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THE FIGURE OF NAPOLEON IN ITALIAN LITERATURE: 1796-1821

THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

AT

THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

BY

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FEBRUARY, 1971

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THE FIGURE OF NAPOLEON IN ITALIAN LITERATURE: 1796-1821

S U M M A R Y

## THE FIGURE OF NAPOLEON IN ITALIAN LITERATURE: 1796-1821

The purpose of this Thesis is to make a comprehensive examination of the influence of Napoleon on the contemporary Italian scene as reflected in the literature of that period.

These twenty-five years marked the transition in Italian thought, life and letters from the world of the ancien régime to a world inspired by the Rights of Man and anxious to shake off artificiality of every kind. The liberal world of the 1820's was making a conscious effort to reach these fundamental ideals of mankind, and in the particularly Italian context, this effort was closely connected with nationalism and the beginning of the Romantic Movement. Hence the significance of these years which bridge the 18th and 19th Centuries: they mark the end of an era and the beginning of what can be considered as the modern world.

In order to put this study in perspective, the First Chapter is concerned with the political and literary state of Italy in 1796. Although politically weak and divided, Italy did have a profound cultural unity. Parini and Alfieri realised the weakness of contemporary society, particularly its dependence on foreign rather than Italian influence, and began the moral and political awakening of the Italian people. However, although the attempt to form a national conscience in Italy was made in the latter part of the 18th Century, it lacked a leader and a driving force.

Chapter Two deals with the arrival of Bonaparte in April, 1796 when he was welcomed as a saviour, the one who embodied the ideals of the French Revolution and who would drive out the Austrians. This young general also seemed like a fellow-countryman/

fellow-countryman rather than a foreign invader because of his Italian ancestry and so it seemed that Italy could now take a short-cut to freedom and unity. The overwhelming enthusiasm was considerably dampened by the news of the Treaty of Campoformio, but by 1799, anger among writers had become more controlled and therefore more powerful and gave way to constructive plans for trying to improve the situation.

The Third Chapter contains a detailed examination of the impression on Italy of the career of Napoleon from 1800 to 1821. This could well be demonstrated by a graph rising steadily from 1800 to the consolidation of his power and coronation in Milan, until 1812, then rapidly declining until 1814 and 1815, followed by a period of enforced silence after which the graph again begins a gradual upward incline. This literature is not all one-sided. Where there is adulation, it is always balanced by satire or serious criticism - the product of careful analysis and thought. Napoleon was seen as a means to an end by all writers, and it is this indirect aim which gives the work produced during the period its great importance. The aim in question was the liberation of Italy and the restoration of her historic greatness in the best possible way; some carried this general idea further to speak of Unification. Obviously, war was the most undesirable background for this work, and this explains why writers made such earnest demands for peace throughout the period. This chapter is divided chronologically into seven sections:

- (a) 1800-1802: Renewed hopes of liberty, patriotism and desire for peace.
- (b) 1803-1805: Renewal of war; consolidation of Napoleon's power; his Coronation in Milan; hatred of England.
- (c) 1806-1809: Napoleon the Conqueror. Adulation, sincerely-believed praise (which was not surprising and must not be condemned especially after the Fascist period), and serious criticism. The people were/

(c) 1806-1809:

were dazzled by all Napoleon's victories. After Jena, Austerlitz, Friedland and Wagram it seemed as if he could not lose. When soldiers returned from these wars they were heroes, and as regards the war in Spain, since only good news was reported, Italians could not be blamed for drawing erroneous conclusions.

(d) 1810-1811: Personal adulation of Napoleon; divorce from Josephine, marriage to Marie Louise of Austria and birth of King of Rome. Spanish War in background but now mainly important in an indirect way since Italians from different parts of Italy met each other in Spain and found they were fellow-countrymen.

(e) 1812-1813: Moscow Campaign and Battle of Leipzig.

(f) 1814-1815: The spell is broken. Torrents of abuse in 1814. February 1815 - Escape from Elba - wonder and admiration; hopes dashed at Waterloo and further abuse fell on Napoleon, but considerably less than in 1814.

(g) 1816-1821: The end of an era. Relief at long-desired peace; strict press censorship by Austria of all literature relating to Napoleon; growth of legend and sympathy for the prisoner on St. Helena; realisation of good he had done for Italy. 5th May, 1821: Death of Napoleon.

The vast number of minor writers who commented on Napoleon help to build up a very substantial comment on the Age as a whole but in addition, there is the contribution of three major literary figures, Monti, Foscolo and Manzoni, who in their different ways substantiate and deepen all the attitudes expressed by others.

Chapter Four/

Chapter Four traces the development of Monti's attitude to Napoleon. He was the official poet of the period and his work is a mythical transfiguration of contemporary events. Monti was a great classicist and lover of beauty, but this latter coincided with his "italianità". His contribution may be referred to as "neoclassicismo napoleonico". Monti was born in 1754 and grew up in the world of patronage, the salon and the court, and for him, this was the traditional way of life of the poet. Consequently, he belonged more to the 18th than the 19th Century. An understanding of his particular background is essential before one can comment fairly on his subsequent changes of political allegiance. People and events were the tools of his trade, the pretext for his Muse, but he did not look directly at this real world before his eyes. Rather, he saw it by means of imagination as one looks at a painting or a piece of sculpture. In this respect he was a true Neoclassicist.

The Fifth Chapter examines Foscolo's image of Napoleon which could also be called, "neoclassicismo idealistico". Foscolo belonged to the new age although in many ways he was the heir of Alfieri. He was nineteen years old in 1799 and at that time he was convinced that Bonaparte was the bringer of liberty to Italy. Hence his furious anger and disillusionment after Campoformio. Yet although this betrayal by Bonaparte prevented Foscolo from being an objective critic, he was honest enough to admit that Napoleon had done some good for Italy. In all Foscolo's work can be found the sentiment of the "patria nazione"; he was essentially a citizen of Italy, a patriot with great hopes for the liberty, unity and freedom of his country. Napoleon always remained for him an example of the classical tyrant even although he had the great merit of/

of having awakened the Italian people. Thus, St. Helena seemed the just expiation of his guilt.

In Chapter Six, there is an attempt to draw conclusions from all these commentaries on the period. The most obvious general impression is the inter-action of life and literature. Italy had been changed irrevocably in these twenty-five years; she had had practical experience of unity and an understanding of the meaning of being a nation. The ultimate goal, unity and freedom, had not been attained, but undoubtedly, this no longer seemed a vague ideal, but rather, a realistic, practical proposition which would have to be reached by long planning and considerable personal effort on the part of the Italian people.

Even in 1821, men realised that the importance of this period in their history could only be assessed in the future when it could be put in its historical perspective. There is calmness, serenity, maturity and spirituality in this outlook which was only reached through personal suffering on the part of individuals. Manzoni epitomises this attitude of mind: man could not make a definitive judgment of Napoleon in 1821 - he could only recognise that the Emperor had put a brake on the excesses of both Revolution and Reaction; that he was the bridge between the 18th and 19th Centuries; posterity would be the judge and contemporaries could only place their trust in their Creator and try to see His hand in the creation of Napoleon.

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## INTRODUCTION

THE FIGURE OF NAPOLEON IN ITALIAN LITERATURE - 1796-1821.

"Ei si nomò : due secoli,  
L'un contro l'altro armati,  
Sommessi a lui si volsero,  
Come aspettando il fato;  
Ei fe' silenzio, ed arbitro  
S'assisse in mezzo a lor".\*

The study of literature, as of history, cannot be divided arbitrarily by dates chosen for the convenience of the student, as all trends and happenings are in part the result of what has gone before, just as contemporary events influence future developments according to their importance. It would be correct, therefore, to look on every occurrence which affects the general life of the community as part of an all-encompassing process of transition or change.

The Napoleonic Era in Italy had a particular impact because for nearly twenty years it was associated with one man whose ideas and policies strongly reflected his personality and contrasted with existing conditions. As a result, the change which took place became more obvious, affecting as it did Italian life, thought and letters. In retrospect, the pre-revolutionary world seems far-removed from the 1820's: attention/

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\* MANZONI: "Il Cinque Maggio" lines 49-54.

attention has turned from the world of baroque and Arcadian artificiality to the more real world of man's quest for his inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which should be ageless.

This "liberal" world of 1820 was making a conscious effort to attain these fundamental ideals of mankind - an effort which was closely associated with nationalism in Italy and the beginning of the Romantic Movement. Manzoni judged that this vast step from the 18th to the 19th Century, from the "ancien régime" to what can be considered as the beginning of the modern world, was due either directly or indirectly to the influence of Napoleon. Hence the significance of these years.

CHAPTER ONE: (a) ITALY ON THE EVE OF THE ARRIVAL OF  
THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY ARMIES.

(b) THE ITALIAN LITERARY BACKGROUND IN 1796

CHAPTER ONE

(a) ITALY ON THE EVE OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE  
FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY ARMIES.

Since the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, Italy had enjoyed a long and beneficial peace - the longest in her history. During this period the population increased, particularly in the cities, and it was among the middle classes which had decreased greatly in the preceding centuries that this increase was most noticed. There was also time for some internal re-organisation in the various States, and in a sense these fifty years can be regarded as a period of convalescence for Italy. Although still weak, divided and under foreign rule, one advantage of the wars which occupied the first half of the century was a reduction in the amount of Italian territory under foreign domination. With the exception of Lombardy (the Duchy of Milan and the Duchy of Mantua) all the other States were autonomous - even Tuscany under Francis II of Lorraine was only joined by a personal union with the House of Austria. In 1765 it became an autonomous Grand-Duchy under Pietro Leopoldo. However, towards the end of the century Austrian influence increased as a result of political marriages, and while these diplomatic manoeuvres were concerned as ever with the balance of power in Europe, they inevitably fostered a feeling of instability in the various Italian States.

One/

One example of this was the plan to transfer the Bourbons of Parma to Naples when Charles of Bourbon went to Spain in 1759, and then annex Parma to Austrian territory and add Piacenza to Piedmont. In Naples and Tuscany Charles of Bourbon and Leopold I merely regarded their thrones as temporary substitutes for more important positions, and the Duchy of Modena was looked upon as yet another possible Austrian stronghold once the Este family came to an end.

Such constant attempts on the part of the Austrians and Bourbons to gain control of the smaller Italian States had one good consequence for the future of the country as a whole: it led to stronger links between the governments and the governed, and the very fact that the new sovereigns were foreigners, free from local prejudices, led to the gradual process of breaking down traditional, regional differences. As outsiders they were in a position to introduce reforms to try and bring Italy to the level of other European countries. Their work was most beneficial in the economic sphere: trade advanced to such an extent that most of the Italian States were forced to abandon their remaining feudal practices which for example in Tuscany and Lombardy meant that the land was the property of the cities of Florence and of Milan.

As/

As the richest areas developed economically under Maria Teresa and Joseph II, the inconvenience of frontiers which hindered communications became more apparent. This was particularly felt in Lombardy, and the more forward-looking sections of the community began to realize for themselves that the common good could only be achieved by linking together the interests of different regions. Italy was in a state of flux, an unhappy mixture of weakness, of old and new ideas, not all of which were bad, but which needed profound re-organisation.

Apart from the Papal States, the most backward were the Republics of Venice and Genoa, decadent aristocracies reminiscent of a bygone age, and the small Republic of Lucca was as full of peculiarities as many a kingdom a hundred times its size. Venice, "la dominante", was ruled solely by the members of the aristocracy (1000-1200) according to laws set down previously. As a result, there was immobility of government, change was regarded as a crime, and this situation led to corruption by the rich. Contact between the rulers and the rest of the citizens did not exist, commerce and industry were allowed to decrease, the arsenals were left empty, and Venice completely lost her diplomatic prestige. Although the majority was passively submissive to the Republic, the example/

example of the French Revolution impressed a section of the bourgeoisie which sought social equality and fanned their anger against the inept government. Inevitably this vast territory of more than two million people was becoming a suitable target for foreign intervention. Lucca, San Marino and Genoa suffered from a similar type of senile decay although the latter's commerce, like her people, was more active than in Venice.

In comparison with these relics of mediaeval times, the development of Lombardy and Tuscany, where different members of the Hapsburg-Lorraine family followed the same political, administrative and ecclesiastical policies, is much more worthy of attention. After the wars of Succession, Maria Teresa was able to turn her attention to the Duchies of Milan and Mantua. On the basis of a new census the tax system was reformed, ecclesiastical exemptions granted since 1575 were abolished, thus recognising the struggle against mortmain, and all communal administration was reformed on a uniform basis. The aim was to replace a varied collection of mediaeval restrictions and privileges by direct dependence of all on the State. Reforms in other fields were also far-reaching in their consequences: the right of sanctuary within churches was/



was abolished, penal law revision put an end to torture as a means of punishment, the Inquisition was suppressed and education was re-examined after the abolition of the Jesuits.

The State was re-awakened. Economic unity spread from the country to the town and from this growing commerce there developed a rich middle-class. Simultaneously there was a renewed interest in culture and a lively concern for public affairs. These were the advantages of the rule of Maria Teresa and Joseph II in Lombardy, but by the nature of things they still regarded Italy as a source of exploitation for Austria, and once roused from their lethargy, the Lombards could not be expected to tolerate this situation for very long. The growing middle-classes would not continue to endure the pre-eminence of the aristocracy which, although deprived of their fiscal privileges, remained the dominant class under Austrian rule because of the amount of land they owned. Further, the development of their own native culture inevitably tended to estrange the Lombards from foreign overlordship. This situation explains why Lombardy was ready to support both the Revolution and the Empire with all her energy, and at/

at the Restoration was again ready to fight against Austrian domination.

Something similar was happening at the same time in Tuscany under the Arch-Duke Leopold, Maria Teresa's second son. When he succeeded to the throne in 1765 his first task was to break down the barriers between the cities, destroy the remains of feudalism and put the chaotic financial system in order. His "codice leopoldino" produced legal uniformity (it was the first in Europe to abolish both torture and the death penalty), and by State Tribunals to which all were subject, he was able to create a unified, uniform administration. Education was reformed in favour of science and in the fields of commerce and agriculture he allowed great freedom and firmly upheld the teaching of the physiocrats. As far as ecclesiastical reforms were concerned, Leopold had the same policy as his brother, Joseph: he wanted an independent Tuscan church, free from Papal control and responsible to the sovereign alone; he did everything in his power to break the influence which the church had on his subjects, culminating in the Synod of Pistoia (1786) which proclaimed the equivalent of the Gallican declaration and even permitted Mass to be said in Italian, but this was soon stopped by public outcry. In 1790 when his son, Ferdinand II/

Ferdinand II, succeeded him all attempts to break with the Pope were forgotten and Ricci, Bishop of Prato, who had been famous for his Jansenist sympathies, formally declared his submission in 1799. Without doubt, his reforms were outward-looking and beneficial, particularly in agriculture, but at the same time all thought of military defence was completely disregarded because Leopold detested war and all it involved. However, by the end of the 18th Century, Tuscany had been thoroughly re-organised and not the least important factor in this process was the part played by the local Italian reformers like Pompeo Neri and Bishop Scipione Ricci, even although they worked under foreign supervision. But in practice, life was too dull and well-ordered to be natural; inertia became the strongest force of all and in the end Tuscany was the first State in Europe to recognise the French Republic. (9th February, 1795).

A complete contrast is seen between Tuscany and the adjoining territory of the Papal States which contained two and a half million inhabitants and stretched from the mouth of the Po to the Garigliano. The Legations of Bologna Ferrara and the Romagna had a reasonable standard of life and/

and culture, but the rest knew only poverty and misery. Statistics tell us that Rome with neither industry nor commerce had 170,000 inhabitants among whom were 20,000 ecclesiastics, 10,000 beggars and 7,000 Jews. The government was considered inferior even to that of the Turks and Alfieri has left a particularly grim picture of the former "caput mundi":

"Vuota insalubre region, che Stato  
Ti vai nomando; aridi campi incolti;  
Squallidi, oppressi, estenuati volti  
Di popol rio codardo e insanguinato;  
  
Prepotente, e non libero senato  
Di vili astuti in lucid'ostro involti;  
Ricchi patrizi, e più che ricchi stolti;  
Prence, cui fa schiocchezza altrui beate;  
  
Città, non cittadini; angusti tempi,  
Religion non già; leggi, che ingiuste  
Ogni lustro cangiar vede, ma in peggio;  
  
Chiavi, che compre un dì schiudeano agli empi  
Del ciel le porte, or per età vetuste:  
Oh, se' tu Roma, o d'ogni vizio il seggio"? \*

The countryside was deserted, even where the soil might have been productive, and the towns were de-populated. "The cities of the Papal States", says Goethe, "only seem to stand, because the earth is unwilling to swallow them up" \*\* and only the churches/

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\* Alfieri: Sonnet against Rome. Written 1777; published 1783.

\*\* "Der Staat des Papstes hingegen scheint sich nur zu erhalten, weil ihn die Erde nicht verschlingen will" --  
J.W. von GOETHE, "Italienische Reise", Part 1, 25th Oct. 1786.

churches and the monasteries showed any signs of affluence.

Pius VI (Angelo Braschi) who reigned between 1774 and 1799, was a man of good intentions who hoped to be remembered as the benefactor of the Papal States. Instead, he was to witness and suffer personally, some of the greatest tribulations that had ever befallen the See of Peter. He will certainly be remembered as an enthusiastic patron of the arts and the founder of the Museo Pio-Clementino which houses most of his collection, but unfortunately these purchases were a serious drain on Vatican finances, already in a precarious position after the attempt to drain the Pontine marshes. To do him justice, Pius VI had inherited a very difficult situation both in the temporal and spiritual spheres. During the second half of the 18th Century the general wave of anti-clericalism led European governments to make increasing attacks on the Papacy and its ancient privileges: "Concordats" were demanded securing the abolition of clerical immunity from taxation, of rights of asylum and so forth. The situation was made increasingly awkward by the movement which spread from Portugal and France calling for the abolition of the Jesuits. Clement XIV (1769-1773), tried conciliation but eventually issued the celebrated Bull, "Dominus ac Redemptor" which put an end to the Jesuit Order for the time being - (21st July, 1773). This then was the unenviable situation which faced Pius VI: his historic journey to Vienna in 1782 was a vain attempt to calm/

calm Joseph II; his efforts to reform the Pontifical finances and suppress abuses were met with opposition from vested interests, and when the Revolution came, Republican fury added to the mounting tide of anti-clericalism gave the Pope an almost superhuman burden to bear.

The twofold kingdom of Naples and Sicily bore many similarities to the Papal States, although the latter is generally considered the less backward of the two. Feudalism was still in force despite various attempts at reform, and the peasantry was subjected to the most humiliating duties and obligations to their over-lords. The main characteristics of the South were poverty, ignorance and administrative chaos; legislation was a mixture of Roman, feudal and canonical resulting in processes which were both interminable and unintelligible except perhaps to the "pagliotti" who specialised in these legal peculiarities. There was a basic lack of any person or group of persons who had the interests of the State at heart: this was not to be found among the feudal lords, the clergy, the feeble middle-class or the wretched populace.

Since 1748, the Bourbons had taken the first steps towards ecclesiastical and administrative reform under the guidance of Tanucci. Unfortunately his reforms did not touch the social field and he was content to follow the line of least resistance, perhaps not surprisingly. His power came to an end in 1777 when Maria Carolina, daughter of Maria Teresa, began to make her/

her influence felt over her weak Bourbon husband, Ferdinand IV. The Queen was determined to replace Bourbon influence with that of Austria, and to this end she worked with her favourite minister, John Acton. This break with the Bourbons meant that they would have to create their own diplomacy and be able to defend themselves. Large sums were spent in building a fleet and in assembling an army of 30,000 men from a populace of 'lazzaroni' who knew how to fight as a mob but were not suited to the discipline and order of the professional soldier. In any case, it would have been difficult to try to instil warlike feeling into such a dejected State, and even without Napoleonic influence it would surely have collapsed from sheer internal weakness. The advent of the French Revolution and the fear of revolutionary movements led the Queen to suppress all mention of change or reform although in this she was going against the forward-looking sections of her kingdom. In Sicily the situation was similar, but even if the people there had more of a regional conscience, which they interpreted as a national one, in both Kingdoms the "ancien régime" was on the point of dissolution.

Parma and Piacenza were other examples of the transference of influence from Paris to Vienna as a result of marriage. The French Minister, Du Tillot, ably administered these two Dukedoms by fostering commerce and agriculture, making wise laws and combating feudalism. He had hoped to unite  
Parma/

Parma and Modena by a marriage between Ferdinand and Maria Beatrice d'Este, but instead the Duke chose the Austrian, Maria Amalia, sister of Maria Carolina of Naples. Like her sister, Maria Amalia dominated her feeble husband, then dismissed Du Tillot, and by the 1790's the exchequer had become so hopelessly over-burdened that the Duchy was in debt for more than its total value. The Ministers were constantly changing and policy was in the utmost confusion; the army was irregularly paid and mutinous; the whole structure of this little State was on the verge of collapse.

East of Parma lay the Duchy of Modena, ruled for forty years by the eccentric Francis III of the d'Este family. Austria did not even need to try to gain control here because the Duke had changed sides after 1748 and since then made every effort to gain Austrian favour. In return he was made Viceroy of the Austrian possessions in Italy, and for this reason he decided to leave Modena and live in Milan. Francis died in 1780 and under his son, Ercole Rinaldo, (humane and intelligent, apart from his financial foibles), the administration was efficient. Nevertheless, he detested the Austrians and lamented that his Duchy must fall within their power.

Geographically situated between the Emperor and the King of France, Piedmont had to adopt opportunist policies and try to please both sides while giving no real advantage to either. Defence was essential, and alone among the Italians/



Italians the Piedmontese had a trained army, backed by a strict feudal caste-system and a regimented aristocracy - the middle-class being rigidly excluded from the commissioned ranks. Charles Emmanuel III, the second King of Piedmont, liked to think of himself as another Frederick the Great, but the comparison was more wishful than real. His successor, Victor Amadeus III, who was well-meaning but devoid of inspiration, spent too much money designing uniforms and trying to maintain the army during the long peace. This together with an obsolete legal system and exorbitant feudal privileges fanned discontent among the growing bourgeoisie, while the nobles themselves had little cause for satisfaction, bound as they were to serve the King - an honorary rather than lucrative position.

New ideas from France and elsewhere arrived first in Piedmont, fomenting constant irritation among the more go-ahead groups; while, paradoxically, the very competence of the administration, the fact that despotism was not largely tempered by inefficiency, as elsewhere, made discontent more understandable and more rife than in any other part of Italy. Culture, particularly that which was not French-inspired, was neglected, and to obtain freedom men of letters had to emigrate - witness the careers of Denina, Baretti and Alfieri of whom the latter was only too ready to renounce his share of the family fortunes in favour of his sister and leave Piedmont for/

was it?

for ever. Disquiet was also caused by commercial and financial troubles culminating in a crisis in the silk industry in 1787, but like other discomforts these were seen as the signal for reforms rather than revolution.

Immobility and conservatism were characteristic everywhere in Italy and where there were reforms they were neither profound enough nor far-reaching. Each of the eleven States was ruled by a sovereign or an oligarchy; the middle-classes were ignorant of their rights; and a populace which was held in servitude naturally regarded every change with suspicion and were completely unaware of ideas and events outside. Until 1796 Italy did not form part of the historical current of the time - "la sua è la storia d'un popolo senza storia". \* In fact, it did not seem possible to the Italians that their long peace could soon end. All were united in this false confidence - they recognised that there were many inconveniences peculiar to each State, but the contemporary view was that there was something to be said for a policy of "quieta non movere".

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\* Ernesto Masi: "L'Italia al rompere della Rivoluzione Francese"-  
Roma, 1898, page 135.

(b) THE ITALIAN LITERARY BACKGROUND IN 1796.

Literature, the mirror of a nation's civilization, draws the greater part of its inspiration from the atmosphere as well as the events in the contemporary scene: it evolves with it as it gives its comment on the age.

During the 18th Century Italian Literature gradually came back to life, and this is true both literally and metaphorically speaking. There was a profound cultural unity in Italy, and since the time of Dante an Italian language and literature had existed, but taste had become somewhat corrupt during the Baroque period with "il silenzio della grande poesia" \* - Marinismo being the most memorable. The realization of this decadent state was the first step towards overcoming it, and in 1690 a literary Academy was founded in Rome to correct the oddities and exaggerations of the Baroque period by proposing a return to the literary tradition of the Cinquecento. The new accent was on a gentle, musical type of poetry and refined tales of love; the settings had to have a languid air and the whole formed an idyllic picture of the bygone world of Arcadian shepherds. To bring this ancient world to life, the Arcadian poets had to imitate the Classics, for only by imitation could they escape from Baroque taste. Unfortunately, this also meant an escape from the problems of contemporary life, but the great merit of Arcadia was that it was not snobbish - it was ready to open its doors to King John of Portugal as well as to a poor countryman like/

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\* Croce: "Storia della letteratura del Secolo XVII", Page 52

like Parini. Another aspect of this feeling of Italian inferiority was expressed by an exaggerated admiration of foreign books, customs and ways of life, with particular reference to France and England. In the middle of the century there was more "Gallomania" than "Anglomania", but by the end of the century the positions were reversed. This admiration of France was due to the splendour of the court of Louis XIV, the impressiveness of French literature at that time which boasted Corneille, Racine and Molière, and then the works of the Encyclopaedists, especially Voltaire, which made France the centre of new rationalist ideas. Strangely enough, much knowledge of England came to Italy through Voltaire's "Lettres sur les Anglais" (1734). What fascinated the French was the spectacle of comparative freedom of life in England - an aspect which was later to draw Baretti from Italy and keep him permanently in England. It is also interesting to note that 1756 saw the first Italian translation of Shakespeare from French by Domenico Valentini. He translated "Julius Caesar" - a choice which was characteristic of the times as it was a Classical subject with which the Italians were familiar.

This combination of Arcadianism and foreign influence was a step forward for Italian literature although this is not perhaps immediately apparent. It must be remembered that a way of life and thought had to change radically, and this could only evolve naturally with the help of time balanced by events.

Metastasio was the most significant interpreter of Arcadian taste/

taste in literature. His poetry could be simple and sublime at the same time, as in his "Canzonetta a Nice", but he is particularly remembered for the spontaneous musicality and graceful sentiment which enabled him to rise above the kind of verse typified by Giambattista Zappi whom Baretti referred to as "il mio inzuccheratissimo Zappi" \*. Metastasio created a new means of poetic expression -- the melodrama, which is best described as "sentimento che si muta in motivo di canto, malinconia dolore rimpianto gelosia dubbio che appena spunta e subito svapora in eco e in melodia, sentimento che si fa confort e riposo a se stesso", \*\* and as such it appealed strongly to the contemporary society of which it was the mouthpiece.

The work of Paolo Rolli can be quoted merely as a supplement to Metastasio. As a characteristic Arcadian poet he expresses himself in a mood that is partly idyllic, partly elegiac, melancholic as well as sentimental:

"Solitario bosco ombroso,  
A te viene afflitto cor  
Per trovar qualche riposo  
Fra i silenzi in quest'orror.  
  
Ogni oggetto ch'altrui piace  
Per me lieto più non è:  
Ho perduta la mia pace,  
Son io stesso in odio a me". \*\*\*

Nevertheless/

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\* Baretti: "La Frusta Letteraria", No.1., ottobre, 1763.

\*\* Momigliano: "Storia della Letteratura Italiana". Page 319.

\*\*\* Rolli: "La Lontananza", 1 - 8.

Nevertheless, behind the pastoral façade of these two major representatives of Arcadia can be glimpsed the more real setting of an 18th Century aristocratic garden where lords and ladies were able to enjoy a life of leisure and boredom.

