionally different from each other.<sup>37</sup> The possibility of nationality of philosophy, according to Gramsci, is related to intellectuals within a nation. Gramsci examines this problem through the analysis of Italian literature. His main question is why Italian people read the foreign authors but seem to ignore national intellectuals.

Gramsci refers to the function of intellectual in the practical sphere as follows:

La funzione dei grandi intellettuali, se permane intatta, trova però un ambiente molto più difficile per affermarsi e svilupparsi: il grande intellettuale deve anch'egli tuffarsi nella vita pratica, diventare un organizzatore degli aspetti pratici della cultura, se vuole continuare a dirigere; deve democratizzarsi, essere più attuale: l'uomo del Rinascimento non è più possibile nel mondo moderno, quando alla storia partecipano attivamente e direttamente masse umane sempre più ingenti.<sup>38</sup>

Gramsci defines culture as an internal organization and discipline: a spiritual activity. According to Gramsci cultural factors create these spiritual/intellectual conditions (*stati d'animo*) which causes a common result.<sup>39</sup>

According to Michele Ciliberto, three criterions can be found in Gramsci regarding the origin and the character of Italian nation: 1) the relationship

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<sup>35</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 10, § 41, p. 1302.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 10, § 47, p. 1334.

<sup>38</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 6, § 10, p. 689.

<sup>39</sup> «[...] i fattori di cultura che contribuirono a creare quegli stati d'animo pronti alle esplosioni per una causa che si credeva comune» (A. GRAMSCI, *Socialismo e cultura*, in *Id., Scritti politici*, I, ed. by P. Spriano, Roma, Editori Riuniti 1967, p. 20).



between nationality and territoriality;<sup>40</sup> 2) the organic connection between nation and people;<sup>41</sup> 3) the link between the national and international dimension.<sup>42</sup> Gramsci says something important regarding the connection between national and international dimension. According to Gramsci, a nation is abstract if it is considered outside of its international context. He writes that «la personalità nazionale (come la personalità individuale) è una mera astrazione se considerata fuori dal nesso internazionale (o sociale). La personalità nazionale esprime un 'distinto' del complesso internazionale, pertanto è legata ai rapporti internazionali».<sup>43</sup>

Gramsci poses a question: what does the fact that Italian people prefer to read the foreign authors mean? For him, this signifies that Italian people are exposed to the intellectual and moral hegemony of foreign intellectuals. Therefore, the people feel that they are more related to the foreign intellectuals than to their fellow countrymen and -women. In other words, this means that there is not any intellectual and moral national block in the country, neither hierarchical and even less an egalitarian one. For Gramsci, the intellectuals do not come out from the people, even if they are accidentally one of them; they do not feel that they are tied to the people.<sup>44</sup> Gramsci underlines that this problem is not only related to the literature but to all national-popular culture (*cultura nazionale-popolare*).

Gramsci emphasizes the separation of educated classes with their intellectual activities from national-people. According to Gramsci, national-people is interested in these intellectual activities, from the lowest – for

<sup>40</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 17, § 32, pp. 1935-1936, writes: «Non si può parlare di nazionale senza il territoriale».

<sup>41</sup> Cf. GRAMSCI, Q 21, § 5, p. 2116: «È da osservare il fatto che in molte lingue, 'nazionale' e 'popolare' sono sinonimi o quasi (così in russo, così in tedesco in cui 'volksch' ha un significato ancora più intimo, di razza, così nella lingue slave in genere; in francese 'nazionale' ha un significato in cui il termine 'popolare' è già più elaborato politicamente, perché legato al concetto di 'sovranità', sovranità nazionale e sovranità popolare hanno uguale valore o l'hanno avuto). In Italia il termine 'nazionale' ha un significato molto ristretto ideologicamente e in ogni caso non coincide con 'popolare', perché in Italia gli intellettuali sono lontani dal popolo, cioè dalla 'nazione' e sono invece legati a una tradizione di casta, che non è mai stata rotta da un forte movimento politico popolare o nazionale dal basso [...]».

<sup>42</sup> M. CILIBERTO, *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale nei «Quaderni del carcere»*, in *Gramsci e il Novecento*, I, ed. by G. Vacca, Roma, Carocci 1999, p. 157.

<sup>43</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 19, § 2, p. 1962.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. GRAMSCI, Q 21, § 5, p. 2117: «Gli intellettuali non escono dal popolo, anche se accidentalmente qualcuno di essi è d'origine popolana, non si sentono legati ad esso (a parte la retorica), non ne conoscono e non ne sentono i bisogni, le aspirazioni, i sentimenti diffusi, ma, nei confronti del popolo, sono qualcosa di staccato, di campato in aria, una casta, cioè, e non un'articolazione, con funzioni organiche, del popolo stesso».

example, romance of appendix – to the highest one, but the problem is that these intellectual activities do not contain the indigenous or native intellectual element but they are more foreign in the face of the national-people.<sup>45</sup>

Michele Ciliberto, in his article *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale nei «Quaderni del carcere»*, writes that Gramsci discloses the tension between 'cosmopolitism' and 'national-state' through the figures of Giulio Cesare and Machiavelli which are symbolic representations of cosmopolitism.<sup>46</sup> Ciliberto underlines three characteristics of Gramsci's analysis of national-state and cosmopolitism: 1) never in Roman history, there was an Italian 'nation' but there was only a territory which never managed to nationalize itself;<sup>47</sup> 2) in ancient roman history, there would be an equivalent for 'cosmopolitism' but not 'national-state';<sup>48</sup> 3) this entire process is related to the fact that there was a shift of the axis of the Empire from West to East.<sup>49</sup> According to Gramsci, «in realtà c'era più 'nazionalità' nel mondo greco che in quello romano-italico».<sup>50</sup>

Gramsci points out that philosophers like Giordano Bruno are European philosophers rather than Italian, because of their cosmopolitan features. According to Ciliberto, Gramsci believes that the Italian people can succeed in developing a true national task when they renew their structural cosmopolitan task.<sup>51</sup> As Ciliberto claims that the destination of Italy lies in the dialectic of 'cosmopolitism' and 'national-state' (*cosmopolitismo-Stato nazionale*), it should also be valid for the entire history of human beings.<sup>52</sup>

Gramsci's analysis of 'national', 'nation', 'people' or 'folk' (*folcloristico*) helps to understand his concept of national philosophy. He separates national from 'folk' or *folcloristico*. The meaning of *folcloristico* or 'folk' is close to that of 'provincial': it indicates a cultural phenomenon with fairly narrow boundaries.<sup>53</sup> Gramsci, as Giorgio Baratta stated, is an appraiser

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> CILIBERTO, *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale nei «Quaderni del carcere»*, p. 159.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Gramsci writes: «Lo sviluppo storico di cui Cesare fu l'espressione assume nella penisola italiana ossia a Roma la forma del cesarismo ma ha come quadro l'intero territorio imperiale e in realtà consiste nella snazionalizzazione dell'Italia e nella sua subordinazione agli interessi dell'Impero» (GRAMSCI, Q 17, § 21, p. 1924).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. GRAMSCI, Q 17, § 32, p. 1935: «la letteratura latina fiorisce dopo Cesare, con l'Impero, cioè proprio quando la funzione dell'Italia diventa cosmopolita, quando non più si pone il problema del rapporto tra Roma e l'Italia, ma tra Roma-Italia e l'Impero».

<sup>51</sup> CILIBERTO, *Cosmopolitismo e Stato nazionale nei «Quaderni del carcere»*, p. 169.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>53</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 14, § 7, p. 1660.

of folklore (*folclore*), traditions and popular culture (*cultura popolare*).<sup>54</sup> According to Gramsci it is necessary to overcome two typical evils of Italian history: 1) municipal particularism (*particolarismo municipale*) and catholic cosmopolitanism (*cosmopolitismo cattolico*).<sup>55</sup> As Giorgio Baratta clearly highlighted, for Gramsci nation does not represent a value in itself in an absolute sense (whatever the source of nation is presumed to be: language, ethnicity, race, etc.). Nation according to Gramsci is more objective and institutional than ideal or symbolic, made up of economy, State, civil society, language, literature, public opinion.<sup>56</sup>

Gramsci's problem with cosmopolitanism is completely related to his critique of culture: i.e. to his approach to culture and territorial values, folklore and tradition. In this sense, the Renaissance created a new intellectual culture but «this culture, cosmopolitan rather than integrated with national-popular life, remained the property of a restricted (albeit geographically diverse) circle».<sup>57</sup> This new culture fail to guide the popular classes «on their national terrains».<sup>58</sup> According to Gramsci, this situation continued to exist in different ways even during the Risorgimento (nineteenth century) and in the twentieth century it found its best example in Croce's work. Gramsci also points out that these intellectuals are not able to transform knowledge into comprehension (*comprendere*) and feeling (*sentire*).