The contemporary scene is more obviously the background used by Goldoni. Although he was greatly influenced by Metastasio at the beginning of his career, Goldoni moved away from the classical world of the ancients to portray the modern every-day world of Venice -- as in "Il Ventaglio". His may seem a somewhat superficial view of the society of the time as one always feels that he is observing life as an amused spectator, seeing the humorous and ridiculous side rather than the deeper issues arising from more profound social or moral problems. The reason for this was that Goldoni was instinctively giving his own personal observations on life: he felt that no social barriers stood between himself and the people he portrayed in his plays who were normal middle-class types without false aspirations or frustrations, people who could easily identify themselves with the characters. This latter point was very significant: the Renaissance had produced a rather aristocratic type of culture, and there had never been a culture of the masses, but with Goldoni it is evident that this tradition has been definitely broken.

While Metastasio, in a refined, sincere way represented the highest achievement of Arcadia as found in the most select drawing-rooms, /

drawing-rooms, Goldoni is the last representative of the 18th Century while it was still happy and serene. From the late 1750's a variety of works gradually appeared which changed the atmosphere of Italian literature: Parini marks the return of poetry to reality, sanity and common-sense and by 1765 he had already published the first two parts of "Il Giorno". Within the next two decades his social criticism was combined with serious political discussion when the works of Alfieri roused Italy from her slumber by urging independence, liberty and unity.

This may sound very unlike the Italy of the Arcadians, but beneath the surface frivolity there was also the serious side where traces of the new social and reforming outlook could be seen, even although they were only of a theoretical nature. Vico examined the principles governing the evolution of the history of humanity and fought strongly against every form of Cartesian rationalism in his "Scienza Nuova", published 1725. At the same time, Muratori was compiling his monumental "Rerum Italicarum Scriptores" which made Italy conscious of her own history, and in so doing emphasised her dignity as a nation in the eyes of Europe and encouraged the tradition of study of Italy's heritage. In the discussion of relations between Church and State the most outstanding figure was Pietro Giannone. His "Istoria civile del Regno di Napoli" (1723), voiced a Ghibelline-like attitude: the State was shown to be independent and/

and sovereign while the Church retained only spiritual power. He viewed the history of Naples as a struggle between Church and State, but his theories, developed with increasing bitterness in the "Triregno", only brought him twelve years of imprisonment ("Il Triregno" was published posthumously in 1859).

✓ 1  
Lack of internal political stability and a growing feeling of social dissatisfaction reacted on the literary scene. During the second half of the 18th Century every Italian writer of note had crossed the Alps at least once, and in so doing came into personal contact with French and English ideas. Through these travellers the thought of the Encyclopaedists and Enlightenment reached Italy: it was hoped to reconstruct society on a rational basis allowing free criticism of all established institutions. Pietro Verri's "Il Caffè" which discussed only social questions, contained the most Illuministic periodical literature of the time; but literary criticism reached a surprising level when even Dante was scorned by Bettinelli in his "Lettere Virgiliane" (1757) - this criticism being a by-product of his admiration of Voltaire.

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Barretti was more conservative and did not exaggerate his admiration of French literature. Instead, he made Italians aware of English literature, giving pride of place to Shakespeare - as in his "Discours sur Shakespeare et sur Monsieur de Voltaire", published in London 1777. His more famous "Frusta Letteraria" (1763-65) stands as the symbol of the/



the literary critic who wanted to destroy the remains of Arcadian poetry and replace it with something more useful, more in keeping with the real interests of the times. He can be justly rebuked for not fully appreciating Dante, but undoubtedly his particular gift was to have been aware of the need to make a break with the past, thereby awakening a national conscience and opening the way for an Alfieri and a Foscolo.

At the same time, Gaspare Gozzi fulfilled a similar although less striking rôle in Venice with his "Osservatore veneto", (1761 - 62). But the critical spirit was not only confined to literature: Beccaria enunciated a new concept of penal procedure based on the belief that justice did not equal cruelty. He condemned torture and capital punishment in "Dei Delitti e delle Pene" (1764) - a work which inspired Parini's Ode, "Il Bisogno", written the following year. In the South, Filangieri developed the lines of thought suggested by Vico and planned a completely new society in his "Scienza della Legislazione" (1780 - 83) and Genovesi, a follower of Giannone, formulated a new vision of economics as well as producing philosophical works - see his "Meditazioni Filosofiche", 1758.

However, this movement which was gradually bringing literature back to life was dominated by Parini - a poet with a conscience. With his moral view of art he held the balance between conservatism and the other extreme, revolution. Parini began as an Arcadian, and like Baretti was a member of/

of the "Trasformati" in Milan who opposed the empty imitation of the Classics. His social status was the factor which determined his work. The son of a small silk merchant in Bosisio, he was brought to Milan from the country at the age of nine years. There he lived with an aunt who left him money on condition that he became a priest. As a result, although he lacked a vocation, his poverty led him to accept the conditions and after his Ordination in 1754 he became a tutor in the Serbelloni family where he taught the young Duke. It was during the eight years which he spent in this household that he had the opportunity to observe the weaknesses and injustices of that society which he later satirized in "Il Giorno - an account of a day in the life of a "giovin signore".

Early in his career, Parini wrote: "Finchè non si giunge a rivolger l'affetto, l'ambizione, la venerazione dei cittadini ad oggetti più sublimi che non sono la vana pompa del lusso o la falsa gloria delle ricchezze, mai non si destano gli animi loro per accorgersi che vi è un merito, che v'è una gloria infinitamente superiore; mai non si sollevano a tentare cose grandi, a segnalarsi nella loro patria, e ad aver la superbia di distinguersi, benchè nudi, fra l'oro e le gemme che circondano altri". \*/

altri".\* Ridicule was the means by which he hoped to demolish this society and by pretending to praise it he gained more scope for exposing in detail its emptiness and "sensiblerie". But the driving force behind his irony was his deep humanity which was shocked by the basic boredom, the "Gallomania", the rigid caste-system and the lack of any remote resemblance to family life. His ideals were social equality, love of nature, the family and one's native land, and he felt strongly about the important part to be played by religion, classical art and the Italian tradition. These democratic principles were of the same spirit which was soon to prompt Burns to say:

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The Man's the gowd for a' that".\*\*

A much more violent and individualistic approach to contemporary problems came from Alfieri, often regarded as the prophet of Italian freedom and unity. He was certainly the prototype and spiritual leader of the poets of the Risorgimento; a man of violent loves and hatreds, and most particularly the enemy of tyranny and of the French. His motto could well have been "libertà va cercando" and he confirmed this himself:

"Fin/

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\* CANTÙ: "L'Abate Parini e la Lombardia nel secolo passato".  
(Page 394)

\*\* BURNS: "A Man's a Man for A' That" - Lines 7-8.

"Fin dalla mia più giovanile età, io sentiva in me una predominante passione fierissima per la civil libertà, più assai a me nota allora per un certo indomito istinto naturale, che non per acquistate nozioni. Con gli anni dappoi, con l'esperienza, e con l'assiduo e lungo studio delle cose e degli uomini, io imparava forse a conoscerla veramente, e ragionatamente apprezzarla. E dai primi anni miei parimente, io mi sentiva una somma naturale avversione per i Francesi in genere, e massime per la loro lingua, pel loro contegno, frasario e leziosi costumi. Coll'età poi, coll'esperienza, e con brevissimo studio, io perveniva in appresso a bene appurare questa mia avversione invincibile, le cagioni indagandone; ed a rettificarla, ragionarla, e comporne un perpetuo odio, per me preziosissimo; e per l'Italia tutta, col tempo, non meno che utile, necessario". \*

Yet Alfieri's aristocratic and introspective scorn was not due to politics or love but was of a more abstract, unreasoning nature - somewhat similar to the "mal de siècle" feelings typical of later Romantics like De Vigny and Byron. This sense of futility led him to years of travel - of storm and desolation, but his violence was sublimated when he began to write. For him the first basic principle in life was liberty, whether/

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\* Alfieri: "Il Misogallo", Prosa II; Pages 11-12, (1st London Edition, 1800).

whether this referred to politics, religion, society or literature, and in this respect his moral teaching was ageless, certainly outwith the limits of the national Risorgimento. It was quite natural that this vision of human liberalism with which he was pre-occupied should be closely connected with the fight against tyranny since the former depended more or less on the defeat of the latter.

In 1777 Alfieri produced a formal description of tyranny and the forces which supported it - cowardice, fear, ambition. Like Machiavelli he considered that it was sustained by the army, the clergy and the nobility. In the second part of this treatise, "Della Tirannide", he tells us how to face tyranny and then get rid of it. Conspiracy was bound to fail, he said, and the abolition of a tyrant could only be the work of one man: "Un animo feroce e libero, allorquando è privatamente oltraggiato, o quando gli oltraggi fatti all'universale, vivissimamente il colpiscono, può da sè solo in un istante e con tutta certezza, efficacemente rimediare al tiranno, col ferro".\* This recommendation of assassination is also reminiscent of Machiavelli - rules are laid down like scientific principles. Alfieri was speaking from his own experience of life, yet in an age which looked to the Enlightened/

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\* ALFIERI: "Della Tirannide", Libro II, Capitolo 7.

Enlightened Monarchy as the fount of social welfare, he looked further ahead and saw that the real problem was fundamentally political -- the rights of man as an individual and as a group. Almost two hundred years later, the present-day reader can recognise immediately the state of mind which produced such a theory, just as he can recognise the unchanging pattern of dictatorship. But although in the world which Alfieri knew it seemed impossible for one man to achieve much towards overcoming the tyranny of political and social tradition, the importance lies in the fact that this was realized and written down for the future. (The treatise was not published until 1789). The world of letters was thus given a new dimension and power, a new practical value. Alfieri looked on the poet as a prophet -- something which was true quite often in his own case -- and as a hero; for him, literature was the main-spring of civilization, the creator of public opinion as well as the measure of its real power. He expounded this theme in his second book, "Del Principe e delle Lettere", (1786): the true poet is working for liberty, and so poetry for the poet is the counterpart of action of the hero. Alfieri is here theorising from his own poetry and concluded that although a considerable level of proficiency may be achieved under despotism, literature will really thrive only in freedom. This/

This puts a great responsibility on the writer: "Lo scrittore sublime è il creatore e rettore dei popoli grandi, è il sommo uomo, come il principe l'infimo; fra lui e questo c'è lo stesso divario che tra un cittadino romano e un asiatico eunuco",\*

Man's highest goal was thus to be an inspired writer and teacher of truth and liberty. Such an ideal had never before been affirmed with such courage, but it served to inspire writers like Foscolo and Mazzini as did the final "Esortazione a liberar l'Italia dai Barbari" which was clearly modelled on Machiavelli. This concentration on the good which can be achieved by a conscientious writer makes one think of Parini, but at the same time it is evident that his was a very different world - one lacking in that personal fire or "impulso naturale", so characteristic of Alfieri.

However, idealism and theorising of this kind when not attached particularly to any régime, can be of profound educational value to others. It can be the vital spark which ignites those minds which are on the same intellectual plane, ready to be developed; for them it becomes a source of inspiration. This was the vital rôle played by Alfieri: he was neither a systematic nor a constructive political thinker but rather an idealist, a heroic individualist, in part a historian although devoid of any practical, social propositions. Nevertheless/

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\* ALFIERI: "Del Principe e delle Lettere"; II, 8.

Nevertheless, there was nothing vague about the way Alfieri recognised that liberty was the first essential on which all political and civil progress depended. From it alone would spring the nation and the growth of the arts. Thus Alfieri is really not so much the herald of the fatherland or of the nation as the prophet and stimulator of liberty. In a sense all his work is dedicated to this ideal:

"Né mie voci fien sempre al vento sparte,  
S'uomini veri a noi rinascon dopo,  
Che libertà chiamin di vita parte". \*

"Né pace han mai, né tregua i caldi affanni  
Del mio libero spirto, ov'io non vergo  
Aspre carte in eccidio dei tiranni". \*\*

This instructive moral tone forced the reader to self-examination and it had the same combined effect on the people as a whole. Concentration on the individual and on his rights as a human being contrasted sharply with the general cosmopolitanism of the 18th Century and tended to produce a national outlook. "Incomincia, o nobile Italia, fin da quest'ora, a riassumerti una tal quale nazionale tua faccia", \*\*\* was Alfieri's advice at the beginning of "Il Misogallo". From sentiments like these one recognises immediately the value of Alfieri's intuitive teaching for the entire 19th Century.

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\* Alfieri: "Della Tirannide". Previdenza dell'Autore, 12-14

\*\* Alfieri: "Della Tirannide". Protesta dell'Autore, 12-14

\*\*\* Alfieri: "Il Misogallo". Prosa Prima.



A fiery soul together with a grim, determined mind formed an ideal basis on which subsequent writers could build; but their ideas sprang from those sentiments expressed so forcefully by Alfieri, the spiritual father of the Italian nation.

As has already been indicated, this vast change in mental direction had to evolve naturally. Neither Parini's satire, Baretti's criticism, nor Alfieri's work of regeneration was sufficient to extinguish completely the Arcadian world, - the career of Vittorelli being a notable example. Lacking the sense and vigour of reality, those writers produced only fanciful, figurative pictures of life. This "neoclassicismo arcadico" is perhaps best seen in the "Amori" (1758) of Ludovico Savioli Fontana from Bologna whose delicate poetry re-echoed the contemporary sympathy for the Classics and for Greek art. His search into antiquity for inspiration led him to choose its most refined, graceful and mellow aspects, those which most resembled the rococo atmosphere and the ideals of Arcadia. The neoclassical trend added grace to the Arcadians and was more readily followed at that period thanks to the studies of Winckelmann and archeological discoveries like that of Herculaneum - a relic of a refined, gracious culture but one which with time had lost both the tragedy and grandeur of its history, until in the 18th Century it became a distant source of inspiration for idealists. Thus, neoclassicism could exist side by side with Arcadianism - both sides stood somewhat/

somewhat apart from reality and did not see any close link between art and the world.

Like Savioli, Vittorelli, often regarded as the last of the Arcadians, was also influenced by this resurgence of classicism. His life spans almost a century, from 1749-1835, and as a result he witnessed personally the vast changes in life and thought which affected every aspect of mankind. An Arcadian, his sincerity at times led him to appreciate particularly the value of contemplation and how it could reach above mere sentimentality to achieve a serenity, perhaps in spite of sadness. One thinks immediately of some of his verses in "Anacreontiche a Irene" -- "Guarda che bianca luna" and "Non t'accostare all'urna". His thoughts are expressed with great simplicity and depth of feeling but one cannot but be aware of the melancholic outlook which he expressed in those pre-revolutionary days.

From the time of Parini's "Mattino", a mournful strain became evident in Italian literature and gradually transformed the idyllic aspect of Arcadia. This transformation was largely due to the influence of English literature. Edward Young's meditations or sermons on life, death and immortality, "Night Thoughts", (1742-5), were best imitated in Italy by Alessandro Verri's "Notti Romane", (1792) and set the fashion for that "poesia sepolcrale", which reached its highest/

highest point in 1750 with Thomas Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard", a work which was later to inspire Foscolo's "Dei Sepolcri".

Another aspect of the period was nostalgia for the mediaeval past, so far removed from the contemporary scene by its air of mystery and picturesqueness. "Le anime proiettano nel passato quegli ideali di cui hanno in sè la vena. Ci si trasporta con la fantasia fuori del tempo e dello spazio attuali, s'immagina di vedere nel passato e nel remoto il clima ideale per la felicità dei propri sensi. Si diffonde quello stato della sensibilità che si definisce esotismo. Il desiderio anticipa l'oggetto, lo crea. Nascono le mistificazioni".\* James Macpherson's "Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language", (1760), appealed to the literary mood and gave a vision of the primitive North showing the grandeur of its simplicity in an almost Biblical sense. At any rate, this was the interpretation of Cesarotti who translated Ossian into Italian and ranked him with Homer among the landmarks of poetry. This was in keeping with the century which had produced Rousseau's ideas on the basic value of primitive nature, as now poetry was being recognised as the most ancient and natural voice of man rather than the fabrication of centuries.

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\* M. PRAZ: "Storia della Letteratura Inglese", Page 391.

In these closing years of the century one could also mention the Arcadian, Giovanni Fantoni, whose poetry suggested something more profound than the shadows of Parnassus and was later proved to be so during the Napoleonic period. Lorenzo Mascheroni's "Invito a Lesbia Cidonia" combined pleasure with the need to instruct and showed that even science could be a possible vehicle for poetry. But perhaps the most typical of these years was the gentle Ippolito Pindemonte, (1753-1828). From 1778 to 1796 he travelled over most of Italy and Europe and was in London in 1789 after having left Paris. He understood the new northern currents of thought, and in his "Poesie Campestri", (1785), one sees clearly the final stages of the 18th Century, particularly in the title and content of "La Melanconia", so typical of the pre-romantic arcadian spirit. Here there can also be found the literary spirit of the young Monti, even although his translation of the "Iliad" stands on a higher plane than Pindemonte's "Odyssey".

Monti is the most characteristic poet of this whole age of transition, from the heights of Arcadia to the invasion of sepulchral and ossianic poetry and the rebirth of classicism. Lacking in originality, he was ready to absorb the influence of contemporary events and moods, and in this way he reflects very clearly both the complexities and the uncertainties of the literature of the period. Indeed, to/

to understand Monti it is necessary to look first at some biographical details as these show how his type of personality fitted in with the cultural trends of the late 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th Century so that he really became the product of contemporary history.

In 1778, the year of Foscolo's birth, Monti first came to Rome as a young man of twenty-four years. As the protégé of a cardinal he was automatically admitted to the Papal Court which still remained one of the most splendid in Europe, renowned as a centre of culture and classical art under the patronage of Pius VI. Rome was thus no longer only thought of as a cradle of Arcadia but now attracted a wide range of writers and artists -- Tiepolo, Canova, Alfieri, and foreigners as famed as Winckelmann, Mengs and Goethe.

This sheltered, idealistic life of Roman society depended for its survival on the maintenance of the status quo and consequently looked unfavourably on the new revolutionary propaganda emanating from France. The general feeling in Rome was that the French were the disruptive force in Europe and as such should be avoided. These two contrasting worlds are represented by Monti in "La Bassvilliana" written in 1793, on the occasion of the death of Jean Hugon de Bassville, secretary at the French Legation in Naples who had come to Rome with the intention of spreading Republican ideas. Unfortunately/

Unfortunately he underestimated the violence with which the Roman people could show their disapproval. Monti imagined that Bassville's soul was saved but before it could enter heaven it would have to witness once again the horrors produced in France by the excesses of the Revolution. In this way Monti became the mouthpiece of Catholic and Monarchist reactionaries, but his was only the most eloquent voice in the general surge of anti-French feeling which swept Italy between 1789 and 1796. In the churches there were "Preces mane et vespere recitandae ad divinam opem implorandam in presentibus Galliae calamitatibus",\* and the less pious showed their disquiet by means of parody:

"Dies irae dies illa  
Quando Galliam in favilla  
Cernet hominum pupilla.  
  
Quantus horror est futurus  
Cum Germanus est venturus  
Armis Gallum comprehensurus....."\*\*\*

More serious and responsible was the view of Alfieri who in 1789 dedicated his "Bruto Secondo" "al popolo italiano futuro". His aims were liberty, freedom from foreign yoke, and national greatness but unlike his contemporaries he realized the necessity of the nation in arms. Like him, Pietro Verri was aware/

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\* BEVILACQUA: "Monti" - page 38.

\*\* BEVILACQUA: "Monti" - page 37.

See also: Anonimo -- "Satire andate attorno in Venezia", 1814, for improved version of this type of satire.

aware of the magnitude of contemporary events and their possible consequences: in 1797, shortly before he died, he wrote to his brother "Fra pochi anni l'Italia sarà una famiglia sola, probabilmente". But few would have believed him for beneath the surface the religion of the age was indifference and apathy. People could speak of liberty and unity and desire these ideals in a literary way without ever thinking of translating words into actions. An effort had been made in the latter part of the 18th Century to form a national conscience in Italy, (a necessary beginning), but it lacked both a leader and a driving force.

Indeed, to the Italians it seemed most unlikely that their long period of peace would really come to an end in the near future, even in the light of recent internal events in France. They did not deny the need for improvement at home, but their inconveniences did not have such a bad effect on the lives of ordinary individuals as one would imagine looking back at the situation from the present day. They had known worse conditions, and the main fact was that even in 1795 their main desire was to be left in peace. The report which De Bernis, the French Ambassador in Rome, issued on 23rd June, 1789, was still the most accurate assessment of the general mood six years later: "La capitale sera toujours tranquille quand les denrées y seront abondantes et à un prix raisonnable. Le peuple, comme les anciens romains, ne demande que 'panem et circenses'". \*

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\* Vicchi: "V. Monti, le lettere e la politica in Italia dal 1750 al 1830. Vol. 6, Page 497.

CHAPTER TWO: (a) THE ARRIVAL OF BONAPARTE IN ITALY,  
APRIL, 1796.

(b) REACTIONS OF PARINI AND ALFIERI  
TO CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS.



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CHAPTER TWO.

(a) THE ARRIVAL OF BONAPARTE IN ITALY, APRIL 1796.

When one begins to talk about Bonaparte in Italy, it is important to distinguish first of all between his work as General Bonaparte, as President of the Italian Republic, and as King of Italy. The imprint of the Revolution was clearly stamped on the first Italian Campaign and in 1796 the voice of Bonaparte was seen as the trumpet-call which awakened the Italian people from their century of sleep, recalling to them the memory of past grandeur and at the same time bringing them into personal contact with the new trends of European thought, particularly with the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Bonaparte wisely concentrated on these sentiments in April, 1796 when he first introduced himself to the Italians: "Popoli d'Italia, l' esercito di Francia viene a rompere le vostre catene; il popolo francese è amico di tutti i popoli; venitegli incontro. Le proprietà, gli usi, la religione vostra saranno rispettati: faremo la guerra da nemici generosi, e soltanto coi tiranni che vi tengono sorvi". \* Naturally, the arrival of Bonaparte was to arouse mixed feelings: first of all many patriotic Italians saw him as the liberator of their land, the man predestined to set in operation their national revival; the more idealistic groups who were quite unconcerned with politics saw him as the herald of the doctrine of liberty, the representative of that new/

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\* Cantù: "Storia di Cento Anni", Vol. I., Page 513.

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new social group, the bourgeoisie, which was gaining strength all over Europe and was determined to bury for ever any remaining suggestions of feudalism; then there were the reactionaries who looked upon him as a brutal soldier, determined to carry out a diabolic plan aimed at overthrowing legitimacy. Inherent in this was the destruction of the moral and religious basis on which society had been built for centuries.

d) It is unnecessary to add that all were deceived in one way or another. Yet, [particularly] in Italy, after centuries of humiliating servitude, the sight of one born of Italian stock who had reached the heights of worldly glory, was sufficient to arouse not only pride but also that latent feeling of inherited superiority which easily gave rise to hopeful illusions of a return to greatness.

However, this was not an example of "vox clamantis in deserto". Bonaparte found the ground well prepared by the work of 18th Century Italian reformers and the influence since 1789 of French Revolutionary propagandists. His military and political action furnished the "driving force" whose absence until then had hindered the development of patriotic Italian "Jacobins" from Piedmont to Sicily. Such men had been campaigning for revolutionary action and had been ready to suffer imprisonment. Beside this new generation there was the more practical type of reformer who was ready to collaborate and move with the times - for example, Mario/

Mario Pagano in Naples and Pietro Verri in Milan. The latter was perhaps the most modern man of his century, the precursor of the French Revolution, of rationalism, nationalism and even of Communism when understood in the moral sense of elevation or rather levelling of the classes. But above all, his inspiration stemmed from his burning desire to guide his country out of its present difficulties - a mission which required true patriotism.

The moment was opportune for the arrival of Bonaparte and the people were mentally conditioned to receive him. Further, his Italian ancestry made him seem a fellow-countryman rather than a foreign invader. His success in arms made him seem their timely saviour, ~~their~~ new Caesar, who could drive out the Austrians thus producing the short-cut to freedom and unity. Even the orator of this young man of twenty-seven years who could tell the Italian people "È giunto il tempo in che l'Italia sta per comparire con onore tra le nazioni potenti..." was designed to fire the patriotic sections of the community.

Besides this, Bonaparte also fitted into the literary atmosphere of the end of the 18th Century in that Ossian was his favourite poet. As First Consul he insisted that the Celtic Bard should be included on the frescoed ceiling of his library in the Malmaison beside Virgil, Homer, Dante, Voltaire, Plato, Demosthenes and Euripides. "Il restauratore dell'impero di Augusto, era anche il restauratore dell'impero di Carlomagno, l'ammiratore di Ossian; e sotto quella sua tenda decorata d'arazzi con le danzatrici @Ercolano,/"

d'Ercolano, nelle desolate lande sarmatiche, l'Imperatore leggeva il suo poeta favorito, Ossian". \* Perhaps the melancholy atmosphere of that poetry, inspired by the mist and heather of the Highlands of Scotland made Napoleon think of the old Corsican folk-songs which were a part of his heritage. \*\* One cannot really be surprised to hear how strongly this work appealed to him when as an example one considers some of the lines attributed to Ossian in Cesarotti's famous translation:

"Ov'è'l figlio di Selma, il garzon prode  
Condottier di battaglia? io nol riveggo  
Tornar a me fra le festose grida  
Del popol mio: dunque cadeo trafitto  
Il maestoso cavriuol leggiadro  
Onor de' nostri poggi! ei cadde al certo  
Poiché siete sì muti: infranto giace  
Lo scudo di mie guerre. Orsù dappresso  
Stiasi a Fingallo il suo guerriero arnese,  
E la spada di Luno: acerbo colpo  
Mi risveglia e mi scuote: io col mattino  
Scendo a pugar, voi m'intendete, io scendo".

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\* M. PRAZ: "Gusto Neoclassics", Page 267.

\*\* Particular reasons for Napoleon's enthusiasm for Ossian are given by P. van Tieghem in "Ossian en France", Paris, 1917, volume 11, page 3 seq. and particularly page 12: "Je crois que ce qu'il admirait dans Ossian, ce n'était pas ses "nuages", mais ses héros, leur vaillance, leur grandeur d'âme, leur pureté, la noblesse un peu dramatique de leur attitude, leur vertu austèrement pompeuse, à la romaine - il y a dans Fingal ou Oscar du Romain de théâtre - leur passion de gloire, tout ce que rêvait le jeune Bonaparte, et tout ce que le maître de l'Europe sentait à certaines heures en lui-même comme la plus secrète et la meilleure partie de son âme".

However, from the literary point of view the French conquest meant that France again became the predominant influence in that sphere, particularly in the type of work produced: the French exported the idea of Republican poetry, although in Italy this never became spontaneous. In addition, the value of literature as a means of instruction was continually emphasised, for example, at all public ceremonies and even in the clubs modelled on their French equivalents, works were read aloud for the benefit of the audience. But the Italian spirit was not slow to react and under the influence of revolutionary propaganda, the idea of nationalism gained ground and gradually penetrated into the literature of the time, giving it a new immediacy far removed from its former cosmopolitan trends. A new sense of involvement in a common cause was felt by writers and men of letters and this in itself marked the first step towards the association of literature with the general public. The best work written between 1796 and 1799 aimed at the reconstruction of Italy through the memory of her past history - this helps to explain the sudden burst of popularity for Alfieri's tragedies.

During Bonaparte's first Italian Campaign the reaction from literary circles was quite overwhelming. Indeed it seemed that all who had mastered the technique of applying pen to paper were determined to voice their opinions on the contemporary scene. As a result, one finds major and minor writers but both groups are important because while the major writers determine the trend/

9 / trend of literature itself and show the opinions of the intellectuals, the minor ones reflect public opinion. Moreover, people from all walks of life - statesmen, soldiers, clergymen, - felt the urge to make their comments on the "Corsican Adventurer", and while this trend continued (as it did until his death and beyond) it meant that literature was no longer confined to an élite.

From a close analysis of the work produced it is evident that the trends of thought which were to develop with subsequent events can be seen even in those early days: there was always patriotism, and at the same time there was adulation; but more important was the serious, sincere desire to interpret events accurately and impartially in order to instruct the people and develop a public spirit.