According to Spaventa, the intellectual is the one who must transform the ambiguous and indeterminate feeling of revolution into determinate thought.<sup>59</sup> Without intellectuals, or philosophers, the revolution would be blind, indeterminate and lacking of scope.<sup>60</sup> Also, without philosophers, the consciousness of right could not exist. Therefore, the world would be dominated either by the despotism of the few or by the despotism of the multitude. It means that he gives the intellectual a universal role to realize the freedom of thought and freedom of absolute human right as universal qualifications. It seems to me that the universality and internationality of intellectuals and philosophy is clear when Spaventa talks about 'the freedom of thought', 'intellect', and 'feeling', which are the unique condi-

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<sup>54</sup> G. BARATTA, *Le rose e i quaderni. Il pensiero dialogico di Antonio Gramsci*, Roma, Carocci 2003, p. 45.

<sup>55</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 15, § 41, p. 1801.

<sup>56</sup> BARATTA, *Le rose e i quaderni*, p. 46.

<sup>57</sup> P.D. THOMAS, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism*, Leiden, Brill 2009, p. 424.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> SPAVENTA, *Rivoluzione e utopia*, p. 69.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

tion for the political freedom as well. But what does the concept of liberty mean for Spaventa? According to him, the concept of liberty has its meaning when human beings are the 'consciousness of themselves', of their 'nature' as absolutely 'free spirit'.<sup>61</sup> Gramsci writes that «l'uomo è soprattutto spirito, cioè creazione storica e non natura». But by spirit he means that the human being is a historical creation (*creazione storica*) and not a creation of nature.<sup>62</sup> Because if the human being is not a historical creation it will be difficult to explain why always there has been the exploited and the exploiter, the creators of wealth and the selfish consumers of it.<sup>63</sup>

## 5. HOW ARE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND NATIONALITY OF PHILOSOPHY POSSIBLE?

In the preface to his lectures in Modena (1859), Spaventa claims that the real unity of a people is based on the existence of liberty in the life of different nations, like a perfect community of a people which consists of the free and rational development of individuals.<sup>64</sup> The development of a people and a nation is possible by the development of national consciousness in all Europe.<sup>65</sup>

He holds that the Italian moral, philosophical and political problem could be resolved by the European cultural and philosophical revolution. He definitively talks about a philosophy beyond borders, which means outside a nation. He gives an international or a universal character to philosophy, but he also keeps its national features. In this respect, he talks about the «circulation of Italian thought» in his introductory lecture in the University of Bologna in 1860, where he writes about the character and development

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70. But we should not forget that when Spaventa speaks of the freedom of thought he always refers to Hegel's idea that we can find in *Geschichte der Philosophie*. In his another article called *Rousseau, Hegel, Gioberti*, Spaventa quoted from *Geschichte der Philosophie* and wrote: «Quando si dice 'volontà universale' non bisogna intendere per quella la somma della volontà universale e la volontà individuale o la volontà ragionevole, e la sovranità non consiste nel numero, ma nella ragione. Laddove una maggioranza impone la sua legge alla minoranza, non v'ha la libertà. La libertà è il pensiero; e chi, spregiando il pensiero, parla di libertà, non sa quello che dice (Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, t. III, p. 477, 478)» (B. SPAVENTA, *Hegel, Rousseau, Gioberti*, ed. by I. Cubeddu, «Giornale critico della filosofia italiana», 1963, p. 92).

<sup>62</sup> A. GRAMSCI, *Socialismo e cultura*, in *Id.*, *Scritti politici*, p. 18. Also: [http://www.classici stranieri.com/liberliber/Gramsci,%20Antonio/scritt\\_p\(2\).pdf](http://www.classici stranieri.com/liberliber/Gramsci,%20Antonio/scritt_p(2).pdf).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>64</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *Per l'unità spirituale della nazione italiana*, in *Id.*, *Unificazione nazionale ed egemonia culturale*, ed. by G. Vacca, Bari, Laterza 1969, p. 196.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

of Italian philosophy from sixteenth century to present time. According to Spaventa, the idea developed in Italy through Bruno, Campanella, and Vico circulated in Europe and then returned in Italy through the philosophy of Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, and Hegel. The term 'circulation' was used for the first time in the Bologna preface of 1860.

Spaventa affirms that in his time the philosophical idea or real philosophy is very weak. It is necessary to go back to the Italian philosophical tradition and to revive the spirit of free national thought through the works of great Italian philosophers. In other words, he tries to refresh or empower Italian philosophy by seeking his germs and the influences into the philosophical thought of other nations. And then from this research to return to Italian philosophy with a new and more elaborated form. For him, this circulation has been forgotten by Italian thinkers, even though its understanding is fundamental for Italian philosophy in his days.<sup>66</sup> Briefly Spaventa claims that Italian thought needs to reveal the greatness of the Italian philosophical tradition, in order to replace Italian philosophy with the common life of European philosophy and 'give back the liberty to Italian speculation'.<sup>67</sup>

Spaventa states: «Io credo che noi italiani abbiam bisogno, più che i tedeschi e gl'inglesi, di libertà interiore, morale, religiosa, scientifica, filosofica, per potere essere liberi politicamente, interiormente, esteriormente, all'aria aperta. Ne abbiam bisogno, perché abbiamo in casa, come cosa o persona nostra, il nostro più gran nemico, il nemico dello spirito libero, l'autorità spirituale, infallibile!». <sup>68</sup> This inner spirit could be achieved only through 'turning' inward and 'going outside': within both inside and outside culture.

During his life time, he tried to fight against the prejudices and hostility to foreign philosophies such as German philosophy, particularly Hegel's philosophy. This is the aim of his work called *Studi sopra la filosofia di Hegel*. According to Spaventa it is necessary to develop natural Italian talent, heritage and genius without damaging it and animate it with the modern philosophical idea. He talks clearly about culture. In other words, this idea should be in harmony with this genius and with its real creations.<sup>69</sup> This

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<sup>66</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *Logica e Metafisica*, ed. by G. Gentile, Bari, Laterza 1911, p. 10. See also M. GRILLI, *The Nationality of Philosophy and Bertrando Spaventa*, «Journal of the History of Ideas», II, 3, 1941, p. 362.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>68</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *Paolottismo, positivismo, razionalismo*, in ID., *Unificazione nazionale ed egemonia culturale*, p. 228.

<sup>69</sup> SPAVENTA, *Logica e Metafisica*, p. 19.

harmony existed in Italy in XVI century. Spaventa is very much aware of the blind belief in nationality or the nationalistic idea. In this respect, he criticizes the attitude of nationalists against the foreign philosophy because they refuse this philosophy without knowing or seeing its origin and, therefore, they try to present and defend their national life as a closed field, without connections with the life of other nations or people.<sup>70</sup> Through this point, he criticizes present Italian philosophers, such as Mamiani, Rosmini, and Gioberti. For him, they neglect the idea of spirit as liberty or freedom itself. Spirit (*Spirito*) is the freedom itself, which is very much Hegelian.

Spaventa finds these philosophies incomplete because they neglect the absolute nature of thought in which the essence and dialectic are the same essence and dialectic of the being; besides they refuse «la medesimezza della natura divina e della natura umana».<sup>71</sup> This means that they reject the principle of the modern world, which relies on the concept of 'identity'. Spaventa in his *Prolusione e introduzione alle lezioni di filosofia nella Università di Napoli* questioned the nationality of philosophy:

Sono possibili, dopo il medio evo e ne' tempi moderni, tante filosofie nazionali, quanti sono i popoli civili di Europa? O invece quelle che si dicono filosofie nazionali non sono altro che momenti particolari dello sviluppo comune della filosofia moderna nelle diverse nazioni? Si può dire, p. es., che ci sia una filosofia italiana essenzialmente diversa da una filosofia francese, inglese, tedesca, come si dice che ci è stata una filosofia greca essenzialmente diversa da una filosofia indiana? E in generale, il genio proprio originario d'una nazione, il quale si specchia e riconosce così nettamente nella lingua, nella letteratura e nell'arte in generale, e ne' costumi, deve e può discernersi anche – oggi giorno e in Europa – in quella forma e attività universale dello spirito, che si chiama filosofia?<sup>72</sup>

Among different European nations, modern philosophy developed in a succession of systems. Although it achieves its major scientific perfection in Germany, it begins to have a universal character which belongs to all European nations.<sup>73</sup> The possibility of a national philosophy relies on the free existence of a nation: «La filosofia, si dice, in un popolo che non è libero ed indipendente non può giovare all'acquisto della nazionalità e della libertà».<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>72</sup> SPAVENTA, *Prefazione dell'autore*, in *Id.*, *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, p. 1.