*career* Giovanni Pindemonte, brother of Ippolito, most embodies the feelings of those years. He began his life in 1751 as an improviser and fortunately retained the fundamentals of that art because at least some of the qualities of improvisation were necessary for anyone trying to record that particular period of history when events produced drastic changes of scene with startling rapidity. Amid the hopes and delusions he remained true to his love of his native land and his ideals of art and liberty. Depending on circumstances, he was ready to reprove Bonaparte, appeal to him or sing his praises with equal interest. He did not contradict himself in his political verses/

verses but rather, produced a documentary account of contemporary history as he understood it. He is important, therefore, not as a great poet but as a sincere, noble citizen who sincerely believed in the value of liberty. Witness his sonnet, "All'Italia", written in May, 1796 in which he lamented "lo scempio dei ben colti campi.....dal novello Annibal Gallico" Later, on the 1st June of the same year he addressed himself directly to Bonaparte, but this time he urged him to be a true liberator, not a tyrant, and asked him why he was so anxious to disturb the peace of Venice. In fact, the forceful sincerity of this sonnet is strangely reminiscent of lines which Foscolo was to write within the next two years.

A BUONAPARTE il giorno 1 di giugno 1796.

"Perchè, se tutto all'armi tue vittrici  
L'Ausonio suol, nuovo Annibal, soggiace,  
De' Veneti alla tua gran patria amici  
Vuoi l'innocua turbar tranquilla pace?  
  
Qui del saper sotto i soavi auspici  
Marte iracondo da gran tempo tace;  
Regnan le leggi, e i popoli felici  
Di discordia non agita la face.  
  
Brutta la crudeltà fa la vittoria:  
Magnanimo sarai, se prode sei,  
E giusto e umano, e a chi ti pregia amico.  
  
Se vera acquistar vuoi perenne gloria  
Cesare ed Alessandro imitar dei  
Non Attila, Odoacre, o Genserico".\*

Francesco/

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\* Opere di G. Pindemonte, Bologna, 1883.

Francesco Salfi from Calabria re-echoed the feelings of Pindemonte in a sonnet to Bonaparte (published in "Il Termometro Politico", No.2, martedì 28 giugno 1796, page 14). For him, this seemed like the quasi-miraculous arrival of the bringer of liberty to Italy - something which he hoped would be realized and appreciated by the people:-

"Italia, Italia, o tu che in pianti e lai  
Unil ti stempri, sorgi, ecco il tuo nome:  
Chiedi, opra, merta, e libertà ne avrai". \*

Of greater importance was the former Arcadian, Giovanni Fantoni known as Italy's Rouget de l'Isle because of his Republican sympathies. He joined the French in Italy and took an active part in political affairs like so many of his fellow-writers, from Verri and Parini to Pindemonte and Mascheroni, to name but a few. Fantoni's admiration of France was short-lived because when Napoleon assumed complete power in Italy he soon became disillusioned and gave up politics for the rest of his life. In 1799 he opposed the union of France and Piedmont as he favoured instead a federation of Italian Republics. For this he was imprisoned in Turin and later in Genoa. In a long poem, "All'Italia", written in 1797, he urged his countrymen to awaken from their long sleep and face the French invader. At all costs Italy must be free.

This concept of freedom or liberty was uppermost in the minds of/

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\* SALFI: "A Bonaparte", lines 12-14.



of these writers. Their heartfelt sincerity cannot be doubted, but when one feels the almost desperate way in which they appealed to Bonaparte, one can begin to understand how great their subsequent disappointment must have been. One such example was the admirable Bergamasque scholar and mathematician, Lorenzo Mascheroni. Bonaparte gave him a position in the "Gran Consiglio" as "Rappresentante del Popolo" and as such he was responsible for planning with Gianni, Valeriani and others a complete re-organization of education until the Austro-Russian victory of 1799 forced him to flee to Paris. However, his life's work in mathematics was embodied in his "Geometria del Compasso" which he completed in 1797 when his health was already failing. He decided to dedicate it to Bonaparte because he felt that this was the greatest compliment he could bestow on anyone. He was eager to do so because in his estimation, he was thus expressing his faith in the man who was going to be the saviour of Italy: ".....e mi sovvene quando l'Alpi varcasti, Annibal nuovo, per liberar tua cara Italia, e tutto rapidamente mi passò davanti l'anno di tue vittorie, anno che splende nell'abisso di secoli qual sole. Segui l'impresa; e coll'in-vitta mano guida all'Italia tua liberi giorni". \*

From exile in Paris he watched the development of events anxiously until he saw what he believed to be the turn of the tide/

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\* L. MASCHERONI: "Dedica della Geometria del Compasso a Bonaparte l'Italico," 1797.

tide -- Napoleon's landing at Fréjus from Egypt on 9th October, 1799, and his arrival in Paris one week later. This inspired his "All'Italia", written in the first days of 1800. It glowed with words of encouragement to Italy:

"Bell'Italia alza la fronte,  
Or si cangia il tuo destino;  
Il tuo figlio è già vicino  
Che dall'Africa volò". \*

He went on to assure them that Napoleon had not forgotten them, but the one dominant note throughout the poem was his sincere patriotism. He concluded with the words:

"Bella Italia, antico nido  
Di grandezza e di valor,  
Oggi abbietta e senza grido,  
Oggi preda del furor,  
Bella Italia, alza la fronte:  
Sarai ricca e grande ancor" ! \*\*

It is interesting to note the similarities between this and Monti's more famous "Inno per la battaglia di Marengo", although Mascheroni's version is more simple and direct. Strange though it may seem at first, he was immortalized by Monti who described his death in "La Mascheroniana" and portrayed him as the image of "il vero uomo libero". Unfortunately he died just before news reached him in Paris of Napoleon's victory at/

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\* L. Mascheroni: "All'Italia", lines 1 - 4.

\*\* L. Mascheroni: Op. cit., lines 49 - 54.

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at Marengo, but nevertheless his last message was to Serbelloni in Milan: "Quando vi presenterete a Bonaparte vi prego di dirgli ch'egli è in cima di tutti i miei pensieri".

Foscolo, a much younger man than Mascheroni, burning with idealism and the desire for Italian independence, produced an Ode which speaks with all the patriotism and courage that was needed to face the conqueror. To the Italians his message was:

"Itale genti, se Virtù suo scudo  
Su voi non stende, Libertà vi nuoce;  
Se patrio amor non vi arma d'ardimento,  
Non di oompre falangi, il petto ignudo;  
E se furenti modi  
Dal pacifico tempio  
Voi non cacciate e sacerdozie frodi,  
Sarete un dì alle età misero esempio.  
Vi guata e freme già il tiran vicino  
Dell'Istro, e anela a farne orrido scempio;  
E un sol Liberator dievvi il destino". \*

This Ode represented the new generation of Italian Republicans whose eyes were fixed on the future, but unlike Mascheroni, Foscolo lived long enough to see whether or not his aspirations were to be fulfilled. The betrayal of Venice by the Treaty of Campoformio was a crime of such magnitude, showing as it did complete disregard for that most sacred principle - liberty, that as far as Foscolo was concerned, the man responsible was almost/

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\* Foscolo: 'Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore', IX, 16 - 26.

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almost beyond redemption. His delusion and deep depression are expressed by his hero, Jacopo Ortis: "Il sacrificio della patria nostra è consumato: tutto è perduto; e la vita, seppure ne verrà concessa, non ci resterà che per piangere le nostre sciagure e la nostra infamia". \* Two years later he spoke even more clearly in the Dedication of his Ode to Bonaparte: "è vero, pur troppo, che il fondatore di una repubblica deve essere un despota; noi e per li tuoi benefici, e pel tuo Genio che sovrasta tutti gli altri dell'età nostra, siamo in dovere di invocarti, e tu in dovere di soccorrerci, non solo perchè partecipi del sangue italiano, e la rivoluzione d'Italia è opera tua, ma per fare che i secoli tacciano di quel TRATTATO che trafficò la mia patria, insospetti le nazioni e scemò dignità al tuo nome". \*\*

After this kind of righteous, fearless anger, words of adulation seem even more false than usual -- see Monti's poem on the Treaty of Campoformio (1797):

"Dolce brama de le genti,  
Cara pace, al fin scendesti,  
E le spade combattenti  
La tua fronde separò". \*\*\*

Superficially, he speaks the truth. All were desirous of peace, and/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis", Part I,  
11 ottobre, 1797.

\*\* FOSCOLO: "Seconda Dedica dell'Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore",  
novembre, 1799.

\*\*\* MONTI: "La Pace<sup>di</sup> Campoformio", lines 1-4.

and rightly so, but what of principles? These were conveniently forgotten when it would not be diplomatic to flaunt them.

Gianni produced a similar work in 1797, "Bonaparte in Italia", which begins by praising liberty but whose length only serves to increase its boredom.

It is easy to criticise sharply those guilty of flattery, but it is also hard to understand just how difficult those years must have been for the people who had to endure them. Unless endowed with exceptional strength of character and intelligence, it would be almost impossible to act like Foscolo. He was one of the very few "anime grandi" and there are few like him in any age. The more ordinary well-meaning writer whose principles would not allow him to give unquestioning praise, would try to make the best of the situation and find something good about it worthy of legitimate acknowledgement. Giuseppe Dal Pian, an Arcadian of some standing, wrote one such poem in Venice while the negotiations for the Peace Treaty were actually taking place in 1797: "L'Italia addormentata, e scossa alla venuta dei Francesi". (The poem itself was not published until 1802). He tried to say that as Italy had at last been roused from laziness and ease she must make use of this peace to gather her lost spirits and rebuild herself so that people would not be able to say again that this could only happen as a result of French intervention. This kind of reasoning was also good because ~~it~~ had a calming effect on the general public.

One must sympathise with the ordinary people who would judge the whole Campaign by their own personal experiences. For months before the arrival of the French they had been warned from the pulpit that the French were a nation of wild scoundrels. Naturally the Italians were confused to see instead an army of gay young men under an equally young general -- they were men who enjoyed dancing and singing, and if one believes Stendhal's account in the first chapter of "La Chartreuse de Parme", the soldiers were not above rocking babies to sleep when they were stationed in country cottages. This section of the Italian people could not realize the other side of the picture, particularly the oppressive tax burdens exacted by the French.

But this mental confusion was not confined to the poor<sup>er</sup> masses: while it affected every part of society in different ways, only writers felt obliged to commit themselves one way or another. This is not an attempt to excuse those who condoned obvious wrongs although it does suggest that a plea could be made for some kind of extenuating circumstances. Without such thoughts one could never read works like Bettinelli's "L'Europa Punita" against Bonaparte and later his "Bonaparte in Italia" (1797), where his attitude is quite the reverse.

Perhaps the one redeeming feature in most of the work written during this period is its "italianità". So strongly was this felt that almost anything would be tolerated if it seemed to be for the ultimate good of Italy and freedom. Monti, who is always/

always criticised for his sudden changes of allegiance, was genuinely tormented in his mind when he wrote to a friend in Ferrara: "Noi siamo alla vigilia della nostra redenzione, e di veder rotto un giogo che da diciotto secoli opprime la terra.....Roma ondeggia in una grande tempesta di sentimenti, ma quello dell'antica libertà sembra rinato nella maggior parte dei cuori", (1796). It was in this state of mind that he wrote a sonnet to Bonaparte, (published anonymously) a few weeks before he signed the Treaty of Tolentino with the Papacy. Monti ungraciously took the opportunity to criticise the Church for her concern with earthly matters and welcomed Bonaparte as the one who would reform it for the good of the world. No excuse can be found for this particular sonnet: Monti was still in receipt of a salary from the Papal Court at the time of writing and he could not possibly have been insensible to the ruthless occupation by the French of Papal territory - notably Ancona and Loreto. He must also have realized the exorbitant indemnity demanded by Bonaparte in exchange for Peace Terms. In fact, Pius VI was only able to pay it because of the generosity of Henry Stuart, Cardinal Duke of York, who sold the famous Sobieski ruby, the largest and most perfect known, valued at £50,000.

Undoubtedly, Monti had gone too far on this occasion, but it is never easy to make accurate comments on contemporary events. He was anxious to be on the stronger side and he felt the need to/

to convince Bonaparte of his change of heart since writing "La Bassvilliana". This may have encouraged him to write as he did, and it certainly influenced him to compose "Il Prometeo", (1797) - the first large work featuring the "novello EROE", and a work which remained unfinished.

It is with something like relief that one turns again to a commentator like Giovanni Pindemonte who managed to maintain a sense of calm detachment. He saw the value of many of Bonaparte's plans and was able to take a broader view of events; he praised the Cisalpine Republic which he hoped would form the nucleus for Italian Republican Unity. Like Alfieri, he realized the importance of the nation in arms:

"Farti grande sol può forza guerriera;  
Solo al ferro t'affida e fia tra poco  
Libera e Cisalpina Italia intera". \*

Literally speaking, this type of poetry had the most sane, balanced outlook which could be expected from the mass of minor works inspired by contemporary events. On the other hand, Monti and Foscolo show the extremes to which sentiment could be roused by the effect on Italy of the actions of one man - Bonaparte. In all cases judgment must be relative to the times and the circumstances in which these writers found themselves. The pattern for the future was laid between 1796 and 1799, and Monti and Foscolo had long enough to assess/

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\* G. PINDEMONTI: "Alla Repubblica Francese", 1797, lines 12-14.



assess the situation and choose a standpoint. If the former decided to foretell through Prometheus and a distance of three hundred centuries the splendid victories which lay in store for Bonaparte, then the latter showed a more analytic interpretation - as in the Dedication of his Ode. By 1799, Foscolo's anger had matured, was more controlled, and therefore more powerful than the spontaneous cry of rage with which he introduced Jacopo Ortis. His reasoned appeal shows much greater insight and in it can be detected the germ of all his subsequent opinions on the subject.

However, underneath the surface there was one vital sentiment common to all the literature of the period - love of Italy and the hope that she would be united and free. In the first place these ideals were not due to Napoleon alone although his presence greatly encouraged them. It was on his instructions that the Administration of Lombardy organized a competition in September, 1796 in which essays were invited on the subject "Quale dei governi liberi meglio convenga alla felicità d'Italia"? Melchiorre Gioia was the successful candidate but he was only one of fifty-two ready to answer the question, and many were candidates who had been particularly impressed by the insurrection of Reggio Emilia (not occupied by the French) against the Duke of Modena in August, 1796.

Gioia's thesis can be summed up by the epigraph "omnia ad unum"; he preferred a Republic to every other type of government because/

because in his opinion, it was the only one where liberty could flourish. He then pointed out that division breeds weakness and discord: "Tante repubbliche isolate formerebbero tante sfere differenti di patriottismo, la forza del quale sarebbe in ragione inversa dell'estensione dello Stato". \* Besides this, even if patriotism were strong in each small State, individual interests of the citizen, which naturally tend to be confused with personal ones - such as vanity, avarice, ambition, would soon degenerate into factions because of being confined to a restricted area. He saw only one solution: "I disordini delle repubbliche indipendenti, la lentezza e la gelosia delle repubbliche confederate invitano l'Italia ad unirsi in una sola repubblica indivisibile". \*\* As such, Italy would then be able to take her proper place on the world's stage and command a position of honour.

Gioia worked out his argument very logically after giving a careful analysis of the various systems of government and of the state of Italy. One senses also the urgency in the tone of this eye-witness observer who believed that the opportunity to realize these hopes was at hand if only the Italians would take advantage of it. Although an idealist, Gioia had plenty of common sense - a fact which is evident from the wealth of practical suggestions contained/

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\* GIOIA: In - "Opinioni di Gioia e Sismondi sulle cose italiane", Paris, 1816, Page 67.

\*\* GIOIA: Op.cit. Page 84.

contained in his work. The nobility and the clergy who try to live and act like lords are sharply criticized because they destroy every hope of liberty and equality. On the other hand, "Questi uomini che mancano di cognizioni brillanti, ma che abbondano di buon senso, che privi della vernice della virtù ne hanno la sostanza ed il candore, coi quale Socrate non sdegnerebbe di trattenersi, e Solone s'assiderebbe volentieri alle loro mense; più occupati a stendere l'impero della morale che quello dell'opinione, questi pastori che meritano il disprezzo dell'aristocrazia vescovile hanno dritto alla vostra stima, perchè possono aiutarvi a propagare i sentimenti di libertà e d'eguaglianza e divenire gli apostoli e i martiri della rivoluzione". \* At the time of writing, Gioia sincerely believed in Bonaparte as "l'angelo tutelare dell'Italia" \*\* - the man who promised liberty to Italy and death to tyranny. His study was not merely produced with the hope of winning the competition: its real function was to instruct the people by pointing out their errors and the means of correcting them; in other words, patriotism inspired him to impart his convictions to others to try and dispel the general apathy and ignorance for the good of the nation as a whole.

The same could be said of Cesarotti's "Istruzione di un cittadino a' suoi fratelli meno istruiti" and "Il Patriotismo Illuminato", also written in 1797. In these works there is more/

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\* Op.cit., Page 125

\*\* Op.cit., Page 110

more of a feeling of propaganda which although sincere, is not evident in Gioia's more impersonal, academic thesis. However, this is only a first impression: as one reads Cesarotti's works, one realises that his different attitude was such because it had to appeal to a wider section of the public.

Bonaparte so admired Cesarotti's translation of Ossian that he made special arrangements to meet its author in Padua when he first visited Italy in 1796. This interview with the French general greatly impressed Cesarotti, then aged sixty-nine years, and was partly responsible for the personal way in which he set forth his democratic principles. In 1801 he explained to a friend his reason for writing: "Il paese intanto andava fluttuando fra le abitudini del Governo passato, e l'idee confuse, o mal intese del nuovo non pria conosciuto. Gli spiriti erano in un'anarchia di pensieri pericolosi; i termini magici di libertà e d'uguaglianza ingannarono gl'ignoranti, e davano ai malvagi pretesti di rapine, e violenze". \*

In fact, he had been asked by the Government to write the first work, but the second, "Il Patriottismo Illuminato", was self-inspired. The people needed to be reassured in a calm, sensible way; factions and hatreds had to be stopped; attention had to be focussed on one central aim in a spirit of harmonious agreement, "perchè quanto più si crede che il suo governo sia buono e preferibile agli altri, tanto più si consolida la fedeltà del suddito, e si aumenta il zelo del cittadino". \*\*

By/

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\* CESAROTTI: "Squarcio di lettera privata ad un AMICO LONTANO,

\*\* CESAROTTI: Op.cit. SCRITTA NEL 1801.

By means of sound, level-headed and fair judgment, Cesarotti was playing his part in securing a stable government. He was constantly aware of the danger of extremes: neither adulation nor denigration could produce good results, he said, because they were unnatural and the result of insincerity. Despotism and tyranny were defined and contrasted with democracy or the sovereignty of the people wherein the people choose their representatives who will then serve the nation, not vice versa.

In his opinion this was the most natural form of government and it could not fall victim to the defects of a monarchy where so much depended on fate and the particular personality of the King and his ministers -- the latter being drawn from the aristocracy in most cases. But most important of all was the attitude of the individual: he had to realize that riches alone did not make man happy for "la vera felicità consiste nella sussistenza comoda, procacciata da un'occupazione onesta, nella contentezza dell'innocenza, nel buon nome, nella stima e nell'amor dei suoi simili. Questi beni possono esser comuni ad oggim di voi; essi non si acquistano coll'oro, ma sono il prezzo della virtù". \* One could never say that this advice was only political propaganda: it was an essentially sound fatherly talk to the young nation, and although Cesarotti supported Bonaparte's government, he did so with sincerity and apparent simplicity which were convincing even to the least intelligent of his audience.

He had the same eagerness and convictions as Gioia, but when the/

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\* CESAROTTI: "Istruzione di un cittadino a'suoi fratelli meno istruiti", page 267.

the two are placed side by side one sees that age had mellowed or matured the older man. Cesarotti, born in 1730, had lived through most of the 18th Century and had become more resigned to changes and to young men with new ideas. Undoubtedly, he saw Bonaparte as "quell'Unico Uomo che seppe mostrarsi ad un tempo propugnatore invitto, donator magnanimo, e maestro impareggiabile di libertà", \* and indeed this seemed to be true. But Cesarotti also realized that it was part of human nature to be enthusiastic at the beginning: he wanted to warn his compatriots not to be deluded by an excess of patriotism. Moderation of one's feelings was necessary for any lasting change, and therefore it was not wise to thunder against the aristocracy of past days -- in any case, not all of them were guilty: "l'odio che abbraccia un'intera classe non può mai essere nè umano nè giusto". \*\*

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✓ Italians must remember to work for the present and not lose themselves in hopes for the future. He was well aware of the necessity of time when an attempt was being made to break with the past and change the direction of one's thought. In this he was very far-seeing, for the impossibility of rapid change was a truth which became increasingly obvious in the story of the Italian Risorgimento, but few were ready to recognise it until later. As early as 1797, Cesarotti wrote: "Il Nostro Comune non è sovrano in attualità, ma solo in diritto e in aspettativa egli può dirsi un Sovrano in minorità, che vive sotto tutela e reggenza". \*\*\* The/

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\* CESAROTTI: "Il Patriotismo Illuminato", Introduzione.  
\*\* CESAROTTI: Op.cit. page 278  
\*\*\* CESAROTTI: Op.cit. page 302-3.

The greatest gift of the French Republic to Italy was its realization, (for whatever motives) of the fact that Italy was not yet ready to govern herself completely alone -- this would have been a disastrous step for Italy.

"Profittiamo di questa preziosa dilazione", said Cesarotti, "e sia per noi questo tempo una scuola, un tirocinio di saggia e leggitima libertà". In this way, Italy could benefit from the Cisalpine Republic: not only had it roused the people and made them think, but it had brought to the surface nascent feelings of patriotism and nationality.

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\* CESAROTTI: Op.cit. page 303.

(b) REACTIONS OF PARINI AND ALFIERI TO CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

By 1799, little remained of the enthusiastic fervour which had greeted the French three years previously: hope had given way to lamentations, as predicted by Cesarotti. Further, the older generation who had remained loyal to the "ancien régime" now found an audience when they complained of the numerous imprisonments for so-called "misure di sicurezza"; of the suffering of the poor -- notably by the confiscation of the pledges in the Monte di Pietà in Milan; and the theft of works of art, not to speak of conscription and new taxes. In general, such criticism was most likely to come from older writers, and while their work showed a renewal of hatred of the French, it was also characterized inevitably by an involvement with reality on the part of the writer.

Alfieri made the most energetic attempt to show his anti-French feelings, but he also had a more positive message: he spoke of the pre-eminence of morals over politics and of the Risorgimento as a spiritual process apart from a political/  
✓ territorial fact. From the 17th Century emphasis on general humanitarian ideas, he concentrated on man and the formation of his personality as an individual -- the basis without which no solid State could be built.

Parini was also concerned with the moral aspect of man, but in a social rather than a political sense. Both were necessary and are, in a sense, complimentary. In spite of his Arcadian background/



background, Parini appreciated the ideas of rationalism and social utilitarianism which developed in the 18th Century. He also stressed the supreme importance of high moral principles in the individual, but in his constant demand for social justice at all costs, he went even further to vindicate human dignity against traditional prejudices and social institutions.

The 18th Century world of ideological reform had become one of class hatred and revolution. In 1796, Parini, like Pietro Verri, was elected to the Town Council of Milan because of his liberal outlook and because the Government wanted to associate itself with Italians who were already well-known. Verri was accustomed to that type of work and was able to adapt himself without difficulty; Parini, on the other hand, was ingenuously confident in the new régime and felt that it was his duty as a responsible citizen to take part in it. However, before long he saw through the new Government: "Amo la libertà, ma non la libertà fescennina". \* It is recorded that when he heard someone shout: "Viva la Repubblica, morte agli aristocratici", he replied, "Viva la Repubblica, morte a nessuno".\*\* This incident shows clearly that Parini stood above the politics of the day - he was striving for more fundamental ideals than the abolition of the aristocracy. His integrity which would not allow him to remain silent when he saw something happening of which/

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\* C. CANTU: "Parini e la Lombardia nel secolo passato" page 356.  
\*\* C. CANTU: Op.cit. page 356.

which he disapproved, did not make him popular with the authorities. On another occasion, when someone suggested removing the crucifix from the Council Room since Christ had nothing to do with the new ideas of liberty, Parini retorted: "Ebbene, ove non c'entra il cittadino Cristo, neppur io non ho a che vedere". \* It comes as no surprise to learn that shortly after this outburst he was obliged to leave the Government for good.

These were times of disillusionment for all: Alfieri had come a long way from writing "Parigi sbastigliata" and was now finishing "Il Misogallo"; Pietro Verri felt that destruction not construction was the product of these years and as such could never mould good citizens or soldiers. Foscolo portrayed vividly the sad condition of Parini in "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis" - (Letter of 27th October, 1798): his description of the aged writer helps the present-day reader to understand something of the personal hardship of those years. Parini seemed to Foscolo "il personaggio più dignitoso e più eloquente ch'io m'abbia mai conosciuto"; \*\* and later he made the following profound assessment of him: "il teologo/storico della propria nazione e doveva per istituto accendere gl'ingegni al vero e al bello".\*\*\*

Parini was neither a revolutionary nor a political reformer. Essentially/

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\* C. CANTÙ: Op.cit. page 358.

\*\* FOSCOLO: "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis", lettera del 4 dicembre, 1798.

\*\*\* FOSCOLO: "Ragione Poetica di Callimaco", III.

Essentially a figure of the 18th Century, he did not envisage the Unification of Italy. It was just coincidence which decreed that he should live at that time, but in fact, his message of social justice was ageless. A few hours before he died he dictated a bitter attack on the French and in the last stanza he foretold the triumph of justice:

L'Ultimo Sonetto de Parini - 15 agosto 1799.

"Predâro i Filistei l'Arca di Dio;  
Tacquero i canti e l'arpe de' leviti  
E il sacerdote innanzi a Dagon rio  
Fu costretto a celar gli antiqui riti.  
  
Ma al fin di Terebinto in sul pendio  
Vinse Davidde; e stimolò gli arditi;  
E il popolo sorse; e gli empî al suol natio  
Fe' dell'orgoglio loro andar pentiti.  
  
Or Dio lodiamo. Il Tabernacol santo  
E L'Arca è salva; e si propone il Tempio,  
Che di Gerusalem fia gloria e vanto.  
  
Ma splendan la giustizia e il retto esempio;  
Tal che Israel non torni a novo pianto,  
A novella rapina, e a novo scempio".

The national Risorgimento owed much of its moral foundation to Parini. His last thoughts were of his country, warning her to learn from the past so that she would not make the same mistakes again.

Since/

Since 1789, while Parini was concentrating on social justice, Alfieri was concerned more with the political problems of the Italians, particularly with the fundamental concept of liberty. His bitter hatred of the French was inspired by personal observations and sufferings (he was in Paris from the outbreak of the Revolution until 18th August, 1792); but he was horrified by the violence and destruction of the revolutionary mobs which could only be described as demagogic tyranny and most definitely ran counter to his aristocratic ideals of liberty. In order to tell the Italians what the French Revolution was really like he began to write "Il Misogallo" - a series of sonnets and epigrams to which he added three long essays.

Personal hatred was only partly responsible for Alfieri's Gallomania: his anger was roused when he turned his eyes towards Italy and saw how the results of the French Revolution had despoiled her; how Venice had been sold, and how the rest of the country was well on the way to becoming a French province. With extraordinary insight, Alfieri realized that the advent of the revolutionary forces would reveal clearly to the rest of Europe Italy's political immaturity. While incapable of dominating the situation as a nation, Italy was not even in a position to enjoy internal harmony, and her ideal state - unity - could/

could be only the result of French imitation or artifice. Hence his proud, uncompromising attitude and determination not to understand Bonaparte. Besides, the latter outraged his idea of liberty and filled his description of a tyrant.

Like Foscolo, Alfieri could not forgive Bonaparte for destroying Venice, the ancient bulwark of Italian liberty. The plans for the Treaty of Campoformio occasioned one of his best epigrams, written in Florence on 5th May, 1797, and originally meant to be included in "Il Misogallo":

"Al Doge, ed ai suoi Veneti, giudizio;  
Buona-parte, Saetta d'ogni vizio.  
Messer lo Doge, ove non siate matto  
Accettate il baratto,  
Che mi propon d'imporvi il Direttorio,  
Con coscienza candida d'avorio ....." \*

Bonaparte's sarcastic ultimatum to the Doge and his people to exchange their aristocracy for his democracy did not escape the brilliant but caustic wit of Alfieri. It was with great relief that he received the news of Nelson's victory at Aboukir Bay. With this in mind he was ready to discredit all previous French victories as being over enemies of unequal strength and to praise the "liberi Britanni" who remained invincible at sea. The epigram/

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\* IN - C. JANNACO: "Alfieri e Napoleone", page 219.

epigram which he composed on 13th September, 1798 to celebrate this French defeat presents Bonaparte as "un vile prepotente" who threatens only those weaker than himself until Providence intervenes to humiliate him. (This epigram is included in the Maggini edition of Alfieri's "Rime", 1933, page 275.)

Alfieri maintained this opinion until his death in 1803. Perhaps his "Misogallismo" was too strong for him to view Bonaparte impartially, and in spite of himself he retained his aristocratic mentality even when speaking scornfully of the class into which he was born. This is easily discerned even without reading of his readiness to pay homage to the King of Sardinia when the latter passed through Florence on his way to exile. \* The Revolution of 1789 and all that originated from it, including the First Consul, were classed by him as false, ignoble, "posate stupidamente per basi di libertà". \*\*

It is important to remember that Alfieri's reactions were always those of a poet before those of an historian or politician. His impassioned teaching on liberty by means of poetry was the main source of <sup>literary</sup> inspiration to Italians of the 19th Century, and indeed, /

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\* ALFIERI: "Vita", Epoca IV, 28.

\*\* ALFIERI: Op.cit. Epoca IV, 19

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indeed, that this should have happened was his greatest hope, otherwise he would never have spoken as he did "alla passata, presente, e futura Italia". \*

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\* ALFIERI: "Il Misogallo", Prosa I, Introduzione.

CHAPTER THREE: THE FIGURE OF NAPOLEON IN ITALIAN LITERATURE.

- (a) 1800-1802: THE BATTLE OF MARENGO TO THE  
PEACE OF AMIENS.
- (b) 1803-1805: RENEWAL OF WAR TO NAPOLEON'S CORONATION  
IN MILAN.
- (c) 1806-1809: NAPOLEON THE CONQUEROR.
- (d) 1810-1811: PERSONAL ADULATION.
- (e) 1812-1813: MOSCOW CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE OF LEIPZIG.
- (f) 1814-1815: THE SPELL IS BROKEN.
- (g) 1816-1821: THE END OF AN ERA.



CHAPTER THREE.

(a) 1800-1802: THE BATTLE OF MARENGO TO THE PEACE OF AMIENS.

The man who returned to Italy in 1800 at the head of a new French army was no longer the young general who had formerly been welcomed as the son of the Revolution, but rather the author of that authoritarian coup d'état of 18 Brumaire (9th November, 1799) which was to mark a decisive stage on his road to personal power. Napoleon now appeared as a person to be identified in his own right - something which had never been thought of in connection with the revolutionary General Bonaparte.

However, the three and a half years which separated the First and Second Italian Campaigns set the scene for future developments and at the same time it gave Napoleon the opportunity to introduce himself to the Italian people in his own incomparable way. His basic attitude towards their country never changed: French interference in the affairs of Italy <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ determined by the Austrian occupation of Lombardy.

Austria, the arch-enemy of the Republic, had to be defeated. In the interests of France, Italy had to be cured of her centuries-old weaknesses and be re-made in order to form a healthy, French-controlled buffer State in Central Europe.

This was the essential reason for Napoleon's interest in/

in Italy, but for him it had also a particular attraction which defies accurate definition because it sprang from various factors. Undoubtedly the Buonaparte family was Italian although history had conspired to make it officially French. This gave Napoleon a natural affinity with the Italians, even in spite of himself and his rôle as leader of the French nation, and it must have helped him to appreciate his strangely equivocal position which to a certain extent made his aims identical with those of the Italian patriots. Not unnaturally he did his best to exploit this situation. Besides this inherited interest, Napoleon, who hoped to emerge as the ruler of an Empire comparable with that of the ancient Romans, felt that Rome, the cradle of that civilization, must contribute an essential part to his own grandeur. Further, although the power of the Roman Empire could be seen only by examining its ruins, Rome still claimed complete spiritual supremacy over all through the person of the Pope. Italy was thus not only a political necessity for France but these three somewhat intangible forces combined to make a personal challenge to a figure like Napoleon.

From year to year the evolution of his career and its impression on Italy can be followed by studying the current literary/

literary productions. This could well be shown by a graph which rises steadily from 1800 to the consolidation of his power and coronation in Milan until 1812 when it rapidly declines until 1814 and 1815; then follows a period of enforced silence after which the graph again begins a gradual upward incline.

Of great importance is the fact that this literature is not all one-sided. Where there is adulation, it is always balanced either by satire or by adverse criticism - the product of careful analysis and thought. Napoleon was seen as a means to an end by all writers, and it is this indirect aim which gives the work produced during the period its great significance. The aim in question was the liberation of Italy from foreigners and the restoration of her historic greatness in the best possible way; some carried this general ideal further to speak of Unification. Obviously war was the most undesirable background for this work, and this explains why writers made such earnest demands for peace throughout the period.

Union and peace were also in the minds of the "Brumairiens" and it was because Bonaparte shared this desire and showed the will to accomplish it that he was acclaimed as Head of State in France. Yet, he was convinced that both at home and abroad, peace could only be won by the sword. Although England was still the ultimate enemy, Austria remained the traditional and only/

tangible foe on the Continent -- Austria which refused to desert the Second Coalition and to make peace on the terms of Campo Formio. Austria therefore was to be attacked on the traditional front, stretching from the Rhine through the Swiss and Maritime Alps to the Gulf of Genoa, and in addition, Napoleon reserved between 40,000 and 60,000 men at Dijon ready to cross the Alps into Italy and annihilate the Austrian left as soon as Moreau had established himself beyond the Rhine. who

This then formed the background to Napoleon's most auspicious victory at Marengo -- a victory wrung from defeat on 14th June, 1800 by the intervention of Desaix and Kellermann. The tactical aim of the campaign had been to relieve Genoa and drive the Austrians out of Lombardy, but strategically the aim was to compel the Emperor to make peace. (This latter was not achieved until 9th February, 1801 at Lunéville). From the point <sup>of</sup> view of the Italians, Napoleon had carried out their vendetta against Austria; by February, 1802 he had founded the Italian Republic of which he became President; and above all, he had brought an end to war: even England had been happy to sign the Peace of Amiens with "The Saviour of the World" in March, 1802.

The prospects for the future of Italy seemed hopeful: Austria's defeat and the return of Bonaparte as First Consul inspired/

inspired confidence and a feeling of security. Contemporaries were justified in thinking that they were witnessing the end of an unhappy era at the turn of the century:

"Secolo infausto, entro le vie profonde  
D'oblio t'affretta, e al nuovo apran le porte  
Chiavi di pace ond'aurea età ridonde". \*

Marengo signified liberty and the end of enforced exile for countless patriots and writers like Giovanni Pindemonte and Vincenzo Monti who had fled to France and others who had been imprisoned by the Austrians -- Francesco Gianni, for example, had been detained in the fortress of Cattaro. Writers of this type knew that their careers depended on the favour of the victors and consequently their reaction comes as no surprise. The best known is Monti's subservient response to Napoleon:

"Sei del mondo il primo amor.....", \*\*

but nevertheless, the fundamental concept of this Ode was the joyous knowledge that Italy had been liberated from foreigners. Although one automatically shrinks from flattery, one/cannot but feel that Monti was doing his best to express himself sincerely when he said:

"Bella Italia, amate sponde,  
Pur vi torno a riveder!  
Trema in petto e si confonde  
L'alma oppressa dal piacer". \*\*\*

By/

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\* S. BETTINELLI: "La Fine del Secolo XVIII", lines 9-11  
\*\* MONTI: "Per la liberazione d'Italia", line 48.  
\*\*\* MONTI: Op.cit. lines 1-4.

By comparison, Gianni's long poem "Per<sup>la</sup> battaglia di Marengo" strikes one as the typical example of the eager improviser, melodramatic and adulatory. He even distorts the facts to suit his purpose: when Desaix fell, he tells of how Napoleon rose to the occasion like a second Achilles, determined to avenge his friends's death without delay. As was his wont, Gianni produced a competent piece of extemporaneous verse, but while the reader cannot doubt that here nature had formed a potentially great poet, one must add that in the circumstances, Gianni showed himself unwilling to comply with the designs of nature.

A writer with a more profound sense of patriotism would be more anxious to keep in mind the ultimate goal and not lose sight of it by an over-concentration on one event or one character, however important. The Arcadian, Teresa Bandettini, showed the ability to take this longer view of the Peace Treaty of 1801. She did not think only of gaining favour with the French; her first thought was for Italy and the needless suffering already endured by war. Perhaps also her years were responsible for her calm outlook:

"Dolce Pace, secreto sospiro  
E di spose e di giovani amanti,  
Troppo ancora di sangue e di pianti  
Tuo bramato venir ne costò.  
  
Sol tu, PACE, tu sola far puoi  
Che respiri la vedova terra...."\*

This/

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\* T. BANDETTINI: "La Pace del 1801", lines 1-4, 9-11

This Peace did give Italy a breathing space and time to see exactly where she stood with regard to France. It was decreed that the Emperor should keep Venice and the Dalmation coast, Istria and the islands previously Venetian, with eastern Lombardy up to the Adige. Tuscany went to the Bourbon Duke of Parma and its Duke was compensated with Austrian territory at Salzburg and Berchtoldsgaden. The "independence" of the Cisalpine and Ligurian Republics was now guaranteed although Austrian cruelty was replaced by the French régime of systematic pillage under the name of "Provisional Government": it was no longer just a question of works of art, but of unending requisitions for the support of the army both in money and kind.

However, Napoleon was aware of the necessity for construction in Italy and was happy to play the rôle of the enlightened liberator provided that all real power remained in his hands. Towards the end of 1801, therefore, a congress of 452 representative "Cisalpines" were summoned to Lyons to agree to a new Constitution which had already been drafted in Paris and approved by the First Consul. The new State was to be known as the Italian Republic and Napoleon became its first President, but although the reality of the arrangement was that ultimate control and authority lay with France, the government and ministers were all Italian. Count Melzi d'Eril, a distinguished Milanese nobleman was made Vice-President, and for the first time/

time since the days of Theodoric, a uniform administration was given to the whole stretch of territory between the Piedmontese frontier and the Adriatic. It was perhaps Napoleon's most remarkable attempt at constitution-building outside France itself and it gave the Italians a practical demonstration of how to begin to set their house in order.

The French organization in communes and departments was applied to the new State. One vital consequence of all this re-organization was that the spirit of localism or "campanilismo" which had been the bane of Italian politics since the Middle Ages, received its first definite check. Further, a national army was formed under the national flag\* and an official class sprang up which learned in the administration of such matters as education, public works, and local taxation the first difficult apprenticeship in the art of self-government.

Foscolo was asked to write the official speech of thanks to be read to Napoleon on behalf of the Cisalpine Republic at Lyons, but it was too frank in its demands and contained too much veiled criticism of the Great Man to be read in public without embarrassment. Monti produced a version which was more/

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\* The green, white and red flag was given to the Italian army by Napoleon, but it had first been used in a rising at Bologna against the Papal Government in 1794.



more pleasing to the authorities: it showed that he realized the precarious state of Italy but saw Napoleon as its saviour. Both writers were too involved personally to give a truly dispassionate and objective analysis of those difficult years. Likewise with the Venetians: as far as they were concerned, they could feel nothing but distaste for a person who negotiated in a way which could only serve to prolong the Treaty of Campoformio. The following acrostic is a typical example of their sarcastic scorn:

"Non Amat Popolos, Omnes Leges Evertit, Omnia Nostra Eripit".

Thus, it is not just by coincidence that the serious work of detached assessment of the condition of Italy came from two Southerners - Vincenzo Cuoco and Francesco Lomonaco.

The Parthenopean Republic had been set up by the noblest "Italian" spirits in 1798 but was destroyed in the following year by King Ferdinand amid scenes of unparalleled cruelty and slaughter. Cuoco and Lomonaco had first-hand experience of this triumph of reaction and the events which they witnessed between 1799 and 1800 were the immediate source of their literary inspiration. But importance does not only lie with their accounts of events: of much greater significance is their analysis of those events. The main argument in Cuoco's "Saggio Storico sulla Rivoluzione Napoletana del 1799" was that the revolution could have succeeded if it had been inspired by/

by the people of Naples instead of by the example of France. The author had participated personally in the revolution and even suffered ten months of imprisonment in Naples. Fortunately his thoughtful temperament kept him from dramatizing what he saw and allowed him to present the facts in a simple way, say why they occurred and what he felt would be their outcome. In some ways, particularly in the emphasis laid on the importance of tradition, this work is Italy's counterpart of Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution". The reader cannot escape from Cuoco's duality of purpose: being a patriot as well as an historian, he felt it his duty to instruct his fellow-countrymen and teach them to learn from past experience. When he does this, he is no longer a straight-forward historian. Rather, he is continuing in the path of Vico and Alfieri with the idea of the "Primato italiano":

"Di libertà maestri i Galli? E a cui?  
A noi, fervide ardite Itale menti,  
D'ogni alta cosa insegna tori altrui?" \*

Besides this idea of historic superiority there is also expounded the basic truth that constitutions and governments have to be moulded to suit the particular needs and temperament of the people in each country. This may seem self-evident to us, but Cuoco and Lomonaco were writing at a time when patriots looked/

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\* ALFIERI: "Il Misogallo", Sonetto XVIII - Firenze 20-XI-1792.

looked only to the teachings of the French Revolutionaries for their inspiration. The sad experiences of 1799 and 1800 broke their confidence in philosophical phraseology, and from the cosmopolitan idea of politics emerged a picture of harsh realism: to obtain national independence the backward outlook and sense of betrayal so widespread among the Italian people would have to be changed; they would have to be prepared to make use of all means, including foreign help, to secure this end, provided it did not encroach on their liberty.

This was the message which Cuoco wanted to spread. The same spirit inspired Gioia and the Italian patriots at Genoa in 1799 to send an "Indirizzo" to the Directory asking for the proclamation of "La Repubblica Italica indipendente, una, indivisibile, alleata della Repubblica Francese". It also inspired Lomonaco to write in his "Rapporto al Cittadin Carnot", "L'Italia ..... sembra che dalla natura sia destinata a formare una sola potenza.....", \* although he went further in his argument to show that Italy's problem was not merely political but also religious. All these writings were the result of intelligent observation of a revolution which failed, and history has shown that through them an apparently negative turn of events created the mentality of national egoism which was to develop during the next fifty years until it reached its definite conclusion.

From/

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\* LOMONACO: "Rapporto al Cittadin Carnot",

From the point of view of the literary historian, ready to recognise and trace the evolution of certain theories, Cuoco stands out as the disciple of Vico, as one who conforms to the highest tradition of 'italianismo'. Not only is he one of the most interesting characters which the South has given to Italy, but he ranks second only to Foscolo for his ability to interpret and foster the national spirit during the hard years of the Napoleonic period. It may seem strange that he had to wait until the beginning of the 20th Century to attain recognition, but this can be explained by the delay in appreciating Vico, his predecessor. Vico was the philosopher, Cuoco the historian and politician who tried to deduct principles from the reality of daily life as he knew it. His is the voice of common sense, moderation and eclecticism and his "Saggio Storico" has been correctly defined as "il libro d'un pensatore che ad una astratta ideologia oppone il suo paesano realismo storico". \*

In the 18th Century French philosophy had dominated not only Italy but also the whole of Europe. By the end of the century the French Revolution dominated the spirits of the people, dividing them into revolutionaries and republicans who stood against the aristocratic element, the representatives of privilege. But life in France had long had a more unified heritage than in Italy where loyalty was given essentially to the/

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\* F. BATTAGLIA: V. Cuoco, page 80.

the local commune. France also had her own rational philosophy, which was the product of her needs, but these, like her philosophy were very different in Italy. In spite of this, Italian patriots still partially blinded by idealism, hoped to secure their deliverance by means of foreign intervention although they did not stop to consider the consequences; the French, on the other hand, did not want to realize the logical truth that what was good for them was not necessarily good for everyone else, as this would have meant curtailing their movements abroad. Instead, "tutto ciò che avean fatto o volean fare, credettero esser dovere e diritto di tutti gli uomini". \* The principles of rationalism were translated into a harmful political practice wherein maxims remained words and action, which only followed the sword, took the form of looting and raising taxes. In this way, expectation of a better future through the intercession of the French bringing liberty, equality and fraternity, was seen to be little more than a dream, an ideal.

Cuoco expected this: "Questo è il corso ordinario di tutte le rivoluzioni. Per lungo tempo il popolo si agita senza saper ove fermarsi: corre sempre agli estremi e non sa che la felicità è nel mezzo". \*\* This observation is drawn from life and as far as Cuoco could see, while revolution in itself is an attempt to counteract history, the latter always takes revenge by/

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\* CUOCO: "Saggio Storico", page 39, IN - Scrittori d'Italia,  
\*\* CUOCO: Op.cit. page 102. Vol. 43.

by re-establishing the equilibrium. Undoubtedly, revolution asserts the right of man to revolt, but the career of Robespierre a son of the revolution, shows how quickly the people tire of extremists. "L'uomo è di tale natura, che tutte le sue idee si cangiano, tutt'i suoi affetti, giunti all'estremo, s'indeboliscono a <sup>forza</sup> ~~forza~~ di voler troppo esser libero, l'uomo si stanca dello stesso sentimento di libertà. 'Nec totam libertatem, nec totam servitutem pati possumus', disse Tacito del popolo romano: a me pare che si possa dire di tutt'i popoli della terra. Or che altro aveva fatto Robespierre, spingendo all'estremo il senso della libertà, se non che accelerarne il cambiamento"?\* The natural development of Cuoco's experience leads to a figure like Napoleon. Between abstract theories and Napoleon there lay the revolution, the attempt to break with the past by introducing universal democracy backed by ideal principles. But history is a wonderful story of continuity which functions at times by means of contrasting spirits: these produce ideas which move men and nations with them. Thus the revolution and Bonaparte are but different aspects of this process -- "il passato, negato violentemente, si riaffaccia alla vita nell'atto stesso della negazione".\*\*

This atmosphere of moderation is the unifying element in all Cuoco's political and philosophical writings. In 1800 he welcomed/

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\* CUOCO: Op.cit. page 99.

\*\* F. BATTAGLIA: Op.cit. page 82.

welcomed Napoleon because he seemed the most likely person to restore order and moderate rule. By this Cuoco understood liberty for all before the law, political parties which could interact within the State, and above all, one government for the country which would guarantee the laws. In this Cuoco became the most vigorous exponent of Italian liberalism and his personal stature increased with his ability to present this political theory to his fellow-countrymen. Again, one sees the parallel with Edmund Burke, the liberal Whig who realized the value of the old as well as the new in order to achieve that true balance which is necessary for good government. Throughout the "Saggio Storico" this concept of liberalism is insuppressible, not just as a theory but as a self-evident political and social doctrine which was of fundamental importance for the unification of Italy. Liberty, independence and unification would never be bestowed on Italy by foreigners but could only be the end product of a determined, combined effort on the part of the people themselves. For this there was no short cut, but first of all they would have to be spiritually conditioned to accept the new order; before civil liberty there would have to be liberty of thought and culture -- "una nazione che si sviluppa da sè acquista una civiltà eguale in tutte le sue parti, e la coltura diventa un bene generale della nazione". \*

With/

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\* CUOCO: Op.cit. page 90.

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With sound common sense Cuoco stressed the need to educate the people so that as mature citizens they would gladly desire the rule of liberty as he had defined it. Without this pre-requisite even the greatest benefits were a potential danger. He also advocated a form of constitutional monarchy in order to maintain a certain continuity and equilibrium, for the step from absolute tyranny to absolute liberty was merely a step from one excess to another and it was at the point where one was about to yield to the other that a safeguard was necessary to save the internal cohesion of the people as a race.

At this point in his treatise Cuoco asked his readers if they thought that Naples was mature enough in 1799 to accept revolutionary orders from well-meaning patriots. His reply left them in no doubt. The people still needed a leader who would keep them voluntarily disciplined but at the same time would allow them a certain measure of personal freedom within the limits of an approved constitution. He warned that Giacobin laws were only constitutional in theory but anarchic in practice. Hence the danger of confronting a people whose lives were still governed by myth and fantasy rather than by thought and intellect, with abstract ideas, especially when their rulers had shown themselves unaware of the complex, primordial nature of their people. A leader with understanding was/



was needed to guide and train them until they could exercise their own intellectual abilities in a spirit of contentment. Cuoco stressed this in a letter to Vincenzo Russo: "Il governo democratico (tu intendi bene che il nostro non è tale) potrà forse essere il più giusto, ma non può esser regolare se non dove il popolo sia saggio; il monarchico potrà non esser giusto, ma, ogni volta che il monarca sia saggio, è sempre regolare. Ma un sovrano saggio sul trono è meno raro di un popolo saggio nei comizi". \*

Cuoco has been called a true prophet of Napoleon, and when one realizes that he was writing in 1800, at a time when he could not have foreseen either the era of the Consulate or the Empire, one cannot but marvel at his accuracy as well as his sincere patriotism. His sentiments were ageless because of the profound human needs which they expressed. This was no party politician or writer seeking favour with a particular group. Rather, his was the voice of the courageous individual, endowed with superior intelligence which gave him a depth of understanding denied to most of his contemporaries.

The arguments which he used to define the Neapolitan Revolution can quite easily be applied to all Italian political activities between 1796 and 1799. "Le idee della rivoluzione di Napoli avrebbero potuto esser popolari, ove si avesse voluto trarle/

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\* CUOCO: "Lettera a V. Russo", Frammento III, page 242.  
IN-Scrittori d'Italia, Vol.43.

trarle dal fondo istesso della nazione. Tratte da una costituzione straniera, erano lontanissime dalla nostra; fondate sopra massime troppo astratte, erano lontanissime da'sensi, e, quel ch'è più, si aggiungevano ad esse, come leggi, tutti gli usi, tutt'i capricci e talora tutt'i difetti di un altro popolo, lontanissimi dai nostri difetti, da'nostri capricci, dagli usi nostri". \* Thus originated the extraneous, abstract principles which filled the minds of the patriots and separated them from the mass of the people. According to Cuoco, the Revolution was bound to falter when it had such an artificial foundation: "La nostra rivoluzione essendo una rivoluzione passiva, l'unico mezzo di condurla a buon fine era quello di guadagnare l'opinione del popolo. Ma le vedute dei patriotti e quelle del popolo non erano le stesse: essi aveano diverse idee, diversi costumi e finanche due lingue diverse. Quella stessa ammirazione per gli stranieri, che avea ritardata la nostra coltura ne'tempi del re, quell'istessa formò, nel principio della nostra repubblica, il più grande ostacolo allo stabilimento della libertà. La nazione napoletana si potea considerare come divisa in due popoli, diversi per due secoli di tempo e per due gradi di clima. Siccome la parte colta si era formata sopra modelli stranieri/

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\* CUOCO: "Saggio Storico", page 90.

stranieri, così la sua coltura era diversa da quella di cui abbisognava la nazione intera, e che potea sperarsi solamente dallo sviluppo delle nostre facoltà. Alcuni erano divenuti francesi, altri inglesi; e coloro che erano rimasti napoletani, che componevano il massimo numero, erano ancora incolti. Così la cultura di pochi non avea giovato alla nazione intera; e questa, a vicenda, quasi disprezzava una coltura che non l'era utile a che non intendeva". \*

Foreign culture is blamed, therefore, as the main reason for the separation of the learned classes from the people, and its roots went deep into Italy's history. Nevertheless, Cuoco did admit that the populace "sebbene non avrebbe mai fatta la rivoluzione da sè, era però docile a riceverla d'altra mano" \*\* a declaration which substantiates his theory of a passive revolution. Cuoco then added that in fact there had been some spontaneous insurrections, particularly in the provinces, where the people demanded liberty; but in such cases he claimed that the patriots themselves must bear the blame for not knowing how to gain the confidence of these people and encourage them to develop naturally. "Le rivoluzioni attive sono sempre più efficaci, perchè il popolo si dirige subito da se stesso a ciò che più da vicino l'interessa. In una rivoluzione passiva/

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\* CUOCO: Op.cit page 90.

\*\* CUOCO: Op.cit. page 92.

passiva conviene che l'agente del governo indovini l'animo del popolo e gli presenti ciò che desidera e che da se stesso non saprebbe procacciarsi". \* With this statement Cuoco has moved from the immediate disturbances in Naples to the social and political grievances of the South in general - problems of which he had a profound understanding. His policies envisaged a gradual progression towards the levelling of classes but one in which the middle classes would eventually be in the majority.

This was a very simple, moderate programme and it depended on the temporary support of some outside force such as was to exist in Napoleonic Italy between 1800 and 1814. His insistence on the abstract nature of the doctrines of the French revolutionaries and on the vast differences between France and Italy marked him as a traditional nationalist thinker, but if carried too far (as reactionaries tried to do) would discredit all Giacobin patriots as thoughtless, French-inspired demagogues. Of course, this was not what Cuoco intended, but if one is prepared to give him credit for his sincerity and profound analysis of the contemporary scene, one must admit that his interpretation of events as a passive revolution did not imply a negative outlook on the revolutionary period. Instead, these three years marked the first step towards political maturity for the Italian middle classes. Further, a political movement was now/

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\* CUOCO: Op.cit. page 106.

now firmly launched which hoped to attain Republican unity and independence by a policy of moderation of the kind advocated by Cuoco - a movement which continued the policies of the Enlightened Reformers of the 18th Century. In other words, during these years the Risorgimento was born, and its fundamental problems and political trends became obvious to those who were able to recognise them.

Another spirit endowed with these qualities was Francesco Lomonaco. His work complements that of Cuoco in attempting to awaken a national conscience. In Milan after the battle of Marengo he published his "Rapporto al Cittadin Carnot sulla Rivoluzione Napoletana del 1799" - a work which contained a fearless indictment of the tyranny and cruelty with which King Ferdinand, Queen Caroline and their associates (including Nelson) extinguished all republican opposition after the departure of the French. Lomonaco also included in his Report the first list of "Italian" martyrs, but not before he had given an account of the barbaric way in which many of them met their death. He singled out Carafa as one of the most outstanding examples of local patriotism and courage. This man had held out in French-occupied Pescara until he could do so no longer; then he signed an honourable Peace with the ruling authorities but in return, their agents trapped him and brought him to Naples to be betrayed and beheaded. (After such a story of courage one is surprised to read that Carafa was an ancestor of/

of Al Capone).

By temperament, Lomonaco was more vociferous than Cuoco, more fired by the gross injustice which he had witnessed, and like Foscolo, he felt bound to express his righteous anger. It is undoubtedly true that "più che un'opera storica, il "Rapporto" è l'effusione di un cuore ferito, la protesta di un'anima indignata, un formidabile atto d'accusa contro il Méjean, la proclamazione d'una verità 'scritta a caratteri di sangue' ". \*

The Report finished on a note of thanks to Napoleon, "nostro concittadino" who understood Italy and therefore would be able to give her "quell'unione e quell'ascendente, che un tempo fece impallidire il mondo". \*\*

With the same patriotic sincerity Lomonaco went on to speak of Italy's troubles in more general terms. In the section entitled "Colpo d'occhio sull'Italia" he emphasised that his country's right to unity and independence was founded not on reason but on tradition. This theme was one of the 'idee-forze' of the Italian Risorgimento; it occurs again in Cuoco, Gioia and Monti, and finds its most unforgettable expression in Foscolo's "Dei Sepolcri". Italians had to restore confidence in themselves and the best way to do so was to remember their glorious past in order to draw inspiration from it for the future. In a few years, Foscolo was to make this explicit plea with/

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\* NATALI: "F. Lomonaco", page 86.

\*\* LOMONACO: "Rapporto al Cittadin Carnot", page 322.