<sup>73</sup> SPAVENTA, *False accuse contro l'hegelismo*, p. 635.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

When Spaventa speaks about the unification of Italy, he also refers to a new cultural and philosophical hegemony, because a new unification requires a new cultural hegemony for its existence, which would be later mentioned by Gramsci. Culture and philosophy reflect a character of a people or a nation. Philosophy is not useless, nor an empty intellectual exercise, but it forms the real human life, in which human beings find the true significance of their spirit. This real form of human life is something natural. Based on it, a free people is recognized and has a true consciousness of itself in its philosophy. The important thing is the cultural and philosophical hegemony of a people; without cultural and philosophical development or without free intellectual development, the unification of a people cannot be successful.

In his article, *Del principio della riforma religiosa, politica e filosofica nel secolo XVI* published in 1854-55 in Torino, Spaventa talks about the principle of a new age. The aim of this article, was to determine the universal concept of the philosophy in XVI century and to clarify the principle of modern philosophy.<sup>75</sup> This work was not only meant to be a sort of introduction to the history of 16<sup>th</sup> century philosophy: it was also about contemporary Italian philosophy:<sup>76</sup>

Io non sono così fuori di questo mondo da credere che l'Italia debba cacciare gli austriaci, il papa, il re di Napoli, il granduca e i duchi, e divenire veramente libera con gli esoterismi delle formule speculative, né che la guerra futura sarà combattuta da una schiera di filosofi. Io credo quanto altri mai, nella potenza degli archibugi, del cannone e della mitraglia [...]. Ma non perché le armi sono necessarie e potentissime, è da affermare che le idee siano affatto inefficaci ed oziose. Se le braccia sono qualcosa in una rivoluzione nazionale, lo spirito e la mente non sono certo un'inezia [...]. Se è grandissima l'efficacia delle armi in una rivoluzione nazionale, si fa manifesto ad ognuno che quelle non valgono troppo nella costituzione *organica* della libertà e dell'indipendenza. Se le armi sono buone a distruggere, e, secondo alcuni anche a mantenere gli Stati, l'unità vera d'una nazione, la libertà e la grandezza d'un popolo non si ottengono che con le grandi idee.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> B. SPAVENTA, *Del principio della riforma religiosa, politica e filosofica nel secolo XVI*, in Id., *Unificazione nazionale ed egemonia culturale*, p. 140.

<sup>76</sup> The principle of XVI century is the division between 'lo Stato' e 'la Chiesa'. This division also demonstrates a new reconciliation and the real universality of Christian idea. The principle is the real concept of liberty and unity of spirit, which is the center and fundamental of human activity. This is the essence of modern world which appears first time in two catholic philosophers: Campanella and Descartes. But according to Spaventa, it demonstrates itself just in the XVIII century, by French Revolution (cf. *ibid.*, p. 142).

<sup>77</sup> SPAVENTA, *False accuse contro l'hegelismo*, pp. 635-636.



In the Preface of *Logica e Metafisica*, he writes that, seeking the development of Italian philosophical thought in new land or territory, is not a mere imitation of German nationality, but it is rather a new conquer of what once belonged to us.<sup>78</sup> In his *Studi sopra filosofia di Hegel*, he also fights against the Italian philosophers who emphasize the national and traditional philosophy at the expense of foreign philosophy.<sup>79</sup> In the Preface of *Logica and Metafisica*, he explains the concept of the nationality of a people by distinguishing two forms: the natural form and the spiritual<sup>80</sup> or liberal form. The first one is immediate and fundamental; it is generated from the work of conscious people in its differences and unity with other peoples or nations. This first one alone, is not enough: the spiritual or liberal form, in fact, is necessary.<sup>81</sup> In this respect, he defines nationality as follows:

La nazionalità è come un'opera d'arte, nella quale l'idea e la natura si conciliano e si contemperano, senza che questa sia distrutta e quella cessi di essere libera. Così bisognava svolgere il genio naturale italiano, senza distruggerlo, ed avvivarlo con la idea moderna, senza che questa cessi di muoversi in quello liberamente.<sup>82</sup>

It means that this idea should be in harmony with that genius and with its real creations, which can be found in the philosophy of XVI century. The philosophy of Mamiani, Rosmini, and Gioberti denies that the spirit is that very form of liberty<sup>83</sup> which engenders intellectual development, which in turn provides a people or a nation with its own national consciousness.