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with particular reference to Machiavelli, Michelangelo and Galileo who had bestowed on Italy a priceless political, artistic and scientific heritage.

From 1800, patriotic sentiments were being expressed with sincere conviction, and from the definite nature of the writings it is evident that opinions had become clarified on the subject. The catalytic agent was the French domination and the reaction which followed, with the result that during the period from 1796 to 1800 cosmopolitan ideas gave way to nationalistic ones to form an Italian conscience.

But in those early years, few looked beyond the political surface to admit openly that Italy also had a serious religious problem. Lomonaco was one of the most lucid exponents at that period of the two ideals of an 'Italian Revolution: namely, national unification and the emancipation of the laity from the political power of the Church. Being both anti-clerical and anti-catholic, the latter was something about which he felt very strongly: "quella religione, che influi sulla decadenza dell'impero romano, fu il principale strumento della corruzione, della debolezza e della totale caduta della nazione/

nazione italiana".\* He also maintained that Italy's goal was not only the selfish desire of Italians - instead, Italian unity was the concern of all as it was necessary for the Balance of Power in Europe: "perchè vi sia in Europa bilancia politica e si disecchi la sorgente delle guerre, è d'uopo che l'Italia sia fusa in un solo governo, facendo un fascio di forze".\*\* However, Lomonaco's patriotism did not blind him to the method by which Italy's aims could best be achieved. He realized that it ought not to be requested as a philanthropic gift from foreigners but ought to be won by the moral and physical strength of the people themselves. His essay on contemporary Italy was dedicated to "Il Popolo futuro d'Italia", and even if his philosophical thought was not always original, he cannot be denied a place as one of the noblest spiritual fathers of the Risorgimento.

In 1801, he published "L'analisi della sensibilità" and in it remarked that his age would have to wait until after the death of Napoleon to be able to give a balanced judgment of him - words strangely reminiscent of lines which Manzoni was to write in 1821. Then, the following year he made a more definite attempt to instruct people with his "Vite degli eccellenti italiani". His aim was solely patriotic - "con l'intento di suscitare che si studii di emularli - stressing once/

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\*LOMONACO: "Colpo d'occhio sull'Italia", page 326.

\*\*LOMONACO: Op.cit. page 327.



once again the pride which contemporary Italians had the right to feel for their ancestors.

One of the most interesting aspects of the literary productions of this period was the writers themselves. Although many of them belonged to other walks of life, the political and social upheaval taking place in their country made such an impression on them that they not only felt obliged to participate personally but also felt they had to express themselves in print. Lomonaco himself had studied first law and then medicine before he became involved in the Neapolitan Republican movement and, like so many of his compatriots, fled to Milan in 1799. There, he was able to make the acquaintance of those other men of letters of all ages who were shortly to converge on the "Northern Capital of Italy" after Marengo.

9 Strange although it may seem, it was in his capacity as a doctor that he first met Foscolo. The latter, who had been wounded when fighting against the Austro-Russians at Cento and later at Genoa, was attended by Lomonaco during his illness.

It is not difficult to imagine the influence of men like Lomonaco, Cuoco, Giola and Monti on each other and still more on younger writers like Manzoni. In fact, Manzoni's first publication was the sonnet "A.F. Lomonaco per la 'Vita di Dante'", which/

which was included in the collection of "Vite degli eccellenti italiani", and Lomonaco was personally responsible for introducing the young Manzoni to Cucco. Manzoni had first entered Milan society in 1800 at the age of fifteen years, the victim of an unfortunate family background. In Milan, after Marengo (June 1800) the atmosphere glowed with liberal idealism and patriotic hopes of a united Italy. The first canto of Monti's "Mascheroniana" was published in the summer of 1801 and greatly impressed Manzoni who considered the famous Monti as a personal friend. Lomonaco's "Rapporto" (published in 1800) had also fired his imagination, particularly the latter's insistence on the fact that all wrongs sprang from the work of priests in Italy, particularly Catholic ones. Cucco, on the other hand, influenced Manzoni as a historian and encouraged him to interpret events according to the philosophy of Vico. These new influences had to be integrated in the mind of the young Manzoni who already felt a spiritual affinity with Parini and Alfieri (apart from his love of Horace and Virgil). He was the first to realize his immaturity: "la gloria amo e le selve e il biondo iddio: ..... poco noto ad/

ad altrui, poco a me stesso:....." \* and he knew that time alone could give him the experience, just as time would judge his own efforts -

"Gli uomini e gli anni mi diran chi sono". \*\*

However, with this very sane mentality he wrote his first important work, "Il Trionfo della Libertà" - an Alfierian attack on tyranny and superstition. In the course of four canti he showed how liberty accompanied by peace, war, equality and patriotic fervour defeated tyranny, superstition and even the Austrian eagle. \*\*\* Some spirits of ancient warriors who had died for their country appeared to the poet, and Brutus spoke vehemently against the corruption of Papal Rome:

"Ché il celibe Levita ti governa  
Con le venali chiavi, ond'ei si vanta  
Chiuder la porta e disserrar superna".

"Questi i dilette de l'Eterno sono?  
Questi i ministri del divin volere"?\*\*\*\*

More modern heroes were also represented, and Desaix asked about the present state of Italy: "...di sue ferute/è sana alfine?  
È in Libertate? è in calma?/ O guerra ancor la strazia e servitute"? \*\*\*\*\*

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\* MANZONI: "Ritratto di se stesso", lines 9 and 13.

\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit. line 14.

\*\*\* Manzoni was writing after the Peace of Lunéville.

\*\*\*\* MANZONI: "Il Trionfo della Libertà", II, 15-17, 160-161.

\*\*\*\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit., III, 28-30.

This question gave Manzoni the opportunity to attack Cardinal Ruffo and the Bourbons (Queen Caroline was described as a 'delinquente', line 262, Canto 3). He ended with a warning that all was not necessarily secure as soon as the foreigners had been removed, for after that, Italians would have to beware the petty internal tyranny of demagogues.

The fantastic way in which Manzoni wove his ideas is less important than the fact that at that time he was able to express the complicated emotions which filled his mind, and through them convey a lasting impression of his scorn for all ministers of religion, his love of liberty and his fervent desire for peace. He had also shown himself to be an adept pupil, but nevertheless, posterity could not be expected to place too much trust in the feelings of an adolescent as an accurate assessment of the mood of the period.

By 1802, Cuoco and Lomonaco had provided the broad basis from which all further ideas on the making of Italy as a nation could develop. They had spoken particularly of the South because it was there that they gained the experience which they analysed and translated to suit the needs of the country as a whole. Further, their works, published in 1800 and 1801, coincided with the political atmosphere favoured by Napoleon although they were not essentially a comment on Napoleonic Italy as such; they welcomed the/

the victor of Marengo in the sense of welcoming a step in the right direction rather than an end in itself. Unlike most contemporary commentators, their writings convey a sense of dignity and profundity which allows them to stand above the events they describe -- qualities which are immediately indicative of a classic work. However, one cannot confine oneself to this type of work if one is looking for a complete picture of the influence of Napoleon on Italian life and letters.

A more popular reaction which naturally tended to be superficial also figured largely in the overall picture. To the general thinking public, the most obvious fact about Napoleon was that he had brought peace and had driven out the Austrians. By 1802, the majority felt that the French Revolution could be seen in perspective and that from it had sprung Napoleon who sincerely wanted to help Italy. Giovanni Pindemonte who in 1800 had written:

"Vanne, restaura i nostri lunghi affanni:  
Per te scacciar quei mostri è un nulla; solo  
Basta a fugarli di tua fama il grido", \*

was one of the best examples of the poetic product of those years. He was a keen patriot as well as a poet but at heart he remained an improviser -- a quality which was certainly an advantage in a period most renowned for its sudden changes of face. Only a narrow margin separated Pindemonte from the flatterers, /

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\* G. PINDEMONTE: "A Buonaparte Ritornato dall'Egitto, 1800,"  
lines 12-14.

flatterers, but even in this latter category sincere patriotism shone through selfish hopes of advancement so that the reader cannot often despise it completely. Witness the message sent by the Consulta of Milan to Napoleon when news was received of the Peace of Amiens: "La pace che avete conclusa coll'Inghilterra, corona le vostre operazioni guerriere e politiche. In sei anni avete percorso lo spazio di più secoli di gloria. L'universo vi riguarda come un uomo unico. L'Europa gemeva sotto il peso di una guerra disastrosa terribile, tale che la storia non ne offre alcun esempio. Voi avete detto: che cessino tanti mali, i mali sono cessati. Voi avete chiuso le porte del tempio di Giano. Benefattore sublime dell'umanità, gustate la grande soddisfazione di aver stabilito la grandezza della nostra nazione, di aver assicurato la felicità dell'Europa. La Consulta della repubblica italiana si rende l'Interprete della riconoscenza nazionale ....."

This was not just an official document of adulation but a heartfelt expression of gratitude for peace.

Serious adverse criticism of Napoleon was uncommon because it demanded supreme personal courage as well as considerable mental ability. Apart from Foscolo, Gioia's was the only dissentient voice raised in public as early as 1802. Patriotism gave/

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\* Quoted in G. de Castro: "Milano durante la dominazione Napoleonica", page 99.

gave him the courage to speak with authority which became almost embarrassing at times. It is sufficient to read his devastating "Quadro Politico di Milano" (published, 1802) and compare it with the idealism and hope which pervaded his treatise "Problema politico e civile, se sia dovuta ai Democratici perseguitati sotto l'interregno Tedesco, un'indennizzazione", (published anonymously in October, 1800, four months after Marengo) to have some idea of the mental anguish suffered by those writers who perceived the sad reality beneath the external show and felt that the only hope for the future of Italy lay in their ability to denounce the French-planned régime. In 1800, Gioia spoke with great loyalty of the Cisalpine Government which had existed before the Austrian invasion. This government, first established by the military conquest of Bonaparte, became the legitimate authority when the Italian people gave their sanction to it, and as such it was recognised by the European Powers including the Austrian Emperor. The latter, therefore, had no right to interfere with the internal affairs of the Cisalpine and to a man like Gioia, the way in which they did so (by pretending to bring peace)/

peace) only increased their treachery. "Nel proclama al popolo Lombardo (28-4-1799) ci si pinga l'Imperatore 'non qual sovrano, ma qual amico sincero, qual padre amoroso, che viene stringendo tra le mani l'ulivo, per aprire la via alla felicità, e condurre il popolo alla gloria! 'Nello stesso giorno comparve un avviso del governo provvisorio che minacciava di 'giudicare e di punire militarmente chiunque ingiuriava le persone sotto pretesto d'essere state attaccate al cessato sistema'". \* Gioia had no confidence in this statement.

There could be no doubt about the right of patriots who had suffered as a result of this proclamation, to claim an indemnity from the unlawful invaders of their country. French kindness<sup>n</sup> to Italian exiles at that time was mentioned particularly by Gioia, but above all shone the fact that Italy had lost her liberty under the Austrians and in order to help her regain this basic right, France had decided to risk her men on the plains of Marengo. What greater proof could Italy have of the/

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\* GIOIA: "Problema politico e civile ...." II, page 17.



the goodwill of France and of Napoleon? "Si può sperare con fondamento che la Gran Nazione, la quale ormai dà leggi all'universo, vorrà che la vittoria di Marengo produca frutti di vita per tutti gl'Italiani". \* Therefore, with sincere hopes of seeing the renewal of liberty and the end of tyranny, Gioia was ready to say -- "Gloria, riconoscenza eterna al vincitore di Marengo". \*\*

But within two years, when sufficient time had elapsed to evaluate the effects of French "help" to Italy, Gioia's attitude had changed completely. In fact, so strongly did he disapprove of the government that he felt bound to declare himself in print regardless of the personal cost to himself. In this document, "Quadro politico di Milano", he stated "Due sono le molle principali che muovono gli stati, la forza e l'opinione. Se il governo tirannico s'appoggia in modo particolare alla prima, gli stati liberi fanno della seconda il loro principale sostegno; ma nessuno dei governi le deve trascurare. Il General Bonaparte, che non è permesso nè di criticare, nè di lodare senza esporsi alle ingiurie dei partiti, ma a cui nessuno ricusa genio militare e cognizioni politiche, inculcò alla Repubblica Cisalpina d'organizzare la forza armata, e prendere un'attitudine imponente in faccia all'estero". \*\*\* An atmosphere of authority based on/

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\*GIOIA: Op.cit. page 55.

\*\* GIOIA: Op.cit. page 65.

\*\*\* GIOIA: "Quadro Politico di Milano", page 181.

on force was thus indicated, and Gioia realized that by writing in this way he could expect imprisonment if not something worse.

Liberty was only a name, whether civil, commercial or religious, and the people remained silent because that was the custom when faced with a tyrant --(see "Apologia al Quadro Politico di Milano, page 206). They were not in a position to make accurate judgments for themselves while in the midst of such a situation, nor could they say with conviction that they were being deceived. Hence, the sovereignty of the people would be lost completely if writers would not make the effort to foster it with their criticism. It was this sense of mission which led Gioia to speak as he did with courage, common sense and even humour -- a necessary combination for the preservation of sanity. "In generale, Milano offre uno spettacolo interessante, ma più comico che tragico. La folla di soldati, che va e che torna continuamente, presenta l'immagine della guerra; i teatri, i caffè, i bordelli indicano la pace più profonda. Osservando in vendita: "culto e leggi d'uomini senza Dio", vi sembra d'essere in un paese d'atei, e non avete che a volgere il guardo per vedere e templi, e sacerdoti, e monaci, e tutto l'attrezzo che li segue. ....Libertà gridano gli oratori dalle tribune, e libertà leggete scritto sopra tutte le pareti, e vedete poi passarvi avanti dei cittadini che si conducono/

conducono in carcere, perchè o parlarono o scrissero liberamente. Girate per le piazze, pei caffè, pei crocchi, per le conversazioni, e sentirete dei ragazzi parlare di leggi senza saperne la definizione; degli uomini schiariti desiderare la libertà, e temerla; degli stolti colle migliori intenzioni possibili; dei semi-saggi determinati ad essere birbanti a norma del loro interesse; dei soldati senza coraggio; dei commissari senza probità; dei legislatori senza cognizioni; il titolo di repubblicano e d'aristocrata dato e tolto con equal leggerezza; degl'impostori predicar la morale; dei monaci sostenere la causa della libertà per persuasione; dei repubblicani maledirla per risentimento; dei scellerati famosi dimenticar l'odio pubblico nella dissolutezza; gli esteri comunicar l'entusiasmo ai nazionali. Da una parte si giura odio eterno al governo dei re, dall'altra si protesta costituzionalmente ai re amicizia, e gli ambasciatori di questi rispondono con eguale sincerità. Nella terra della libertà s'usano le perfide ricerche della tirannia; (a Milano si aprono e fors'anche si ritengono le lettere alla Posta) nella terra della giustizia gl'imbecilli cadono vittima dell'ignoranza e dell'ingiustizia dei legislatori; (attesa la legge del 10 ventoso) in tempo d'entusiasmo si vede un popolo oppresso dalle/

dalle fatiche, che solleva un momento il capo al rumore universale, guarda stupidamente, normora sotto voce, va alla messa o al bordello, e ignora ancora se è libero o schiavo". \*

Like Cuoco, Gioia also stressed the inherent differences in the French and Italian backgrounds and needs and showed that nations, like human beings, could not be set in a definite mould for administrative convenience, no matter how logical it might seem. In two years, Italians had shown by means of literature that they were aware of their precarious social and political position. Their reactions ranged from flattery to sincere praise and sincere criticism because at heart these writers believed that the end justified the means, and of course, their "end" was the glory of Italy whether or not they were all equally conscious of it. Above all, significance lay in the fact that this patriotic spirit had been undeniably kindled.

*arise!*

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\*GIOIA: "Quadro Politico di Milano", pages 200 - 201.

(b) 1803-1805: RENEWAL OF WAR TO CORONATION OF NAPOLEON IN MILAN.

The Peace of Amiens which lasted for fourteen months, was little more than a breathing space for France and England. In 1802, Pitt had accepted France's "natural frontiers" including Belgium, but a few months later, Napoleon annexed Piedmont, Parma and Elba, was elected President of the Italian Republic, found new pretexts for continuing to occupy Holland, intervened against the Catholic princes of Germany, and imposed a new constitution on Switzerland. Thus, within six or eight months of Amiens the balance of Europe had once more been considerably swung in favour of France. Moreover, since Napoleon showed signs of embarking on a new stage of colonial expansion, (he had bought Louisiana from Spain, sent an ill-fated expedition to San Domingo, and even appeared to be planning a new attack on Egypt and Spain) England, though bound by her Amiens agreement to surrender Malta, clung on to it, and encouraged by Russia, made it the subject of an ultimatum to the French which was understandably refused.

Naturally, Napoleon posed as the man of peace who had been forced to defend his country because of the broken promises of "perfidious Albion", and by publicizing this attitude he helped to spread anti-English sentiments, particularly in Italy as shown by Lattanzi's contribution on "La Discesa in Inghilterra":

"Come appena deposta la tromba,  
Che tremenda nei campi risuona,  
Come ingorda di sangue Bellona  
Guerra/

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Guerra intuona dall'anglico mar.

Alza, Europa, il ferro e il grido

Va la pace a vendicar,

D'Albion sul trono infido

Sta chi turba terra e mar". \*

"Let us be masters of the Straits for six hours and we shall be masters of the world" - so spoke Napoleon to Latouche-Tréville in 1803 as he made plans for the most effective and direct means of defeating England: invasion. Italy was not to be left out of this scheme which demanded great man-power, although when Napoleon wrote to Melzi summoning Italian regiments to Boulogne to take part in the invasion, he tried to sound as if his first thought was really of Italy's good: "Non è per aver cinque o sei mila uomini di più al campo, ma per due motivi capitali: l'uno che l'Inghilterra impari a conoscere l'esistenza della repubblica italiana, l'altro per ispirare l'orgoglio e la fierezza militare alla gioventù italiana, sole doti che le mancano per battere a numero uguale gli Austriaci". (Napoléon, Correspondence, IX,8). Nevertheless, a statement such as this did show how Italy and France had needs which coincided with Napoleon's point of view, albeit unintentionally and in spite of himself.

On the eve of the departure of the Italian legionaries, (November, 1803) Vincenzo Lancetti, "membro dell'accademia militare", foretold the imminent complete humiliation of England:

"Mercanteggiar,/  
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\* LATTANZI: "La Discesa in Inghilterra", lines 5-12.

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"Mercanteggiar, non vincere,  
In Europa tu dei,  
Bastino a te gli orribili  
Mogollici trofei". \*

Lattanzi also wrote a series of satires in 1803 entitled "I Costumi della Rivoluzione" wherein he not only displayed his dislike of England but also his well-meaning patriotism. He was typical of the many minor poets who hoped to acquire some fame by attaching their names to that of Napoleon. But this does not necessarily imply that his work was mere adulation because the essential theme was his sincere wish for whatever was best for Italy, and in his opinion this seemed to be security and peace at home and abroad which only Napoleon could obtain:

"Fa grande Italia, Grande qual Tu sei,  
E non temer di Giorgio l'armi impure,  
Chè l'armi sue nulla far ponno ai Dei.

Mostrati, e vinci, e sprezza le sozzure  
Degli Anglicani che di fiele pregni,  
T'insidiano le greggie, e le pasture.

Nei Franchi cor, nei nostri cor Tu regni". \*\*

There/

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\* IN-- G. DE CASTRO: "Milano durante la dominazione napoleonica", page 180.

\*\* LATTANZI: "I Costumi della Rivoluzione", Satira I.

Among many anti-English prose works can be noted "La politica e le cabale dell'Inghilterra superate dalla virtù e dal valore del primo console" by G.F. Ferrari in "Giornale Storico", Vol.XXV, May, 1802. There were also numerous caricatures of the English, the most famous being one of John Bull in the act of devouring the world. "Si allude, scrive il Marcelli, al governo britannico, che, spergiuro ai trattati, non contento di signoreggiar nei mari d'Europa, vorrebbe divorarsi il nuovo mondo e le più ricche provincie dell'Asia". ("Giornale Storico", Vol.XXX, February, 1804)

There is even a pathetic note at the end of this first Satire when Lattanzi talks of the future greatness of Italy when her people would no longer be slaves but a source of pride to all who could claim to be associated with them:

"Tempo però verrà che CHI ci regge  
mostrerà al mondo che in Italia è nato".

Much more refreshing was the unexpected outburst from a Veronese military leader, Giuseppe Ceroni. Like Foscolo and Gasparinetti, he was a poet as well as a soldier full of patriotic intolerance, anxious for his country's good name and fortune, and furious at everything which might harm or dishonour her. In fact, the Viceroy, Eugène, often used to remark that the three poets of his army caused him more trouble than all the rest of the army put together. Ceroni was so disgusted with what he had seen of the army and of French politics in Italy, that at the age of twenty-nine years he was prepared to publish a severe indictment of the contemporary scene (although within a few years his attitude changed to one of praise for the man who guided the affairs of Italy). However, in 1803 he was happy to continue the trend set by Gioia's "Quadro Politico di Milano" by publishing a "Canto Politico" which led to a number of arrests and an exciting political trial. In Ceroni's opinion, French propaganda had been based on lies and had only resulted/



resulted in a change of overlordship for Italy:

"Sull'Alpe

Coll'asta in mano e la vittoria in fronte  
Invan la franca libertà mostrossi  
l'Ausonia invocando ai lauri antiqui;  
Or geme anch'essa in ceppi, e ha sul crine  
Scompigliato il berretto e infranti al piede  
I fasci, a nuova autorità soggetti .....  
Tra serie di politici misfatti  
Miri dovunque un patteggiar nefando,  
Un'invidia, un livor nei volti impresso,  
Mentre sta il mele adulator sui labbri ..... " \*

Ceroni could neither forgive nor forget the sad fate of Venice:

"Patria infelice e più d'ogni altra degna  
Della romana libertà, e tu piangi  
E con servile chioma e bassa fronte  
T'incurvi al giogo detestato? A tua  
Colpa non è! Colpa è di lui che tutto  
Un di potea, che il popolar tesoro  
Ti involò crudelmente, e il fasto e il senno  
E le navi, e le leggi, e l'armi, e il nome .... " \*\*

This manuscript was published secretly and dedicated to Cicognara, a Councillor of State - hence the great scandal which it aroused. Ceroni was immediately removed from the army and imprisoned although after a nominal period he was reinstated. Botta referred to this reinstatement in his "Storia d'Italia", (1796-1814): "Buon modo avea trovato Bonaparte presidente perchè gli/

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\* IN- G. DE CASTRO: Op.cit., page 142,  
\*\* Op.cit., page 143.

gli scrittori non facessero scarriere: questo fu di arricchirgli e di chiamargli ai primi gradi. Pareva loro un gran fatto, ed accettando il lieto vivere, tacevano o adulavano. Tuttavia qualche volta il malumore gli assaliva, e negli intimi simposii loro si sfogavano e si divertivano a spese del presidente di Parigi".

While the outpourings of a Ceroni and a Lattanzi were indicative of a certain section of public opinion, one would like to feel that even from these ranks of non-professional or minor writers there had been a more serious attempt at constructive criticism of the early Napoleonic period. Such was the contribution of the Arcadian, Giovanni Fantoni, sometimes referred to as Italy's Rouget de Lisle. In 1803 he composed a long "Epistola a Napoleone Bonaparte, primo console della repubblica francese, presidente della repubblica italiana" and prefaced it with a Letter containing words of profound wisdom and advice. He urged Napoleon to make the best possible use of the short period of time allotted to him in this world. Only in this way, said Fantoni, would/

would he be worthy of the opportunity which fate had bestowed on him, and at the same time, posterity would accord him a favourable mention. "Voi potreste essere l'uomo più grande che abbia esistito e porvi in capo della lista dei benemeriti della vostra specie. I tempi e la progressione dello spirito umano vi hanno preparate le circostanze, e queste la gloria di poter esser utile sommamente. Pochi nell'istoria hanno avuto una situazione più favorevole. Ma l'occasione fugge, la vita dell'uomo è breve, l'insidie che lo circondano, se è potente, molte e frequenti: onde per poco gli è concesso di fare il bene. Chi perde il momento di farlo o siegue l'orme degli ambiziosi volgari, si confonde fra la folla degli uomini, ed è reo verso se stesso e presso l'umanità. Perisce, è vero, la sua coscienza, ma non quella della posterità, che lo giudica. Abbiate la gloria che vi conviene: astraetevi, se avete veri talenti, dal comune degli uomini illustri, e procacciatevi nel gran piano che non potete fare a meno di meditare, con la prosperità dell'Italia, un giudizio che sia/

sia degno delle vostre circostanze e di una giusta ambizione".\*

These words of Fantoni strike the reader by their similarity in sentiment to the letter with which Foscolo prefaced his "Ode to Bonaparte" in 1799 but of course, times had changed considerably in four years. The ideal of liberty was still uppermost in Fantoni's "Epistola" but to this were added practical suggestions for its fulfillment in the light of Italy's particular problems. First of all, he argued that if the subjects themselves had lived in a happy atmosphere, posterity was more likely to speak kindly of the era:

"Al potente, che è vivo, onori rende  
il timor dei soggetti: al grande estinto  
solo color ch'ei fe'felici e il voto  
meritato dei saggi e delle genti".\*\*

But this could not be achieved without prolonged hard work and good will:

"Nè sgomentarti: ardua è l'impresa, è vasta  
l'opra; ma l'arduo a l'uom di genio è cote  
onde aguzzar lo spirito e farlo eterno:  
e a chi vuole e a chi può conviene il vasto".\*\*\*

With this basis any heights could be reached, as had been proved by the ancient Romans; now, their example ought to be a source of inspiration to Napoleon. His first essential was power in order to maintain law and order, and having achieved that the ruler could then conscript a stable national army for it was well-known/

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\* FANTONI: "Lettera a Bonaparte", 1803.  
\*\* FANTONI: "Epistola a Bonaparte", lines 41-44.  
\*\*\* FANTONI: Op.cit., lines 59-62.

well-known that mercenaries were never really dependable.

Fantoni foretold that Napoleon could safely hope to fulfil these ambitions provided he remembered that nations were formed of human elements and therefore in the last analysis, real success or failure depended on the reactions of the people.

"Chi possiede, difenda: ha cuore e braccia  
ché vera ha patria, e ciaschedun possiede  
ove vive felice. I primi beni  
non son le terre né i metalli: siamo  
noi, la patria, le spose, i padri, i figli;  
fin la colomba si difende e volge  
a un ingiusto oppressor gli artigli e il becco". \*

Fantoni believed rightly that education should play a vital rôle in the organization of this State, and he thought that commerce ought to be free "come la fecondante onda del Nilo" (line 169), but above all he stressed the importance of customs and traditions which should be treated with special consideration as the natural background of every race:

"Guida l'uomo l'abitudine, degli usi  
sono il prodotto le nazioni, e denno  
il carattere proprio ai lor costumi;  
della vita civil son gli elementi,  
d'una privata e pubblica concordia  
il cemento, i costumi. Abbian la norma  
da invariabili leggi istitutive". \*\*

No one could ever doubt Fantoni's fervent patriotism --

"l'onor d'Italia mi vi spinse, il mio,  
la gloria tua, nell'altrui ben riposta,  
e la speranza che ne sii capace". \*\*\*

For/

For him, Napoleon was most certainly a means towards obtaining the reconstruction of Italy; he was not only writing with Napoleon in mind, but he gladly recognized the fact that the First Consul had been accepted by the Italian people as their guide:

"Te il popolo sovrano organo e guida  
del suo volere riconosca allora".\*

Fantoni also exhorted him to do his utmost for Italy - "Compita e accetta la grand'opera" -- (line 340) so that he would be remembered as the man who had brought them peace, happiness and education.