## 6. CONCLUSION

For Giuseppe Tognon, Spaventa did not just contribute to the circulation of Hegel's philosophy in Italy, but he also helped determine the con-

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. B. SPAVENTA, *Prefazione dell'autore*, in *Logica e Metafisica*, p. 15. Here he also points out that if Italian philosophy wants to renovate philosophy in Italy as a part much deeper, intimate and highest principle of our life, it is important to deal with two types of studies: Italian philosophy in XVI century and modern philosophy in German system (cf. *ibid.*, p. 16).

<sup>79</sup> He also mentions how he was contrary to this nationalist idea in the aforementioned *Prefazione to Logica and Metafisica*, p. 17.

<sup>80</sup> Spaventa writes that the spirit is not like a material thing that functions outside and can be communicated outside. For him, to have spirit, it is necessary already to have it in itself. The problem of current Italian philosophy for Spaventa (for example in Mamiani, Rosmini, and Gioberti) is that they negated the idea of spirit as being with liberty, as liberty itself (cf. *ibid.*, p. 20).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.



ditions of profound theoretical and practical conflicts which were active in that pivotal moment of the history of the Italian nation.<sup>84</sup>

Spaventa was not a nationalist in a discriminatory sense because he supported a universal and cosmopolitan idea. He was cosmopolitan because he conceived philosophy at that moment in Italy not only as being completely traditional, but he related the Italian tradition with the European. He had the cosmopolitan idea. According to nationalists, philosophy is concerned not only with the relation between universal and particular truths, but it also «comprises a method of grasping and explaining the truth».<sup>85</sup> The individual mind develops subjectively and objectively. For this reason, it contains national elements, that is it contains subjective elements.<sup>86</sup>

German philosophers like Herder and Fichte give importance to nation and nationality because of its cultural characteristic. According to the universalists, truth and the knowledge of truth cannot belong to a nation, that is, philosophy as the knowledge of truth cannot be French or German. Spaventa can have universal, national, and cosmopolitan approaches to the problem of nationality of philosophy. He was not against foreign philosophy – like his chauvinist contemporaries – nor was he an abstract cosmopolitan or universalist who does not accept any cultural or traditional features in philosophy.

The idea of national philosophy is based on some fundamental concepts such as ‘national consciousness’, ‘identity’, and the ‘idea of nationality’. Spaventa tried to give a role and responsibility to philosophy or more precisely to ‘theory’ in order to construct a «moral and political Italian consciousness»,<sup>87</sup> which he clearly explained in his work *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*.

Also in the contemporary period, Esposito claims that thought/thinking (*il pensiero*), not only philosophical thought (professional way of think-

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. G. TOGNON, *Bertrando Spaventa e la ‘filosofia del diritto’ di Hegel*, in *Filosofia e coscienza nazionale in Bertrando Spaventa*, p. 61.

<sup>85</sup> GRILLI, *The Nationality of Philosophy and Bertrando Spaventa*, p. 341.

<sup>86</sup> According to Herder – the founder of the concept of nationality in Germany, who establishes a link between culture and nationality – all the spiritual activities such as art, philosophy, language, and religion which are the organs of a nation can be developed only through nationality. He insists on the importance of the nation and also of the society or social unity. It means that he is not as much individualist as other in the eighteenth century. According to Herder, the individual gained his/her development through the group that s/he bounded up (cf. *ibid.*, p. 342).