"..... e un grido solo  
al tuo apparire, formerà di guerra  
Italia tutta, che dai monti al mare  
echeggerà liberamente, nunzio  
che sei fra noi, che la virtù non muore  
che ne siamo gli eredi e che ci guidi,  
non minor degli avi, alla vittoria".\*\*

Fantoni had not time for any particular hatred of England because the welfare of Italy consumed all his thoughts: in other words, he had no time for conscious adulation for personal glory. Behind the colourful outbursts against England during this period, there can always be seen the figure of the writer, desperate to prove his loyalty to the new ruler by the violence of his hatred of the latter's enemies. Such was the position of Lattanzi. In 1804, after an attempt had been made on the life of "Napoleon the Peace-maker", he published a long poem which took the form of a conversation held in heaven between the poet, Parini and La Hoz,\*\*\* accompanied/.

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\*\* FANTONI: Op.cit., lines 335-6.  
\*\*\* FANTONI: Op.cit., lines 369-375.

\*\*\* Jean Claudio de la Hoz y Rota, 1630?-1714. One of the lesser Spanish dramatists of the School of Calderon

accompanied by the spirit of Mascheroni. La Hoz described Addington and Grenville as demons and placed them in the same category as Bourbons like the Comte d'Artois who had sought political asylum in England and thence plotted to assassinate Napoleon -- (witness the Pichegru-Cadoudal plot of 1803-1804). Still in the same mood, he spoke of George III as a wild tiger, intent on sharpening his claws to ex<sup>t</sup>erminate France and Italy. Perhaps Lattanzi was unaware that as he was writing, the sixty-four year old British Monarch was suffering from one of his frequent bouts of insanity\* and was therefore not in a position to plan world conquests. One wonders if even Napoleon was impressed to hear that:

"Demoni son gli esuli Borboni,  
 E il veglio che frenetico e spergiuro  
 Regge l'isola avara dei ladroni.  
  
 Come tigre che l'unghia abbia sanguigna,  
 Giorgio così nel seno un'alma asconde  
 Tinta di rabbia indomita e ferigna.  
  
 Demone è pur Nelson, che sangue spruzza  
 Quando la respirata aria rigetta,  
 E come l'Etna il suolo e l'acque appuzza". \*\*

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\* It is now known that George III was suffering from porphyria, not insanity. See: British Medical Journal, 6th January, 1968, pages 7-18. "Porphyria in the Royal Houses of Stuart, Hanover and Prussia" by Ida Macalpine, Richard Hunter and C. Rivington. See also: "George III and the mad-business" by Ida Macalpine, Richard Hunter, November, 1969. (Allen Lane, the Penguin Press).

\*\* LATTANZI: "L'Inferno e il Paradiso", lines 140-145, 152-154.

It was providential that Lattanzi's portrait of Nelson was written before Trafalgar, as one hesitates to imagine the effect of that British victory on the poet's already over-worked imagination. However, in fairness to Lattanzi, it must be admitted that he had been so shocked to realise that Napoleon could easily have been killed in the Spring of 1804 that he wanted to make any would-be assassins understand the consequences of such a near disaster. Too much would have been left undone, and no other person was capable of replacing the First Consul:

"Bello è il morir de valorosi in campo;  
Ma s'ei perisce .....periran gli eroi,  
E sparirà come sparisce un lampo". \*

It is particularly interesting to remember that it was at this difficult period in Italy's history that the first edition of Alfieri's "Vita" appeared - (one year after his death). At first one feels surprised to learn that Alfieri was still writing until 1803 because already he seemed to belong to a different age. But on reflection, his lack of personal attachment to any age becomes apparent. His was the eternal cry of the "liber'uomo" for liberty in all things and the abolition of tyranny. His sentiments and the way in which he expressed them vastly influenced Foscolo, Leopardi and Carducci, thus maintaining the continuity of the highest traditions of Italian thought. His patriotism/

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\* LATTANZI: Op.cit., lines 284-286.



patriotism and independent spirit sprang from the depths of his being and were associated with a certain grandeur whether political, social or literary which seemed very far removed from the rather trivial, every-day events which occupied most other writers. One could almost say that his mind was on more fundamental matters except when he felt strongly that these basic principles were in danger. For Alfieri, the French represented this danger, and therefore he took every possible opportunity to show his contempt for all their actions. In 1804 when his autobiography was published in Florence, his sarcastic comments on the French in Italy between 1792 and 1799 must have been compared with the contemporary scene since no substantial changes had been made in the intervening years. Alfieri spoke ironically of the "splendida conquista di Lucca",\* the smallest of the Italian Republics, and then of the occupation of Rome itself "che mi pareva la più brillante impresa di codesta schiaveria". He was not afraid to denounce "codesti schiavi malmati" who pretended to preach liberty while at the same time they tried to suppress every nation which turned to them for help. Alfieri warned his fellow-countrymen that these "semi-filosofi" could be compared only with animals: he even went so far as to invent a species to suit the occasion when he spoke of "quei scimmietigri" \*\* who had done their best to obstruct his/

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\* ALFIERI: "Vita", IV, XXVII.

\*\* ALFIERI: Op.cit. IV, XXI.

his flight from Paris in 1792. When this "misogallismo" appeared it served as a warning of present dangers and also as a reminder of the real goal for which Italians had to strive; nothing short of complete liberty and unity could be contemplated or tolerated. Such a restatement of patriotic hopes came at an opportune moment when sufficient time had elapsed for the people to have become well-acquainted with their new political machine and so be able to pass judgment on it. Some reacted like Fantoni who recalled Napoleon's glories in order to encourage him to greater deeds and thereby lead Italy back to her past greatness. In his humble way, he showed a truly fervent love of his country. Alfieri, on the other hand, was able to comment on the age and at the same time stand above it with dignity and pride.

It was difficult for the people to think clearly and adopt an attitude which combined patriotism, unselfishness and common-sense. Propaganda was planned to keep all sections of the community dazzled so that laws restricting freedom of the press and religion, which operated from September, 1803, would not be given unnecessary publicity. This was only successful on the surface, for even the least intelligent were affected when orders from Paris interfered with their habitual way of life. In fact, from 1803, an increase in the/

the numbers of those practising religion was noted and commented upon in Church reports. This in itself showed a positive reaction rather than complete passivity in the face of foreign domination, even if this reaction had to remain secret or anonymous because of the political situation. From time to time throughout the Napoleonic period, popular feeling was expressed by songs and various types of verse, many of them in dialect for obvious reasons. "I piccioli canti popolari sono le perle iridescenti venute a galla dai profondi recessi del mare del popolo". \* The most famous of these were the Roman Pasquinades, "l'espressione dell'ira profonda ma impotente di un popolo asservito, abbruttito, sonnecchioso, povero, il quale sfoga la propria indignazione contro i suoi tiranni col sogghigno beffardo del suo supremo disprezzo". \*\* One such example was occasioned by the Italian Concordat signed by Pius VII and Napoleon in September, 1803:

"Per non perder la fede un Pio perdè la sede;

Per non perder la sede un Pio perdè la fede".

Another, which took the form of question and answer, resulted from the sequestration of countless works of art stolen from Italy by the French:

"E vero che tutti i francesi sono ladri"?

"Tutti no, ma Buona - Parte"!

These/

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\* NANNUCCI: "La Poesia Napoleonica in Italia", page 15.

\*\* GIOVAGNOLI: "Passeggiate Romane", page 258.

These Pasquinades were a very natural, human reaction, spontaneous in their humour. They are almost in the same category as Lancetti's adulatory verse, interesting for the light it shines on the feelings of different sections of the people as they became affected by the Napoleonic power.

While it is easy to criticise the shortcomings of the literature inspired by Napoleon, it is often forgotten that many of these deficiencies arose because the writers were too close to their subject and consequently lacked perspective. Great wisdom and experience are needed before one can make a comment on current affairs which is sufficiently impartial to stand the test of time. However, the student of this period in Italian literature is fortunate in having just such an example in the work of Cuoco. He produced a meditation on history rather than an accurate account of events, but first of all he realized the difficulty of his task and his unavoidable limitations: "Non vi è che un solo mezzo per divenir ragionevole e giusto, ed è quello di cessare di esser contemporaneo; obbligar per un istante l'avvenimento di cui siamo o parte o spettatori, per rammentar ciò che lo ha preceduto o preveder ciò che ne deve seguire". \* In his articles in the "Giornale Italiano" between 1804 and 1806 he spoke with resignation about Napoleon. He felt that the French Revolution had led inevitably to a man like him/

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\* CUOCO: "Giornale Italiano", 30 maggio - 2 giugno, 1804.

him, capable of restoring order in the State. This would certainly be the judgment of posterity, for whatever was necessary could not be evil. (*Giornale Italiano*", 30th May - 2nd June, 1804). Misconceptions arose when people took Napoleon out of his historical context and tried to assess his actions as those of an individual.

Cuoco was firmly convinced that Napoleon had been of service to Italy when he created the Regno D'Italia: "L'Italia vede per ora riunita in un corpo solo quella sua parte che era la più divisa; vede data alla sua industria interna una nuova energia ed alla sua sicurezza esterna una solidità maggiore". \* This meant unity for the North together with partial independence, something which the Parthenopean martyrs would have rejoiced to see. But its greatest importance for Cuoco was that as a result, the people living there would begin to live as Italians, and once that was established, a national spirit would soon be roused. Against the argument that Napoleon did not really care for the good of Italy, Cuoco replied: "Che importa ciò, se quest'uomo grande ha di mira il bene comune dell'Italia, sua patria d'origine, e della Francia, sua patria di elezione? Il nuovo regno non ha con l'Impero se non quel vincolo di solidarietà reciproca, che lega il beneficiato al benefattore: Napoleone è il pegno tra i due popoli, comune sovrano di due nazioni sorelle".\*\*

This/

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\* CUOCO: Op.cit., 1-6 aprile, 1805.

\*\* F. BATTAGLIA: "L'Opera di V. Cuoco", page 165.

This showed Cuoco's fundamental idealism because as far as he could judge at the time, there was no reason why the two countries could not progress side by side in harmony. In May, 1805, he sent his two-volume work, "Platone in Italia" to Napoleon with the message: "Amo estremamente l'Italia, ed al pari dell'Italia amo l'ordine, ed offro questo libro a colui il quale ha ristabilito l'ordine e si gloria del nome di 'padre dell'Italia'". \* Words like the above were undoubtedly sincere, written to encourage Napoleon (after the style of Fantoni) rather than ingratiate himself with his new master. Later in the same month (May, 1805) he addressed Napoleon on behalf of all his fellow-countrymen: ".... L'Italia aveva bisogno di nuova vita, e tu solo, dopo Teodorico e Carlo, l'hai promessa e l'hai data. Tu solo hai detto agl'italiani, siccome dici tuttora: 'Obbliate di esser veneziani e milanesi. Perchè rammentare i nomi della vostra picciolezza e dell'infelicità vostra? Non siete voi tutti italiani'? Tu solo hai ridestato quell'antico valor militare, in cui solo sta riposta la vera grandezza di ogni nazione ....." \*\*

The logic behind Cuoco's reasoning is faultless and his feelings are those of a true patriot: sincere, controlled, and directed to the ultimate goal of national strength and unity. Further, he went on to add that as this was the only way in which Italy's problems could be solved, even the death of Napoleon in 1805/

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\* CUOCO: Lettera a Napoleone Bonaparte", maggio, 1805.

\*\* CUOCO: "Giornale Italiano", maggio, 1805.

1805 would not have been able to undo the good he had already done. These were truly prophetic sentiments. Having been unified once and thereby proved to themselves that it was both possible and advantageous, the Italians could never forget the experience and behave as if it had not happened.

The Risorgimento was soon recognised as a profoundly spiritual movement as well as a means of solving the European Balance of Power. In other words, the ideals of Mazzini and Gioberti have much more significance if one understands first of all the thought of their predecessor, Cuoco. Political equilibrium was the first cause of Napoleon III's Italian campaign against Austria in 1859, just as it was mainly the reason why England supported Garibaldi in 1860. Cuoco saw these problems and understood their magnitude. He also stressed the importance of religious peace in the State as being one of the prerequisites of normal life. Like Dante and Marsilio of Padua, he wanted to see the restoration of simple grandeur in the Church and a restatement of the theme, "my kingdom is not of this world". Empire and Papacy, Napoleon and Pius, had diverse aims, one terrestrial and the other celestial, but religious peace could only be attained if they would work together to ensure the good of all their subjects. This was a direct reference to the new Concordat which unfortunately was to prove a very short-lived pact. Nevertheless, in 1804, Cuoco really felt that he was witnessing the beginning of

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a new era of religious peace: "Il primo dovere di chi ama la patria è quello di rispettare la religione dei padri suoi; il primo dovere di chi ama <sup>la</sup> religione è quello di rispettare <sup>^</sup> il governo della patria, senza di cui non vi sarebbe alcuna religione".\*

With a statement like the above, Cuoco revealed much of himself. He was able to achieve detachment from the times in which he was living and replace abstract philosophical discussion with an eternal spiritual reality. To understand this is the key to Cuoco's thought and to so much of the sincere, patriotic writings which contributed in no small way towards the making of Italy.

Cuoco's writings were allowed publication because they happened to suit the authorities, but it must be stressed that the government was very sensitive to any kind of criticism and a strict system of censorship was in operation. The Cisalpine Republic had wanted an official historian and unlikely though it may seem, Melchiorre Gioia was chosen for the position. (This was a strange choice because of his temperament, not because of his intellectual capabilities). Gioia was not the figure of the scholarly, discreet conformist, nor could he look at events with sufficient calm judgment to be a completely dispassionate, objective historian. His "Quadro Politico di Milano" was but one example of his spontaneous, honest approach, but it was hardly the type of work to/

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\*F. BATTAGLIA: Op.cit. page 195.



to be expected from someone in his official capacity. This did not pass unnoticed by the authorities for on 9th August, 1803 Gioia received the following communication:

"Il Ministero ha dovuto prendere in seria considerazione il complesso della condotta di Melchiorre Gioia, piacentino, dipendentemente dalla pubblicazione del suo libro intitolato: 'Teoria Civile e Penale del Divorzio' ..... Esso sembra non conoscere il titolo di Istoriografo della Repubblica, che per giovarsene con intemperanza e dar peso alle sue produzioni, le quali non vanno esenti da varie imputazioni di dottrine, per lo meno inconvenienti alla società in cui vive e scrive l'autore..." \*

Gioia accepted this decision with quiet diplomacy\*\* and at an opportune moment produced a pro-French discourse entitled "I Francesi, i Tedeschi, i Russi in Lombardia" (1805). Amid the preparations for Napoleon's Coronation in Milan, it must have been reassuring for the people to hear from someone like Gioia that/

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\* IN- G. DE CASTRO: "Milano durante la dominazione napoleonica", page 202.

\*\* Almost two and a half years later Gioia was championed in public by Foscolo - an indication of the serious nature of the government's attack on its official historian:- "La sciagura di Gioia mi contrista e mi contristerà sinchè nol vegga rialzato. Con tanto ingegno, con tanta dottrina, con tanta pertinacia allo studio, egli s'è ferito sempre, maneggiando imprudentemente le proprie armi. Getta sempre fiori e lodi sul cocchio e strapazza il cocchiere; toccherà sempre qualche frustata; il mondo non gli darà lode di anima indipendente; chi l'ama non potrà lodarlo di saviezza; i lettori lo credono sempre stipendiato per far libri, ed egli si vedrà sempre mal avviato per averli scritti". (Foscolo-Lettera, 8 gennaio, 1806. In Cantù: "Monti e l'età che fu sua", page 204).

that "ora mille fatti dimostrano aumento nelle arti, nelle scienze, nel commercio al comparir dei Francesi in Lombardia, diminuzione al comparir degli Austro-Russi. Questo aumento e diminuzione stabiliscono la superiorità del sistema attuale sul sistema austriaco, sì nelle epoche anteriori al 1796 che nell'epoca del 1799". \*

This was soon followed by an anthology of writings about England: "Cenni morali e politici sull'Inghilterra, estratti dagli scrittori inglesi", (1805) the purpose of which was to demonstrate the author's supposedly rational arguments against France's greatest enemy. This is rather an unfortunate collection because of its obvious bias to suit Gioia's purpose. He was astute enough to quote from Scottish writers like John Knox and Donald MacNicol whose unashamed bigotry is often amusing. Gioia's conclusion to this anti-English propaganda was that the bad educational system in England was responsible for "l'intemperanza ed in specie l'ubriachezza che egli avvicina ai bruti, l'insensibilità che le rende crudeli verso la servitù ed il bel sesso principalmente, l'orgoglio eccessivo che assicura loro l'odio di tutti i popoli, la sperata avidità dell'oro, cagione di perfidi guadagni e di monopoli oppressori ..... La corruzione move la molla del loro governo ed assicura il successo ad ogni voglia del re: dopo aver comprata la loro carica, i membri del parlamento vendono la sorte degli elettori, mentre l'opposizione stessa talvolta pagata, conserva l'ombra della costituzione". \*\*

Naturally the victims of such a régime were tho/

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\* GIOIA: "I Francesi, i Tedeschi, i Russi in Lombardia".  
 \*\* GIOIA: "I Francesi, i Tedeschi, i Russi in Lombardia".  
 \*\* GIOIA: "Cenni morali e politici sull'Inghilterra",  
 Conclusione.  
 page 660.

the people - "oppresso da mille aggravi crescenti, egli geme nella miseria, ed ora è costretto a morire di fame in mezzo al lusso dei fabbricatori e negozianti, ora per procurarsi alimento deve ricorrere a ribellioni e sommosse. I prodotti delle manifatture vendute a basso prezzo dalla miseria popolare presentano ai trafficanti l'occasione di enormi guadagni, mentre lo Stato va a perdersi nella voragine del debito pubblico". \*

As if the picture did not seem already black enough, Gioia went on: "Sostenuti costoro dall'ambizione governativa, figlia dell'orgoglio nazionale, spingono i loro vascelli sulla vasta estensione dei mari, e vantando libertà ne divengono i tiranni. Appredando a tutte le isole, a tutt'i porti, dell'uno e dell'altro emisfero costringono i popoli a comprare da essi e a vendere ad essi soli". \*\* One would not even take the trouble to comment that both countries could benefit from a system of colonial preferment. However, only the most fervent Empire loyalists would question his statement that "coll'armi e colla perfidia soggiogarono la Scozia, l'Irlanda ed una gran parte delle Indie; coll'armi e colla perfidia si mantengono nell'odiato possesso".\*\*\* The only way of curbing the power and greed of England was by a type/

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\* GIOIA: Op.cit., page 570.

\*\* GIOIA: Op.cit., page 571.

\*\*\* GIOIA: Op.cit., page 571.

type of "Continental System" or by surpassing them in naval strength. As the latter did not seem practicable at the time of writing, Gioia advocated economic sanctions and enunciated the basic principles of that system which Napoleon was soon to try to put into practice.

Although this is a worthless literary document, it is indicative of the kind of anti-English indoctrination which was being spread to the Italian people who had no means of checking its reliability. Insinuations of this sort can be laughed at but by constant repetition they can do much to form a national attitude of mind which, when once established, can be difficult to change.

Perhaps it was the accumulation of statements like the above which convinced even Cuoco that Italy's prime enemy was England and that any shortcomings on the part of Napoleon towards Italy could all be traced indirectly to his preoccupation with "perfidious Albion". A few months after the Italian Coronation, Cuoco wrote: "Si vedrà che Napoleone merita l'eterna gratitudine degl'Italiani perchè ha loro fatti e preparati i più grandi beni possibili, e che questi beni non poteansi e non si possono ottenere senza distruggere in gran parte il colosso della potenza inglese/

inglose che rendeva eterni i nostri mali". \*

We can understand Cuoco's almost credulity when we remember that by 1805, Napoleon had already re-awakened Italy: not only had he introduced modern farming techniques and army-training, but he had brought order to the State. This was the aspect of Napoleonic rule which Cuoco appreciated more than any other for he knew that without order Italians would be trying to build on sand: "è l'uomo del destino perchè è l'istrumento di quell'ordine eterno pel quale la forza, che anima l'universo, tende costantemente alla perfezione". \*\*

In 1805, as in 1802, Lomonaco prepared a treatise on bygone glories, "Vite dei famosi capitani d'Italia", with the purpose of encouraging national pride in an almost-forgotten heritage - a suitable preparation for the imminent arrival of Italy's new King. Then Monti, the official Court Poet, produced "Il Beneficio" in honour of the Emperor and spoke of Italy's need of one ruler. But the picture was not all one-sided; adulation was balanced by plenty of satirical criticism like the following rather pedestrian sonnet, secretly published by Ceroni:

"Tinse nel sangue de'Capeti il dito  
Il ladron franco; e di sue fraudi forte,  
Vincitor scese nell'ausonio lito,  
Ebbro gridando: Libertade o morte.  
  
Pieno/

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\* CUOCO: "Giornale Italiano", 5 - 8 gennaio, 1806.

\*\* CUOCO: Op.cit., 27 gennaio, 1806.

Pieno la mente di contanta sorte,  
Libertà sogna il popolo tradito,  
Nè le novelle ah! sento empie ritorte  
Ond'ora ha il piè profondamente attrito.

E libero qual gloriasi, i suoi dritti  
Mira calpesti, e da straniero spado  
Protetti gli oppressor, salvi i delitti.

Che più? fra noi seder dee un Gallo in trono,  
Ahi, se cangiar tiranno è libertade,  
O terra, ingoia il donator e il dono". \*

Another anonymous person in Milan who had strong anti-French feelings, let it be known that he would only recognise Napoleon as King if he wore a crown of thorns, carried a wooden sceptre and had a cross in place of a throne. Undaunted by the police, on the eve of the Coronation this man proved that he was not just a religious maniac by displaying a sign at the entrance to his house bearing the letters I.N.R.I. When asked for an explanation by the police, he said that the letters represented: "Imperator Napoleon Rex Italiae".

Undoubtedly, opinion was very mixed although on the surface adulation prevailed as in Cesarotti's commemoration of the Coronation:

"Creò nazioni e le create estinse,  
Dal Po, dal Reno, da le foci a i fonti;  
Strappò/

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\* CERONI: Sonetto. IN-G. DE CASTRO: "Milano durante la

Strappò diademi da regali fronti,  
 E i rottani de i troni in fasci avvinse.  
 Fatto gigante, attortigliossi i crini  
 D'Asia a la manca, e l'agitò qual alga;  
 D'Europa a l'altra man volse i destini.  
 Or re sul trono e imperator s'asside:  
 Che manca più? Dal trono a l'ara ei salga;  
 S'alzò così fra i maggior numi Alcide", \*

This type of sonnet seems almost acceptable when placed side by side with some of the organized collections of verse written immediately after the Coronation whose insincerity and obvious flattery make painful reading. Such is the effect of "Prose e rime in occasione di celebrarsi con straordinaria pompa i giorni di nascita e di nome di S. M. I. e R. Napoleone I, recitate nell'Accademia degli Oscuri, Lucca, il dì 16 agosto, 1805". Although this was but a foretaste of future adulation, the fact that it was produced at all shows the rather pathetic frame of mind of educated Italians. Whether they realized it or not, this was their indirect, misguided way of expressing patriotism and they did so because to them it was the only obvious means of participating in the country's problems. Moreover, most of their desperate attempts to ensure Napoleon's favour sprang from the understandable belief that he was Italy's only hope of success in her struggle to become a nation.

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\* CESAROTTI: "In occasione dell'incoronazione di Napoleone in Milano", 1805.

(c) 1806-1809: NAPOLEON THE CONQUEROR.

Napoleon had reached the height of his fame and success by July, 1807. Behind him lay not only the victories of Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, Auerstädt and Friedland, but his alliance with the Russian Emperor, signed at Tilsit had announced the agreement of East and West to co-operate in an attempt to conquer the sea from the land<sup>\*</sup> and thereby restore peace and liberty to Europe. It was also felt that although Napoleon's naval inferiority had been confirmed at Trafalgar (October, 1805), with Austria and Prussia now helpless, England could not remain an inaccessible enemy for much longer.

When faced with such an overwhelming success story, one can easily understand why Italians were disposed to regard Napoleon with wonder and often with awe: to both the general and informed public he seemed indeed invincible, and even those who did not admire his conquests could not ignore them. Further, since the Treaty of Pressburg (December, 1805), all the mainland of Northern and Southern Italy had passed under the sway of Napoleon because Austria had been forced to cede Venice and the Venetian Provinces of Istria and Dalmatia to the Kingdom of Italy. Apart from this, the Italians had been subjected to a systematic process of pro-French indoctrination since the days of Marengo which had increased with the establishment of the Empire.

Napoleon's attitude towards Italy was clearly seen from  
1st April, 1805/

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\* This was to be achieved by perfecting the Continental System.



1st April, 1805 when he began a three-month visit to the country his first journey outside French territory since Marengo. This time he came as the new Charlemagne to be crowned in Milan with the famous Iron Crown of the Lombards.\* The Emperor-King chose this occasion to emphasize his authority and power in Italy. When he placed the Crown on his own head, he announced: "Dio me l'ha data, guai a chi la tocca", thus claiming Divine Right as an additional means of intimidation.

The Italian reaction could well be described as a mixture of astonishment and bewilderment which present-day analysts might liken to mass hypnosis. This state of mind remained until after the Russian Campaign because the people were swept along in a rather extraordinary world, dazzled by reports of brilliant victories and propaganda until they felt they must indeed belong to a special age governed by no ordinary mortal. Indeed, such was the rapidity of events that there was scarcely time to think. Napoleon knew that the element of surprise often produced confusion in battle because it denied the enemy time to reorganize, and the same could be applied to nations. Thus, carefully staged appearances would follow news of a startling victory and have the effect of captivating the imagination of the public. Hardly a month passed but news was spread "di azion de scuri l'aria," as Porta often remarked. News bulletins announced that Napoleon planned/

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\* This sixth-century crown, preserved at Monza, was designed by Queen Theodolinda to include a nail of the True Cross.

planned to invade England, that he was attacking Austria, that he had gained Vienna with the help of Italian legions, and naturally writers were quick to respond by giving their interpretation of events.

After Austerlitz the flood of literary comment rose to unprecedented levels: men vied with each other in their efforts to praise "il protettore del mondo" and no opportunity, however trivial, was neglected. Thus it was that a man like Giovanni Battista Pacchiarotti could publish a poem in Pavia entitled: "Napoleone, Raggio della Divinità". In the second canto he spoke in awesome tones:

"Potente, Saggio e Buon Napoleone  
Della Divinità fedel immagine  
Chi verràà teco mai al paragone"?

In the poet's eyes Austerlitz was conclusive proof of Napoleon's greatness and marked but another stage in the development of the European Empire of "questo terrestre Sol".

The Arcadian poet, Giusto Navasa, tried to be more rational in his song of praise, "L'Italia Rigenerata da Napoleone il Grande" (1806). "Supponendo l'Italia priva, come lo era, del suo vigore, e della sua gloria, io canto i fasti di quell'Eroe che tutto le ridona, e che considerandola come figlia, la benefica, e le va' adattando leggi conformi alla natia sua inclinazione". \* Navasa was glad that Italy had produced Canova at/

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\* G. NAVASA: L'Italia Rigenerata da Napoleone", Prefazione.

at the same period as he was a sculptor capable of producing an image worthy of Napoleon. He then went on to re-echo Lomanaco's sentiments by stressing Italy's past glories:

"Ausonia più che tanto cara ai Numi  
Sempre feconda, e bella, or più non serba  
Sua Maestà antica, al primo onor ritorni.  
Risplenderà Napoleon: l'etade  
Avrà suo nome dall'Eroe novello;  
Tutto sarà lucente, in ogni core  
Pace brillar vedrassi, e Italia ancora  
In LUI trovando il difensore, il Padre,  
Qual pria si renderà grande, e famosa". \*

Behind the words of praise lies the poet's rather sad, idealistic voice of hope that Napoleon may bring peace and prosperity to Italy. The same hope inspired Bartolommeo Benincasa even before Napoleon's spectacular victories in 1806. Not long after the Coronation in Milan, Benincasa published his "Q. Orazio Flacco redivivo a Napoleone il Grande, Imperatore dei Francesi e Re d'Italia" - an adaptation of Horace to suit the current mood of adulation but with the ever-present patriotic end in view:

"Oh dai propizi Numi a noi mandato,  
Tu dell'Italo suol Rettor, Custode,  
Rendi all Patria lo splendor passato.  
Ove appare il tuo aspetto, avvien che stenda  
La Primavera amabile sereno,  
E di luce più chiara il Sol s'accenda". \*\*

After/

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\* G. NAVASA: Op.cit. Parte III, page 44.