<sup>87</sup> F. GALLO, *Philosophical Revolution and the Shaping of European Consciousness: Bertrando Spaventa’s ‘La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea’*, «Phenomenology and Mind», VIII, 2015, p. 212.

ing), develops a *constituent* function or plays a crucial role in constituting the part of Europe.<sup>88</sup> It is very important to observe that the function and the role that Esposito gives to thought was already ascribed by Spaventa to the philosophers and philosophy – as he stated in *La rivoluzione e l'Italia* published in 1851 in «Il Progresso». In this regard, Spaventa wrote that philosophers created and transformed the feeling of a people into thought. Thought is a sort of mirror in which people can see their nature, their needs and also themselves. Spaventa, in this regard, writes that:

Quando le condizioni politiche e sociali della vita d'un popolo non corrispondono al nuovo principio che si è sviluppato nel mondo dell'intelligenza; quando il fatto è in contraddizione con l'idea; la rivoluzione già esiste come germe nella coscienza nazionale. Ma allora ne' popoli l'idea rivoluzionaria è un sentimento vago, oscuro, indeterminato. I filosofi trasformano questo sentimento in un pensiero determinato; questo pensiero è come uno specchio nel quale il popolo riconosce se medesimo, i suoi istinti nuovi, i suoi novelli bisogni; nel quale egli trova risoluta la contraddizione tra ciò che è e ciò che dovrebbe essere.<sup>89</sup>

Philosophy, thought, or thinking takes the responsibility to support the unity of Europe, in which the western philosophy was born. Philosophy can save Europe.

Philosophy, which aims to reveal what truth is or what truth ought to be, has no nationality but it contains some national characters because of its origin. It is better to call it not national philosophy but 'philosophical-culture'. Every nation has its own 'philosophical-culture'. Nevertheless, it is clear that philosophy is much richer when it is supranational, that is not being limited to one nation or nationality.<sup>90</sup> Spaventa discussed the existence of a «circulation of European thought» to trace back to Italian Renaissance. According to what he wrote, Italian philosophers of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century had already mentioned and argued «all the main elements of modern European philosophy».<sup>91</sup> From my reading of Spaventa, I can deduce

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<sup>88</sup> R. ESPOSITO, in a talk on *Da fuori. Una filosofia per l'Europa*, Lectio magistralis, Futura Festival 2016, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEndg0V32XQ&t=5>.

<sup>89</sup> SPAVENTA, *Rivoluzione e utopia*, p. 69. Spaventa published his articles in the journal called «Il Progresso» respectively on the 3 and 15 June 1851 as *La rivoluzione e l'Italia* and, on the 31 August and 11 October, as *Le utopie*. Then he added another article *Rousseau, Hegel, Gioberti* on 26 December 1851. Also see I. CUBEDDU, *Bertrando Spaventa pubblicista*, «Giornale critico della filosofia italiana», 1963, pp. 46-65.

<sup>90</sup> GRILLI, *The Nationality of Philosophy and Bertrando Spaventa*, p. 346.

<sup>91</sup> T. HONDERICH (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press 2005, p. 453.

that the problem of nationality of philosophy is very much about two important Hegelian concepts, 'liberty' and 'consciousness', that is the liberty and conscious of a people through which the philosophical and intellectual development becomes possible.

In *La rivoluzione e l'Italia*, Spaventa wrote that the important thing for Italians was to accomplish the work that had already begun with their revolution. In other words, the important thing was that the consciousness of absolute human right, reason, and thought for Italians became universal and national; besides another important thing was that this fundamental principle would penetrate into all the manifestation of human life. In other words, the realm of rules of the intellect embodied itself not only in art but also in religious feeling. The main aim was not just to achieve the civil liberty, but had to target the liberty of intellect and liberty of thought,<sup>92</sup> which was the main problem of the current world. Thus, the idea of nationality of philosophy developed around politics, or political philosophy.

As far as I'm concerned, the main characteristic of Italian philosophy is its relation to its own culture, its own philosophical tradition, through critical thinking, which gives it also a historiographical and historical feature. This distinctive character can be found in Spaventa and Gramsci when they analyze Italian culture through its philosophical, political, literary tradition.

The existence of 'philosophical-culture' and the originality of philosophy are possible only where the process of democratization is completed, since the elements of democracy enable the 'critical thinking'. If in a country the process of democratization is not completed, but has been rather interrupted/destroyed and continues being destroyed, the creation of a 'philosophical-culture' is impossible. If in a territory there is no consensus (*consenso*) which is an important element of democracy, political and philosophical culture cannot be developed. If in a country there are always strict and uncompromising opposite poles, there will be always negation and no affirmation. If there is affirmation of foreign philosophy and there is no consensus between cultural dynamics and other philosophies, or philosophical conceptions, it is because the hegemonic culture is based on 'negation', therefore obstructing the affirmation of others.