\*\* B. BENINCASA: "Q. Orazio Flacco redivivo a Napoleone il Grande", IV, 2.

After Jena, Luigi Camilli tried to make his name with fourteen canti about "Le Guerre di Napoleone il Grande" which he hoped would attain the same immor<sup>t</sup>ality as the man whose praises he was singing. As a historian, Camilli tried to be fair and impartial but the tedious result of his efforts barely merited the attempt. More indicative of the real attitude of the thinking public were Odes from two Professors, Grassi and Garmagnano, of Turin University (October, 1806). They did not dwell so much on the battles which had been won as on the fact that the outcome would mean peace for Italy. Francesco Grassi regretted that Virgil was not alive to do justice to this second "secolo d'oro":

"In quella pace lieta  
 Tragge in terra dal ciel stirpe novella;  
 E l'età d'or rappella  
 Con aureo carme il Mantovan Poeta.  
 Vivessi a veder l'opre  
 Napoleonie chi'l futuro scopre"! \*

His colleague, Alessandro Garmagnano, had similar feelings about the importance of Austerlitz, Jena and Auerstädt: he rejoiced because he thought that at last all wars were at an end and consequently Italy could benefit by having time to concentrate on her internal problems:

"Or che ad Europa lieto nunzio alfine  
 Sarà di pace questo di felice:  
 S'intreccin dunque d'Elicon fiori  
 Di Bonaparte gl'immortali allori". \*\*

Scholars/

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\* F. GRASSI: "Sopra il ritorno della pace", Ode - lines 96-101.  
 \*\* A. GARMAGNANO: "Per le vittorie riportate da Napoleone I",  
 Ode - lines 17-20.

Scholars and artists were perhaps more likely to adopt this tone of idealism mixed with patriotism. These were the kind of feelings which had prompted Beethoven to dedicate his "Sinfonia Eroica" to the Consul of the French Republic whom he admired enthusiastically as a soldier, a statesman and the champion of liberty; but the same feelings had made him cancel that dedication when Napoleon became Emperor, for in Beethoven's eyes, this man of the people had shown himself to be only a tyrant, ambitious of personal power. At heart, the same sentiments existed in Italy but few were prepared to admit disillusionment as early as 1804, either because they lacked Beethoven's courage and foresight or because their thinking was more wishful than rational. Luigi Lanzi, the art historian, falls into the latter category with his monumental "Storia Pittorica della Italia", (1806). This aged Jesuit who knew neither fear nor worldly ambition, saw Napoleon as a powerful and beneficent patron of the arts. His sincere but ingenuous praise was repeated with greater conviction at the end of the third edition of his work in 1809: "Ben posso dire che, stando ora a capo delle cose d'Italia un 'nuovo Alessandro' nel cui cospetto ammutolisce la terra, non è difficile che, in vigor del trasporto che mostra per queste professionali, sorgano gli artefici più eminenti".\*

More predictable were the commentaries from Monti, the "Official/

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\* L. LANZI: "Storia Pittorica della Italia", Vol V, page 395.

"Official Poet", and from his rival, Gianni, the improvisator. The latter described the scene at Marengo, Ulm, Vienna (where the wrathful spirit of John Sobieski appeared to encourage Napoleon) and Friedland, but his best work was a dramatization of the Battle of Jena in which he showed that Napoleon won by having a carefully planned army, equipped with modern arms and techniques whereas the Prussians had not progressed since the time of Frederick the Great. He portrayed Napoleon at the end of the day, looking with pity on the battlefield, replacing his sword and turning towards the arch enshrining the ashes of Frederick the Great:

"Il cener sol di Federico asconde,  
Il nome no, perchè vivrà immortale". \*

The climax came when the spirit of Frederick admitted Napoleon's superiority and offered him his sword:

"E dir pareo, ben Tu degno se' certo  
Di posseder quel brando mio, che un giorno  
T'avrei, vivendo, in ogni impresa offerto". \*\*

To contemporaries, this would not have sounded strange because in October, 1806, after 14,000 soldiers had surrendered to the French at Erfurt, Napoleon entered Potsdam in triumph, visited the tomb of Frederick the Great and carried off his sword, belt and insignia of the order of the Black Eagle.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Monti also chose to record/

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\* F. GIANNI: "La Battaglia di Jena", 140-41

\*\* F. GIANNI: Op.cit. 158-60.

record this striking event -- Prussia's greatest humiliation. In stanza XVI of "La Spada di Federico II" he made Frederick admit that Napoleon's victory was "la giusta vendetta di Dio" but he managed to maintain a very balanced atmosphere in his poem by showing great understanding of the feelings of the Prussian King at the sight of his country's total defeat. Yet when one stops to consider the circumstances of the time as well as Monti's own position, one is surprised at his impartiality and objectivity. The reason for this was that Monti himself had ceased to be inspired by Napoleon but was merely writing in his official capacity as "Poet Laureate".

Giovanni Fantoni was one of the few Italians who tried to analyse his country objectively during the years 1806 - 1807. He lamented the lack of peace and social justice and felt that his fellow-citizens had lost all sense of proportion. He blamed Napoleon for this and did not hesitate to say so:

"O tū, che osasti rompere  
tanta speranza, con esempio orribile  
tutto potrai corrompere,  
fuorchè/

fuorchè il sordo rimorso incorrutibile". \*

Italy was indeed in a sad plight when she had to place herself at the mercy of a foreigner in the hope of attaining dignity as a national unit:

"Tempi infelici! in cui  
vano è sperar salute all'uomo infermo;  
chè sol nei vizi altrui  
cerca chi regge e medicina e schermo".

"Come sperar di sorgere  
dal fango impuro del rinato vizio?  
Chi ci oserà di porgere  
nel troncato sentier lume propizio"? \*\*

Fantoni realized that the people were being deluded by a bright façade of glowing promises, and he warned that the other side of the coin was much less attractive:

"Tutto è rapina, tutto  
di vendetta e di stragi oggetto infame:  
fra le ruine e il lutto  
su le membra insepolti, erra la fame". \*\*\*

Fundamentally, the country lacked unity among the people: they did not think of themselves as Italians, first and foremost, but as Milanese or Romans:

"Vostre/

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\* G. FANTONI: "Sullo Stato dell'Italia nel 1806, lines 108-11

\*\* G. FANTONI: Op.cit., lines 180-187.

\*\*\* G. FANTONI: Op.cit., lines 340-343.



"Vostre divise voglie  
strazian del mondo la più bella parte,  
e lo stranier le spoglie  
dell'Italia impotente avido parte". \*

Fantoni then went on to say that their moral standards were generally low, and that as far as national spirit was concerned, such was their lack of pride in their past glories that not one of them was fit to lift his eyes to the Campidoglio.

This veiled attack on Napoleon was as strong an indictment as Fantoni felt capable of making. However, his feelings on the subject were expressed with more clarity and impact by Cuoco in the letter with which he prefaced the Second Edition of his "Saggio Storico", 1806. Indeed, since Foscolo's Dedication of his "Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore", no-one had struck the same level of patriotic ardour:- "Un uomo che ha liberato due volte l'Italia, che ha fatto conoscere all'Egitto il nome francese e che, ritornando, quasi sulle ali dei venti, simile alla folgore, ha dissipati, dispersi, atterrati coloro che eransi uniti a perdere quello Stato che egli avea creato ed illustrato colle sue vittorie, molto ha fatto per la sua gloria; ma molto altro ancora può e deve fare per il bene dell'umanità. Dopo aver infranto le catene all'Italia, ti rimane ancora a renderle la libertà cara e sicura, onde nè per negligenza perda nè per forza/

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\* G. FANTONI: Op.cit., lines 260-263.

forza le sia rapito il tuo dono..... Se tu ti contenti della sola gloria di conquistatore, mille altri troverai, i quali han fatto, al pari di te, tacere la terra al loro cospetto; ma, se a questa gloria vorrai aggiungere anche quella di fondatore di saggi governi e di ordinatore di popoli, allora l'umanità riconoscente ti assegnerà, nella memoria dei posteri, un luogo nel quale avrai pochissimi rivali o nessuno".

These lines of Cuoco were widely read at the time and considerable attention was paid to his analysis of the contemporary political scene. He was able to highlight Italy's needs and weak spots, and was ready to give Napoleon the praise due to him in the hope that he could be encouraged to complete the work which he had begun. Cuoco had only one end in view: the creation of a strong, independent Italian nation, and it seemed reasonable to expect that Napoleon could help most towards this ideal. Beyond all doubt, sincerity guided his approach, and although present-day readers might feel that his was the only possible attitude for an honest person to have adopted, this was not so obvious at that time and people expressed their sincerity in different ways. Giuseppe Sarchiani, Professor of Greek in Florence, considered that the best contribution he could make was to show his appreciation of Napoleon as a military wonder in an elegy entitled: "Invicto Gallorum/

Gallorum Imperatori Italiae Regi Napoleoni Magno", (Florence 1807  
On the other hand, the elderly Angelo Mazza from Parma thought  
Napoleon must be a heaven-sent gift because the problems he had  
to face and resolve were super-human. He was also one of the  
few who still remembered to differentiate between God and the  
mighty Emperor:

"Altri diran che dopo Dio sei Nume,  
Io sol dirò che sei Ministro a Lui;  
E tal parte dei decreti sui  
Son caligine al mondo, a Te son lume". \*

However the immediate responsibility of all writers was to  
make the general public aware of the importance of current  
events because these were the factors which would determine the  
country's future. Cesarotti was so anxious to help in this work  
of education that in 1807 at the age of seventy-seven years he  
published a long poem in blank verse entitled: "Pronea" or  
"Providence". It was an attempt to explain that as Providence  
had intervened to send Napoleon to Italy, failure to appreciate  
him would meet with celestial disapproval. In the poem, France,  
distraught by the horrors of revolution, had prayed for  
deliverance and God had granted her request through the person  
of Napoleon: then follows an account of the glorious career of  
Bonaparte/

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\* A. MAZZA: "Sonetto a Napoleone", 1807, lines 1-4.

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Bonaparte from the days of Marengo to his coronation in Milan. World peace was his aim, but to achieve it, war was necessary because Napoleon was being threatened by the adverse elements which had been driven out of France and were sheltering in the various Courts of Europe. But these challenges merely served to increase Napoleon's grandeur as was inferred in the final canto of the poem by a vision of Time reviewing each century but stopping at the nineteenth since it appeared as the embodiment of lasting peace and happiness.

This work was highly praised by Napoleon who decided that he liked it even better than Monti's "Bardo della Selva Nera". Cesarotti was certainly highly favoured both before and after its publication and knowing this, it is easy to read the poem in such a way as to see only the adulation and submission of the poet. But this would be a very biased judgment. To begin with, Cesarotti's vision was in keeping with the grand-scale choreography of the Napoleonic Empire as it existed in the mind of its creator, but having the wisdom that comes with years, Cesarotti recognised that Italy could learn much from Napoleon and gain experience in the social, political and economic/

economic spheres. But an ignorant populace could not be expected to have the necessary insight or awareness of the significance of such a situation. Cesarotti therefore hoped to supply this need, and in view of the development of events by 1807, his was a very sensible analysis:

"Egli ti forma  
All'arte del valor, ti sveglia al senso  
Di tue posse natie, forte ti rende,  
Intrepido, costante, all'ozio avverso,  
Operoso, animoso, uomo non ombra,  
Schermo a te, scudo ai tuoi : solo di tanto  
Sei già felice assai". "

Idealism and patriotism rather than a vainglorious desire to please his master lay behind this exhortation to the Italian people to appreciate Napoleon.

It is important to keep in mind just how difficult life must have been for those writers who wanted to be sincere but at the same time were impressed by appearances which roused their patriotism, while for others it was a case of hoping that the end would justify the means. This was a period of torment and national tragedy for Italy which seemed little changed since the time when Dante remarked:

"Ah! serva Italia, di dolore ostello,  
nave senza nocchiero in gran tempesta,  
non/

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\* CESAROTTI: "PRONIA"  
In -- Opere, Vol. 32, page 58. (Ed. Firenze, 1809).

non donna di provincie, ma bordello"! \*

Naturally, this mood of confusion and distress was reflected in most of the work produced during these years, and when one considers the complex background, pity can often replace scorn for any writer who produced a few lines of adulation in order to gain favour with the authorities.

An outsider is more likely to take an objective view of this situation, and Madame de Staël<sup>"</sup> was one of the best-qualified "outsiders" to do so. Speaking about contemporary Italian literature she said: "depuis les derniers siècles, des circonstances malheureuses ayant privé l'Italie de son indépendance, on y a perdu tout intérêt pour la vérité, et souvent même la possibilité de le dire. Il en est résulté l'habitude de se complaire dans les mots, sans oser approcher des idées. Comme l'on était certain de ne pouvoir obtenir par ses écrits aucune influence sur les choses, on n'écrivait que pour montrer de l'esprit, ce qui est le plus sûr moyen de finir bientôt par n'avoir pas même de l'esprit..... Quand les écrivains en prose ne peuvent influencer en aucun genre sur le bonheur d'une nation, quand on n'écrit que pour briller, enfin quand c'est là route qui est le but, on se replie en mille détours,/"

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\* DANTE: "Purgatorio", VI, 76-78.

détours, mais l'on n'avance pas". \*

One of the most typical products of this epoch was that great Classical scholar, Pietro Giordani. Like so many other Italians, he was deceived by the contradiction between the principles of the revolution which brought the French to Italy as "liberators", and the imperialistic policy of the Directory and Empire. Nevertheless, he had faith in Napoleon as the only man able to reform internal Italian politics and restore order to the national scene. In his opinion, conscription, army-training, good legislation, the abolition of privilege and laicization were the necessary steps towards re-vitalising the Italian character and shaking them out of their inertia. "Dipinsi Bonaparte come doveva essere", \*\* was Giordani's own comment several years later. However, at the beginning of his 127-page "Panegirico a Napoleone" which he wrote in 1807, he stated unashamedly that his aim was to show the Emperor as "sapientissimo e fortissimo benefattore del genere umano". Superlatives were used throughout and deification of this earthly ruler flowed easily from Giordani's classical pen. He spoke of "quest'esempio unico di umana perfezione" of whom one could only ask: "tra grande e buono qual sia più"? This was hardly surprising in view of the fact that/

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\* Mme. de Staël: "Corinne" livre 7, page 134 (Ed. Paris, 1916)  
\*\* P. GIORDANI: Lettera alla Marchesa T. Poldi, 28.10.1835.

that "Napoleone era visibilmente eletto da Dio a mutare e governare le cose mortali", and proof of his greatness was to be lasting peace. Giordani argued well in support of arms and conscription as a deterrent against war: "Lo stato non si può mantenere senz'armi ognora pronte: né altre armi son buone fuorchè le cittadine: i forestieri non giovano, anzi nuocciono sempre; fuori non ti difendono, in casa ti offendono. Importa avvertirvi che quel popolo che non si trova continuamente sull'armi ben disposto a difendersi, è sempre in pericolo". \* He then went on to praise the various aspects of Napoleonic government and outlined their effects on Italy: Free Trade would bring economic benefits and the "Code Napoléon" would assure equality for all before the law, sanction divorce and regulate the distribution of property. Personal endeavour would be recognised by the creation of the Legion of Honour and the "Corona Ferrea"; above all, education was to be rightly assigned a place of maximum importance in the state.

Undoubtedly there is much that can be classed as adulation in this "Panegirico", but when it was written, men's minds were being dazzled by the power and glory of the Emperor and it is only fair to allow that much of Giordani's enthusiasm was sincere. Besides, when faced with the task of praising Napoleon, it was natural for this poet to use grandiloquent language/

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\* P. GIORDANI: "Panegirico", pages 56-57.



language and turn to Pliny the Younger as the most suitable Classical writer whom he could not only try to emulate but surpass. Unfortunately, jealousy has always been one of the more common of human weaknesses and even the most illustrious figures are not immune. The detractors of Giordani, particularly Monti and Foscolo, were very ready to publicize the fact that the "Panegirico" won him 600 lire and a gold tobacco-box of the same value at a time when he badly needed the money. From this they concluded that his motives in writing were insincere and adulatory and therefore labelled both the work and its author unworthy of any serious consideration. It is regrettable that Foscolo showed so little understanding of this man, only five years his senior, but then, jealousy is usually unreasonable. When the present-day reader troubles himself sufficiently to view this work in its historical context, he is more likely to understand the patriotic, hopeful spirit of Giordani which lay behind it. The author's self-appointed task was to influence Napoleon to do more for Italy by presenting him with an idealized picture of himself as the re-maker of Italy. In this light, the <sup>above</sup> criticism to which Giordani was subjected by other writers seems indeed misguided and certainly excessive.

His/

His was the more normal type of simple, human reaction which could be expected to develop from such an unsettled period of history: a combination of wonder, admiration, patriotism and sensible opportunism on the part of a needy scholar. In 1807, there were few who would have acted differently given the same opportunity and ability.

There was another more sensitive type of patriotism, however, which sprang from a greater depth of intellect and demanded supreme courage for its expression. Unlike Giordani, Foscolo was not so easily deceived by a façade of grandeur and promises, and when faced with reports of dazzling victories, he kept evaluating their effect on Italy and her future. He never lost sight of the basic realities of the situation, and at this particular stage in the development of the Napoleonic Empire, he was moved to emphasise Italy's individuality as a nation by remembering her past. In "Dei Sepolcri" (1807) his message was that Italy's heritage rather than foreign help proved that she would rise again. His outburst had the same quality of grandeur as was found in the political writings of Dante, Petrarch, Alfieri and Parini, and yet he managed to be original: "Il suo fine è di ricostituire nell'anima degli'Italiani/

degli'Italiani la coscienza civile' e la religione  
'nazionale'". \* Indeed, few lines have roused such  
patriotic ardour as the following which ended his poem:

"E tu onore di pianti, Ettore, avrai  
ove fia santo e lagrimato il sangue  
per la patria versato, e finché il Sole  
risplenderà su le sciagure umane". \*\*

The occasion of Foscolo's outburst was the Edict of  
Saint-Cloud, issued in France on 12th June, 1804 and in  
Italy on 5th September, 1806 which forbade burials in places  
other than cemeteries, and these latter had to be situated  
outside the towns. In addition, gravestones were forbidden.  
Foscolo was certain that Italy's only hope of regaining her  
freedom and greatness was by keeping alive the memory of her  
illustrious predecessors: "I monumenti, inutili ai morti,  
giovano ai vivi, perchè destano affetti virtuosi lasciati  
in eredità dalle persone dabbene.....Solo i malvagi, che  
si sentono immeritevoli di memoria, non la curano.....A  
torto, dunque, la legge accomuna la sepoltura dei tristi e  
dei/

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\* A. MARPICATI: Foscolo, page 78.

\*\* FOSCOLO: "Dei Sepolcri", lines 292-296.

dei buoni, degl'illustri e degl'infami". \* Hence his anger and grief that this foreign power was attempting to deprive Italy of an essential part of her self-defence and thereby leave man's earthly immortality in the hands of poets. But his hatred of the Emperor was revealed more by omission than by what he actually said against him. This was the era of the "Continental System" or economic blockade of England, and therefore any sympathy for the English way of life was tantamount to pouring scorn on France. How subtle, therefore, of Foscolo to recall the glories of Nelson

"Che tronca fe' la trionfata nave  
del maggior pino, e si scavò la bara," \*\*

for his victories at Aboukir and Trafalgar were disasters for France. At a time when everyone's ears resounded with news of the outstanding victories of Austerlitz and Jena, no-one else dared to remind Napoleon that he was not invincible.

By contrast, the diplomatic approach of D'Algarotti's "Giudizio di Giove" seems particularly repulsive. It was published/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Lettera a Monsieur Guillon sulla sua incompetenza a giudicare i poeti italiani", 22 giugno, 1807. In-Opere Completi - Napoli, 1860, pages 252-7.

\*\* FOSCOLO: "Dei Sepolcri", lines 135-6.

published in Venice (December, 1807) with musical accompaniment on the occasion of Napoleon's visit to the city to make it a maritime centre for his military preparations against England. The Court librarian, Rev. Jacopo Morelli, wrote a detailed account of the lavish preparations made by Venice for their august visitor. One wonders how the Venetians in particular could have put on such a display, even under duress. At the entrance to the Grand Canal a Doric-Style triumphal arch was erected: "Sorgeva dall'acqua l'imbasamento a scarpa, di opera rustica; sul quale in ambedue le facciate posavano quattro colonne appoggiate alli piloni fiancheggianti l'arco. La proporzione di questo variava secondo il cambiamento del livello dell'acqua, proveniente dal flusso e riflusso; ed essa era di due metri nel punto medio tra la più alta e più bassa marea. Il soproornato girava tutto dintorno senza risalti. Nell'Attico in ambedue le facciate eravi un'Iscrizione presa in mezzo da due Vittorie in bassorilievo; e nel dado ad esso superiore vi erano trofei aggruppati. Fra questi nella parte riguardante La Laguna soprestava una Vittoria che due corone d'alloro porgeva e nella parte opposta un Genio che teneva l'arme della città....

.... Sull'imbasamento Vittorie di tutto rilievo, in mezzo a copiosi trofei, erano collocate..... Nella struttura di questo nobilissimo edificio bene può dirsi senza esagerazione, che in esinia maniera e con approvazione comune vi spiccò l'intelligenza

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e il buon gusto de' nostri Accademici di Belle Arti, i quali l'industria loro per ogni migliore riuscita premurosamente vi posero".\* Morelli also tells us that Napoleon was present at a gala performance in La Fenice during which D'Algarotti's "Giudizio di Giove" was sung.

However, the organization of the Continental System was only one of the many reasons for this visit of Napoleon to Italy: he wanted to show himself in person to his Italian subjects and at the same time divert European attention from Junot's march across Spain to subdue Portugal. Besides this, his struggle for control of the Papal States had reached breaking point and on 1st November, 1807, Napoleon had ordered General Lemarrois to proclaim himself Governor. Shortly afterwards, General Miollis was sent to occupy Rome, (2nd February, 1808). Similar plans were made for Tuscany where the government had shown itself incapable of maintaining the embargo on English goods. Consequently, by October, 1807, Napoleon had decided that the Spanish-Bourbon, Marie-Louise/

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\* MORELLI: Descrizione delle feste celebrate in Venezia per la venuta di Napoleone, 1807.

Two oil paintings of this scene by Giuseppe Borsato, "Arco di Trionfo eretto sul Canal Grande per le visita di Napoleone nel 1807" and "Napoleone assiste alla regata sul Canal Grande" are in the collection of Professor Mario Praz, Rome. They are also reproduced in his "I Volti del Tempo", pages 272 and 256, respectively.

Marie-Louise, \* should be removed from the Tuscan throne and indemnified with a portion of Portugal. Then in March of the following year the Kingdom of Etruria was formally annexed to the French Empire and divided into three departments, but such was the discontent provoked by the French régime that Napoleon decided to modify it to the extent of giving Tuscany the rank of a Grand-Duchy and conferring it on his sister, Elisa, (March, 1809) who had previously married an Italian, Felix Bacciochi. She did her best for her new subjects and tried to ease some of the hardships associated with conscription, but her powers were very limited and the Tuscans soon learned that like the rest of their compatriots, their primary value to the French was as cannon fodder in Spain, Austria and Russia.

When the first novelty of fighting for "Napoleone Nostro Re" faded the people realized that a smart uniform was little protection against the dangers which they had to face every day. Nearly every family had reason to wear mourning, and naturally men were ready to avoid the battlefield at the slightest/

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\* Daughter of Charles IV of Spain. She married Ludovico di Borbone-Parma, (obit - 1803) who became King of Etruria in 1801, after the Treaty of Lunéville. 1807 - she was given Lusitania by Napoleon. At Congress of Vienna she was given Lucca which she ruled as Regent for her son Carlo Ludovico. Elisa was born in Madrid, 1782, and died at Rome, March, 1824.

slightest opportunity. Nevertheless, to combat this reaction, Napoleon found several willing mouthpieces among the Italian clergy. These were clerics who took it upon themselves to encourage their flocks to join the army and fight for their King and country. Angelo Dalmistro, a Venetian, gave three long sermons on the subject, the first in July, 1808. According to him, "servire al Principe è servire a Dio medesimo", and therefore to disobey the orders of the ruler was the same as disobeying the commandments of God. Dalmistro also knew how to appeal to man's desire to be a hero: conscription was the key which would unlock a treasure-house of glory about which they could boast for the rest of their lives. This was the worthiest and noblest of professions, and indeed valour on the battlefield could even lead to martyrdom and cannonization by the Church. The latter reason alone should have made Italians anxious to exchange their farming tools for shields. He even dissuaded them from marriage: "Le nozze non/



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non sono per li soldati",\* because unmarried men have fewer worries and consequently make better soldiers.

This kind of sermon was heeded for a time by the uneducated masses, particularly when it was given by a person in a position of respect. Then when it was soon followed by other victories as at Wagram and Raab (August, 1809) the people were ready to be convinced that participation in these historic feats must be something of an honour and privilege rather than a French-imposed law. The elderly Teresa Bandettini declared herself to be at a loss for words to describe the feats which Napoleon had accomplished. After Wagram she wrote:

"Qual nome a Te darem che in parte uguaglie.

Non emulate imprese, e Te disegni?

Dir ti dovrem Signor delle battaglie?

Dator di regni?

Ebbe Numi ed Eroi Sparta, Cartago;

Roma pur n'ebbe, e luce ancor ne spande;

Ma non fur che imperfetta e smorta imago

D'alma più grande.

Tu alla gloria nascesti, e l'età nostra

Vinse l'antica." \*\*

Many/

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\* A. DALMISTRO: Primo Discorso sulla coscrizione, page 49.

\*\* T. BANDETTINI: "A Napoleone nella battaglia di Vagzia", lines 68-71, 76-79, 82.

Many Italians lost their lives in the French cause at Raab in Hungary and the soldier-poet, Ceroni, who witnessed the battle described how he himself was responsible for burying many of his compatriots. In spite of this, the same Ceroni who had endangered his career a few years previously for his anti-Napoleonic remarks now declared himself converted to the cause of Napoleon because he had brought peace to Italy:

"e il tolto urto di guerra

Gli dei tu, salva dal tedesco scempio,

'Italica terra". \*

Indeed it seemed that peace was so desperately desired that everything else would be overlooked if this end could be assured. Further, there was scarcely time for Italians to think clearly and analyse the whole situation as the French had planned to hold the attention of all sections of the community by displays, entertainment and a show of grandeur. This was carried to such an extent that the lower classes were almost unaware of the existence of the new King of Italy and of why they had to fight for France on foreign soil. They saw only the splendid coaches of their masters and the gold and glitter of celebrations which provided them with an excuse to sing, dance and make merry.

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\* CERONI: "Ode a Napoleone il Grande", lines 34-36.

It appeared to be a time of jubilation, and this was the impression which the French wanted to give: the games popular with the Ancient Romans were re-enacted in the Foro Bonaparte in Milan; public dances were held to which all were admitted free of charge, and the same applied to all spectacular forms of entertainment. It was not for nothing that Napoleon had decided to incorporate many of the characteristics of the Roman Age in his régime, and he was correct in thinking that the ancient "panem et circenses" was still an expedient political measure in the nineteenth century.

Knowing this background, one can but imagine what to expect from the ranks of minor poets who were carried away by the widespread enthusiasm produced by success. During a mime which represented Napoleon at the entrance to the Elysian Fields, Antonio Gasparinetti recited the following:

"E' quel suon, onde colma d'ebbrezza  
L'universo natura, in tal sermone,  
Cui sol la lingua delle Muse è avvezza,  
  
Chiaro cantava Dio Napoleone,  
E torrenti di luce il sol diffuse,  
Napoleone Dio Napoleone  
  
Rispondea la terra, e il ciel si chiuse".