To conclude, Spaventa was not only interested in the Italian philosophical development from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to his time, but he was very much attentive to foreign studies and philosophies, particularly German idealism. Through the comparison of these philosophies Spaventa came to the conclusion that without 'liberty of intellect' and 'thought', which he found in

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<sup>92</sup> SPAVENTA, *Rivoluzione e utopia*, p. 69.

Hegel, in Germany,<sup>93</sup> a national and even international philosophy was not possible. Another important conclusion is that there is not nationality of philosophy but it is possible to find the spirit of a nation in that philosophy: a 'national spirit' can be felt in that or this philosophy. He found the key source in the German philosophy to make the Italian national consciousness possible.

The problem in Spaventa is that he defines the principle of Italian and European philosophy by reducing both to just German idealism, especially into the Hegelian idea. In this regard, in his third lecture in Napoli he explains that the character of Italian philosophy is the same as the modern philosophy; that is «[...] la ricerca del principio di ogni cosa non nella assoluta oggettività, materiale o ideale, ma nella mente assoluta».<sup>94</sup> And he continued to explain that «lo sviluppo è la esplicazione, la opposizione e finalmente la unità de' due momenti della mente assoluta, cioè la oggettività e la soggettività infinita: la realtà vivente della natura e l'autonomia della coscienza umana».<sup>95</sup> This sentence summarizes Hegel's dialectic.

Spaventa claims that the nation creates a spirit. The nation is not only a geographical territory but it has a meaning with its spirit. He gave importance to the national spirit and national consciousness which would create a unity.<sup>96</sup> For him, the political freedom of Italians was not possible without freedom of thought and feeling: only if there is liberty of thought, then consciousness of being will become possible and thence comes political liberty. The last thing I would like to add is that for Spaventa cultural and intellectual liberation comes before political liberation. It signifies that theory precedes or anticipates practice or praxis.

The greatness of Spaventa lies in his analysis of the appearance of nationality and the idea of nations by drawing a parallel between the Middle Ages and modern period, which allows him to arrive at modern philosophy. Therefore, he managed to make a connection between nationality and modern European philosophy.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Spaventa explains the character of German philosophy as follows: «Il processo del pensiero tedesco è naturale, libero, consapevole di sé: in una parola, critico. Quello del pensiero italiano è spezzato, impedito, e dommatico. Questa è la gran differenza. Ora l'Alemagna è entrata in un nuovo periodo critico, più ampio e vigoroso del precedente, e al quale succederà una nuova costruzione del reale» (SPAVENTA, *Prefazione dell'autore*, in ID., *Logica e Metafisica*, p. 26).

<sup>94</sup> SPAVENTA, *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea*, p. 67.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>96</sup> SPAVENTA, *Rivoluzione e utopia*, p. 69.

<sup>97</sup> In *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni con la filosofia europea* Spaventa writes: «Lo scopo della mia Prolusione è stato di vincere l'uno e l'altro pregiudizio, che sono in sostanza uno solo;

Gramsci's studies on the concept of nation, culture, popular-nation, and *Weltanschauung* of cosmopolitanism lead us to comprehend the cultural and intellectual production in a country. In Q 29 (§ 7) Gramsci considers the impact of Dante on the language as «essenzialmente un atto di politica culturale-nazionale».<sup>98</sup> According to Gramsci, with his attempt to translate Latin into popular language or popularize Latin, Dante made a great contribution to the national popular-culture. Dante's defense of Italian language against Latin, considered to be as an élite language, is not less important in that period for Gramsci. Dante as an intellectual of the period tried to make a connection between culture and people. Gramsci attempts to relate the intellectual to popular culture or to the people. This approach of Gramsci refers to the hegemony of popular culture over élite culture, or hegemony of Italian language over the Latin.

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cioè esporre il vero concetto – quello che io credo vero – della filosofia nostra e della europea, e far vedere come coincidono e devono coincidere» (*ibid.*, p. 49). At the end of his lectures (10th lesson) he states that through his work he tried to overcome the idea that Italian philosophy and European philosophy are in opposition to each other. He believes that he had demonstrated that Italian and European philosophy had the same progress and the same results. The character and development of Italian philosophy after Risorgimento was the same as European philosophy (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 197-198).

<sup>98</sup> GRAMSCI, Q 29, § 7, p. 2350.

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