These/

These were the closing lines of a poem after the style of Cesarotti in four canti which closely resembled a choreographic libretto and bore the impressive title: "Apoteosi di Napoleone, Primo Imperatore e Re", (Mantua, 1809). Gasparinetti provided yet another account of the military glories of "questo giovinetto EROE" who brought peace to Italy and happiness to all except "il fellone Anglo inumano",\*

A similar story came from a Venetian lawyer, Tomasso Grapputo, whose pastoral composition, "La Selva Napoleoniana" (Venice, 1809) bore all the traces of monotony associated with a list of battles composed for the purpose of pleasing the mighty Emperor. Praise of everything Napoleonic was balanced by denigration of everything English because the latter was considered solely responsible for war and was seen as the only obstacle to lasting peace for Napoleon and therefore, Italy:

"Vieni, o Pace alma, e il flagello  
Più non fischi della guerra;  
Cada l'Anglo crudo e fello  
Tra le angoscie ed i sospir,  
Della fronda a te sacrata  
Vieni dunque il crine adorna:  
Vieni, o Pace sospirata,  
E il comun compl desir.  
Sta/

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\* GASPARINETTI: "Apoteosi di Napoleone", Canto IV, 71.

Sta di Averno sulla sponda  
Boccheggiante il rio livore:  
Ha sul labbro bava immonda  
Ed il palpito nel cor  
Nel Britanno petulante  
Spera in van la ria Bellona;  
Verrà tempo, in cui tremante  
Chiederà venia al Vincitor.

Sogni son di menti inferme  
Il tentare alla Vittoria  
Di tarpar l'ali ben ferme,  
Di far fronte al Fato e al Ciel.  
Cedi, cedi alfin Britanno,  
Nè in lei più t'affida tanto:  
Più non valti esser crudel". \*

Try as they would, it seemed that as far as men of letters were concerned, nothing written by mere mortals could ever suffice to make the people of Italy fully appreciate their new saviour. The theme of Giovanni N. Campanelli's address in the Church of S. Luigi in Rome, (3rd December, 1809) was that Napoleon was here to execute the Will of God. "È dogma incontrastabile non esservi in questo mondo Potestà alcuna che non venga da Dio". No-one but God himself could have inspired Napoleon with such an understanding of matters concerning religion nor such wisdom in the formation of laws. His justice and charity were in harmony with the teachings of the Gospel and/

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\* T. GRAPPUTO: "La Selve Napoleoniana", 3 Day, page 83.

and showed him to be the perfect legislator.

The present-day reader would be easily forgiven were he to ask what more remained to be said about Napoleon's exploits. Yet on the other hand, one should be surprised that no major work of true literary value had been inspired by the sight of such a carefully planned re-evocation of the age of Imperial Rome, even without mentioning the countless acts of heroism, military manoeuvres and frequent expeditions to foreign countries which must have made an outstanding impression on the most impassive spectator. One explanation is that the vastness of the subject intimidated artists: to the contemporary onlooker it may have seemed impossible for one man to grasp all that had taken place and still be able to do justice to it when he put pen to paper. The alternative explanation is more obvious: that there was a dearth of literary talent in Italy. But we know that neither point of view is quite satisfactory, for men like Gasparinetti had tried to produce a definitive work on the Age of Napoleon up to 1809 and apart from him, there were men of outstanding intellectual capacity at that time who would have been able to describe the past few years without being over-powered by them. Perhaps the reason for this notable lack of a Homer, Virgil or Ariosto lies more with the Age itself than with the writers. It cannot be denied that there was something false about/

about these victories of Napoleon as far as Italian hopes were concerned, and therefore even those who believed in them and tried to immortalize them in verse, were restrained by an instinct of which they were perhaps unaware. In addition, there is also the strange fact that the greatest poetry is more often inspired by the tragedy of defeat or death than by victory -- witness the memorable contributions of Victor Hugo on Waterloo and of Manzoni on the death of Napoleon.

However, one other magnificent attempt was made to produce a literary classic but due to bad timing and lack of publicity it was almost entirely overlooked. In 1809, Stefano Egidio Petroni from Perugia composed one hundred odes covering the period from Napoleon's College days in Brienne to the Treaty of Tilsit. This "Napoleonide" which was first published in Naples had an atmosphere of majesty combined with natural simplicity -- qualities that were indeed rare among the mass of literature then being produced. Like Monti, Petroni was a master of the art of metre and his skill is best appreciated when one reads the odes chronologically. He also proved himself a true Neo-classicist by his expert use of mythology to describe famous events like the Battle of Lodi and the Expedition to Egypt. Petroni's was no careless contribution to the literature of the Napoleonic Age. He even commissioned Pécheux, a Turin designer, to design one hundred bronze medallions/

medallions to be printed side by side with each ode to complement and explain the narrative. The finished product was a magnificent volume, a monument of labour and devotion to a man whose permanence in office seemed unquestionable to the author. In July, 1810, Petroni's work was shown to Napoleon who received it with interest but without excitement as by then he had not only grown accustomed to such demonstrations of admiration but was also so preoccupied with foreign policy that he had little or no time for literary appreciation. We also know that because of the rapid development of the European political scene, Petroni, unlike Cesarotti, Monti and many others, was denied any tangible form of recognition from the authorities. The reader cannot but feel sorry that all the talent and effort which Petroni expended on the production of a work of such magnitude should have resulted in an end-product which can only be described as yet another well-meaning expression of devotion stretched to the limits of poetic invention. But what else could be expected considering that the monotonous subject matter at the author's disposal was a list of battles in which the same side was always victorious?

In fact, it would not be far from the truth to say that by the end of 1809, men of letters in Italy hardly knew which way to turn or how to comment on the state of affairs in their country/



country. Astonishment left them unsure whether to write words of praise or blame, but in view of the strict censorship then in force, a plea of stupefaction seemed the wisest policy for the majority except when a specific event took place which meant an obvious occasion for celebration. The year 1809 had begun with the French occupation of Rome and the Papal States on the grounds that the Pope had repeatedly refused to wage war on England. Then, spurred on by his successes against Austria in the Spring, Napoleon decided to abolish completely the temporal power of the Papacy and on the 17th May, Rome was proclaimed a Free Imperial City. The Pope was assured of independence in all spiritual affairs and of the free use of the Papal Palaces provided he did not try to influence or advise the people about any temporal matters. Quite predictably the result was deadlock and the people were torn by their loyalty to Church and State, even in the simple matter of amusement: masks and races were forbidden by the Pope but organized by the French who commanded that all should attend. The result in Rome was that hardly anyone complied with the French order and then Pius VII issued the famous Bull "Quam memoranda" excommunicating Napoleon on 11th June. However, the final word at this stage came from the Emperor who gave orders to remove the Pope from Rome, (6th July, 1809), to Savona.

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There are many eye-witness accounts of the scene as General Radet and the French troops broke into the Quirinal Palace to arrest the Pope, but one of the most moving was written by a Scot, Paul Macpherson, who was then Agent for the Scottish clergy and later became perhaps the most famous Rector of the Scots College in Rome. Although he recorded the details of events in the Capital City simply, factually and without emotion, the reader soon becomes very much aware of the confused, difficult situation which faced the Italian people. "Sad times. God help us! My mind was too much agitated to apply seriously to anything". \* This was Macpherson's conclusion, expressing neither bitterness nor anger as might have been expected, but profound sadness. Once again, it was the well-informed "outsider" who best expressed Italy's position, and his verdict encompassed both the political and spiritual fields.

It was indeed a sad time of disillusionment and turmoil for most Italians. They also learned that at the same time as the Pope was removed from Rome, the French secured the total collapse of Austria at Wagram. Then in December, when Napoleon's divorce from Josephine was announced, it seemed to set the seal on his image as an all-powerful ruler whose every wish, whether political/

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\* P. MACPHERSON: In notebook containing "Things to be remembered, jotted down as they occurred 1808-1810".  
Archives of Scots College, Rome.

political, military or personal, was granted. Obviously opposition from individuals was pointless when even the Pope had been silenced. Giordani was one of the few writers who still felt such complete trust in Napoleon that he published his reasons for writing <sup>the</sup> "Panegirico" in the 'Giornale italiano', (1809, Numbers 95-96), and hoped thereby to dispel some of the current dissatisfaction with the French rule: Napoleon was the greatest legislator of all time and the only man capable of the task; therefore, the people should not make rash judgments but have faith in him and wait until his schemes bear fruit.

However, this lone voice had little influence on the general public and could not hope to stem the growth of awareness of themselves as a nation with individuality instead of as an area within Europe ready to be brow-beaten by either Austria, Spain or France. In other words, reaction to Napoleon produced that form of intellectual nationalism which was to spread gradually until it reached all levels of society. Under the circumstances, this was quite a natural development towards the formation of an Italian identity after so many years of enforced cosmopolitan outlook.

Napoleon was desperately anxious to capture public opinion, but he was dismayed to find that this seemed to escape him in spite of his strict control of all printed matter. Certainly, direct/

direct opposition no longer existed and the popular or minor poets were under such close supervision that any attempts on their part to criticise the authorities came to nothing. But some writers found that they could carry on the struggle by means of commentaries on literature for they could say what they pleased when it involved only questions of art. This intellectual nationalism was found particularly in universities, especially when an opportunity arose for a public speech. Both Monti and Foscolo made use of such an occasion to exalt the glory of Italy and emphasise the importance of the purest form of "italianità" in all things. It was from this kind of idealism that the prototype for the future of Italy was to develop. Foscolo's "Orazione Inaugurale 'Dell'origine e dell'ufficio della letteratura'" given in 1809 at the University of Pavia fulfilled such a purpose. He did not recite, as was the custom, a panegyric about Napoleon, the august patron of learning, but instead maintained complete silence about him in a manner reminiscent of "Dei Sepolcri". After his fierce condemnation of Giordani's "Panegirico", he did not need to use words to describe his own opinion of the French Emperor. Once again, with his perception and sane judgment of events, Foscolo had assumed the part of the balancing force in Italian literature. But this was very much a transitory part of the Napoleonic Age and not one which could be expected to stimulate creative/

creative thought. With the exception of Foscolo, one could say that Italians were still waiting for Manzoni and Leopardi to help them cross the bridge to the future.

The moral and social optimism which had been such a prominent feature of the Revolutionary and early Napoleonic campaigns had now disappeared and been replaced by a mood of "tristezza patriottica", a feeling akin to desperation for the fortunes of Italy in particular and the world in general. It was no coincidence that this age had recently produced "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis" for indeed suicide was one of its greatest evils. The sensitive patriot only managed to survive by trying to study the pattern of history and hope that the strength of tradition would suffice to save the Italian people and awaken in them their hidden vitality. Breakdown occurred when a writer felt that such a solution was impossible and unfortunately, Lomonaco was one of the first victims of this unhappy situation. He had become a professor in the Military College in Pavia, instituted by Napoleon. Lomonaco was sincere and frank as well as being very intelligent and an exemplary professor. He did not speak openly against Napoleon, but he made no secret of the fact that he longed for Italian independence and unity. Further, the ardour with which he spread his ideals from the rostrum, in conversation with students and in his writings, was severely frowned upon by the authorities.

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In 1809, he published a volume of "Discorsi letterarie e filosofici" which the police declared a danger to public morals and in opposition to the politics of the government. He tried to defend himself but several slanderous accusations were made against him in the College, even by men whom he considered as friends. His exasperation soon developed into a persecution-mania until this friend of Foscolo met the same fate as Jacopo Ortis. Unlike Monti, Lomonaco did not know how to bend with the times, and unlike Foscolo, he had no other fount of solace. His quest for liberty was an agonizing one but he attached such importance to it that he was prepared to make any sacrifice to attain his ideal. Few could have remained unmoved when they learned of his painful conclusion: liberty could only be found by turning one's back on life and plunging instead into the depths of the Ticino. Lomonaco certainly proved himself worthy of the epitaph,

"Libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara,

Come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta", \*

and to Italians, his selfless action was a greater indictment of the Age of Napoleon than anything he could ever have written.

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\* DANTE: "Purgatorio", I, 71-72.

(d) 1810-1811: PERSONAL ADULATION.

After having divorced Josephine, political as well as personal reasons made Napoleon decide to marry Maria Louisa, eldest daughter of the Emperor Francis of Austria. Although this eighteen-year old girl had been taught to say the "Our Father" daily with the phrase "and deliver us from evil and Napoleon", the French Emperor was undeterred in his choice of a wife and when she provided him with an heir, (20th March, 1811), his decision seemed more than justified.

From the beginning the situation was an artificial one. Poets now had a specific event to celebrate but it was of such a nature that hypocrisy or some form of equivocation seemed inevitable. Their solution was to take refuge behind a mythological screen. Napoleon, who had repudiated his wife in order to attach himself to one of Europe's oldest dynasties, was compared to Jupiter who had divorced Themis to marry Juno in Crete. Hesiod's narrative of the genealogy of the gods formed the basis of all that was written in Italy to celebrate Napoleon's second marriage.

As might be expected, this event produced nothing of real literary merit. The best work was Monti's "Jerogamia di Creta" but even his erudition and carefully-worked out allegories fail to move the reader, although if one did not know that the ode had been written to celebrate a contemporary event, one would admire his splendid description of Jupiter's marriage, portrayed with/

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with a sense of epic solemnity worthy of the poets of antiquity. Another similar contribution came from Giovanni Rosini, Professor of Italian in Pisa, entitled: "Le Nozze di Giove e di Latona". However, even in the midst of the mythological fantasy surrounding Napoleon's wedding, the author was careful to stress that the purpose behind it all was peace. This latter theme predominates throughout the four canti and is an indication of the general desire for peace in Italy at almost any price. The Venetian lawyer, Tommaso Grapputo, combined mythology with an Arcadian background in his "Gli Auspicii Nuziali a Napoleone il Massimo" -- a work of no great value because of its unashamed adulation of the French ruler, but noteworthy because like Rosini, the poet took the opportunity to speak of the need for peace:

"Marte deponi il brando; assai le glebe  
Dell'Europa fumar d'innocuo sangue,  
E umanità di tante stragi è sazia.  
Requie l'Eroe, terrore, e amor del mondo,  
Cerca egli pure fatigato, e stanco,  
E tempo è ben che alcun riposo ei s'abbia". \*

Domenico Pertusi from Pavia tried to be more practical and objective by analysing the effects of this marriage. In his opinion, the union of Austria and France would not only ensure European peace but would also benefit commerce because the extension/

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\* T. GRAPPUTO: "Gli Auspicii Nuziali a Napoleone il Massimo",  
Conclusione, page 56.



extension of the French family circle meant the removal of trade barriers. But the reader feels nothing but boredom as he turns the pages of this "Poemetto per le Nozze di S.M.I.R. Napoleone il Grande con l'Archiduchessa d'Austria", and recognises yet another vain attempt to justify a situation which was basically unsound.

Giuseppe Ceroni showed more ingenuity than other poets on this occasion, but his vivid imagination did not help him to produce a literary masterpiece. His contribution was a poem in blank verse with the surprising title, "La Morte di Tasso". Ceroni's idea was to let the spirit of Tasso tell of the wonders of Napoleon, including his divorce and second marriage which would undoubtedly result in the birth of an heir. Nothing but a selfish attempt on the part of a poet to ingratiate himself with the authorities lay behind Ceroni's work. There was no serious consideration of his country's future or of the need to end war, and indeed this category of so-called 'literature' is only worthy of scorn. Other writers who had even less access to news of events than Ceroni, showed an understandable desire to please Napoleon by praising his every action, but they also tried to reach a compromise by weaving some of their patriotic ideals and hopes into their compositions so that to a certain extent, they were fulfilling a useful purpose. In other words, they showed that Napoleon's marriage celebrations had not completely diverted/

diverted their attention from the difficult war in Spain and the unsettled state of affairs in Italy itself. One example of this "dual purpose poetry" was Cesari Arici's "Il Vaticinio," written in 1810 to celebrate Napoleon's choice of Maria Louisa as his second wife. Although Arici copied Monti's idea of a comparison with Jupiter and Juno, he did make a sincere plea for peace and ended with a condemnation of "Anglia superba" whom he held responsible for war in Europe. Thus, even if we disagree with most of his ideas, we can recognise that Arici's aim was not just personal favour. Count Paradisi, President of the Senate did likewise only he spoke more vehemently against England, foretelling her imminent downfall:

"E tu del comun pianto eterna fonte,  
Tardi pentito, alla regal Parigi  
Tu pure un giorno piegherai la fronte,  
Fiero Tamigi". \*

By 1810, the defeat of England must have been the earnest hope of the majority of Italians who were close to despair and desperation. Each year saw more and more of their compatriots drafted into service overseas at the command of the French Emperor and many never returned. This was often mentioned in the sad popular songs sung by the women left at home:

"Guarda Napoleon quello che fai;  
La meglio gioventù tutta la vuoi,  
E le ragazze te le friggerai". \*\*

Life/

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\* PARADISI: "Inno alla Pace", lines 60-63.

\*\* IN CANTÙ: "Della Canzone popolare" in "Letture di famiglia di Trieste", VI, 26.

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Life became increasingly difficult from an economic point of view as the French tried to enforce their Continental System. An internal tariff barrier cut off the Kingdom of Italy from the provinces to the west which were within the French economy, with the result that the grain and fruit-producing areas of Italy now became vast French allotments, and the raw silk of Lombardy which used to be exported to England and Germany, was requisitioned for the French market at a lower price. At the same time, the goods which Italy could no longer get from abroad were forcibly supplied by France -- a factor which led to increased prices in Italy. There was a widespread smuggling organization whereby English goods were brought into Italy via Switzerland, but this was ended in 1810 when the French authorities ordered a vast quantity of English merchandise to be burned publically in Milan.

There were many hardships and it is not surprising, therefore, to learn that Italians became more and more anxious to evade conscription. Dalmistro again did his best to exhort men to do their duty and take their share of the fighting. His two sermons, in January and May, 1810 had the same tone as the first delivered in 1808. "La salvezza dello/

dello Stato sono i fucili", \* he said, and then went on to remind his congregations that Napoleon was always victorious -- a statement which could easily be disproved by the contemporary scene in Spain. He interpreted everything as the Will of God and said that although a soldier's life was a hard one, it was good for healthy young men, especially as it made them think of death. Besides, it was better to die as soldiers in the service of one's monarch, "sul letto della gloria, che disertori pertinaci sul palco dell'infamia". \*\* It was unlikely that the deserters would have been there to listen to his advice, but it is certain that Dalmistro sincerely believed what he was preaching. He saw himself as the successor to Cesarotti whom he greatly admired. Since the latter's death in 1808, Dalmistro felt there was no-one left to sing the praises of Napoleon, and it was supposedly to fill this gap that he wrote a series of thirty-one poems (published in 1810) entitled "Il Puro Omaggio a Napoleone il Grande". His adulation is bearable because it is sincere and seriously argued. Above all, his burning desire was for peace and he decided that if it could only be achieved by a just/

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\* DALMISTRO: Secondo Discorso sulla Coscrizione, gennaio, 1810

\*\* DALMISTRO: Terzo Discorso sulla Coscrizione, maggio, 1810.

just war, then such must be the Will of God.

Dalmistro would have agreed wholeheartedly with another cleric, Giovanni Nicola Campanelli, who took it upon himself to give an impressive assessment of the whole age of Napoleon in a public speech delivered in the Pantheon, Rome, in December, 1810: "Il costume, le arti, le scienze, l'industria, l'agricoltura, il commercio rinfioriscono. Lo spirito pubblico, la disciplina, il valore si perfezionano. Le sue armate divengono invulnerabili. Le vittorie d'Austerlitz, di Jena, di Friedland, di Ratisbona, di Wagram fan tacere i trionfi di tutti i secoli ..... Si avvicinano i tempi dal vangelo predetti, che tutti saranno uniti colli stessi legami di amore, e di leggi. Già l'Europa attonita presenta il tenero spettacolo di una grande famiglia". This was mostly wishful thinking on Campanelli's part, or at least the only kind of "thinking" that would have been acceptable in French-occupied Rome at that time. The facts show that Italy's social and economic life was far from flourishing thanks to taxation, conscription, tariff and blockade. By 1810, 100,000 troops, of whom one half were Italian, had to be supported by Italy and the resulting drain on her labour market led directly to desertion and brigandage. Details like/

like these help to explain why men like Dalmistro and Campanelli wrote as they did. Being in a position of authority, they were anxious to use their influence to try to alleviate discontent and restore confidence in the Napoleonic régime.

The birth of a son to Napoleon provided another timely diversion although less was written on the subject than might have been expected. Monti was obliged to recognise the event and he did so by continuing with a mythological allegory similar to the one used to celebrate Napoleon's marriage to Maria Louisa, except that he changed the setting from Crete to Alvisopoli. \* In "Le Api Panacridi in Alvisopoli" Monti recalled the legend of the bees which fed the infant Jupiter with honey when he was hiding from his father, Saturn. The result was a most pleasing example of poetic skill and harmony, primarily a work of "art for art's sake" rather than for the sake of Napoleon and his son. The most memorable lines are the/

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\* Alvisopoli was a new industrial town founded near Portogruaro in 1800 by Alvise I Mocenigo who persuaded Monti to immortalize him by this mention in his poem.

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the refrain which seems almost fit to lull the royal child to sleep:

"Quest'aureo miele etereo  
Cogliamo al porporino  
Tuo labbro, auguste pargolo,  
Erede di Quirino". \*

Nevertheless, Monti reminded his readers that His Majesty, Napoleon Francis Joseph Charles, King of Rome, could never hope to outshine his father:

"L'imita; e basti. Oh fulgida  
Stella! Oh sospir di cento  
Avventurosi popoli!  
Del padre alto incremento!  
Cresci, e t'avvezza impavido  
Con lui dell'orbe al pondo:  
Ei l'Atlante, e tu l'Ercole;  
Ei primo, e tu secondo". \*\*

The aged Vittorelli made a similar comment which consisted of only four lines: "Per la nascita del Re di Roma" :

"Cresci del grande Egioco  
Cura gelosa e cara,  
Dal genitor impara  
La terra a moderar". \*\*\*

In every town in Italy the people were encouraged to take part in the festivities organized in honour of this event.  
Niccolò Barbieri/

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\* MONTI: "Le Api Panacridi in Alvisopoli", lines 41-44.  
\*\* MONTI: Op.cit., lines 65-72.

Niccolò Barbieri described the scene in Pavia in a pastoral poem which took the form of a dialogue between two shepherds: Corydon left his flock to his companion, Menalcas to go and see the celebrations in the city; then on his return, he told Menalcas all about the singing and dancing, military displays, speeches and even bagpipes which contributed to the general gaiety and happiness. Barbieri's poem is an unimportant literary curiosity but it does give an accurate eye-witness account of the French psychological approach towards the Italians - every excuse was sought to entertain them and make them feel that Napoleonic interference in Italy was to their advantage. Francesco Benedetti was not deceived by this French façade of gaiety although he may have been slightly influenced by it. He had an ingenuous, impulsive nature which led him to suicide in 1821, but he was a sincere Tuscan patriot, full of the real spirit of the Risorgimento. He felt that fate had decreed that Italy's destiny was to depend on foreigners one of whom would unite the country. For this reason he welcomed the birth of the King of Rome, just as he welcomed Murat and even the Emperor of Austria several years later, with faith and hope of seeing Italy united and at peace. The most obvious Classical comparison Benedetti could find was Virgil's Fourth Eclogue where the latter possibly celebrated/



celebrated the birth of a son to his protector, Gaius Asinius Pollio and prophesied the beginning of a Golden Age. \*

For his theme, Benedetti not only quoted but supplemented Virgil's lines to suit the contemporary situation:

"Iam nova progenies Coelo dimittitur alto,  
Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem". \*\*

The future ruler of Italy would not be concerned with conquest but only with liberation and fraternal peace. Consequently, all nations had reason to rejoice and send every good wish to this Child of Destiny. Benedetti was not afraid to stress the importance of peace for Italy and inferred that Napoleon who had now reached the summit of human endeavour, would end war and unify the country so that his son could continue his policies without fear of foreign interference. Such sentiments won high approval from the authorities and Benedetti was rewarded with a medal of the Napoleonic Academy of Lucca.

Every kind of reassurance was necessary for the Italian people because their every-day world consisted of economic difficulties and anxiety about their friends and relations who were risking their lives in Spain. By 1811, Ceroni was almost the only remaining faithful Napoleonic chronicler ready to/

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\* In the Middle Ages and even earlier, these lines of Virgil were regarded as a prophecy of the birth of Christ. vid. Dante, 'Purgatorio', XXII, 70-71.

\*\* BENEDETTI: Introduzione all'Ode: "Per la nascita di Sua Maestà il Re di Roma".

to recount the details of every French victory. His account of "La Presa di Tarragona", reminiscent of Gianni's accounts of battles, had a highly dramatized popular appeal. It also suited the current French policy of trying to convince the Italians that in spite of appearances, they were on the winning side and were beating the English. Ceroni's reasons for writing were predominately selfish: he wanted recognition and financial support from the French authorities.

However, this was the last work of adulation to be produced for Napoleon because from then on, even his most fervent admirers had to admit that he was neither omnipotent nor invincible. Although no immediate or direct benefit could be gained from the sacrifices of Italians in foreign lands, their efforts were not in vain as far as the future of their own country was concerned. Men from every part of Italy found themselves brothers in arms; they were no longer Milanese, Romans or Neapolitans when they met in Germany or Spain. Instead, they recognised each other as compatriots. "Nel campo si viveva piuttosto allegramente; il continuo pericolo non toglieva sicurezza, e nei brevi ozii i soldati si ricordavano l'un l'altro i rischi passati, le vinte città, gli ingressi trionfali, tutte le soste di quella corsa fortunosa da/

da un capo all'altro dell'Europa; chi avea guerreggiato in Italia, chi in Germania; l'uno s'era trovato ad Austerlitz, l'altro a Jena, un terzo a Wagram, un po' da per tutto". \*

But these observations were only possible to the onlooker who could see the Napoleonic Age from a distance and place it within the framework of history. To the contemporary observer, the real picture was of the futile loss of manpower, particularly of the country's youth. Once again it was left to Foscolo, "libero uomo e non cortegiano", to cut through the mass of equivocation, adulation and wishful thinking and tell Napoleon exactly what he was doing to the Italian people:

"A traverso le folgori e la notte  
Trassero tanta gioventù che giace  
Per te in esule tomba, e per te solo  
Vive devota a morte". \*\*

The Milanese audience which first heard these words from Calcante in Foscolo's tragedy, "Aiace" immediately recognised this and many other references to Napoleon. It was for this reason that further productions of the play were prohibited by the public authorities and it was not published until 1828 in Naples. Ajax really represented Foscolo's ideal picture of himself: the hero fighting uselessly against tyranny although/

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\* DE CASTRO: "Milano durante la dominazione napoleonica",  
page 328.

\*\* FOSCOLO: "AIACE", II, I, 47-50.

although like Jacopo Ortis, his pessimism led him to suicide. When he faced Agamemnon who represented Napoleon, he spoke in tones reminiscent of Ortis and of the letter which prefaced Foscolo's "Oda a Bonaparte"; but in front of Calchas, Aiace became less sure of himself. Calchas's was the voice of Italian tradition, wisdom and humanity, but it also represented the Papacy, outraged by Napoleon. This explains the tone of terrestrial detachment with which Calchas openly criticised the French use of men as cannon fodder and of nations as inanimate objects to be pushed about at will. How perceptive of Foscolo in 1811 to make Agamemnon say:

"Son tale omai,  
Che mentre il mondo m'obbedisce e ammira,  
Nessun può amarmi". \*

The closing lines of the tragedy after the death of Calchas not only remind the reader of Alfieri's "Saul" but also provide an accurate glimpse of the troubled state of mind of Napoleon, alias Agamemnon:

"Più forte,  
e più esecrato, e più infelice io sono". \*\*

This was a portrait of a very human man who had reached a position of unparalleled worldly power which he was trying desperately/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit. II, XI, pages 304-306.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit. V, VII, pages 419-420.

desperately to maintain and consolidate. This same man had even managed to ensure his succession through the person of his son, and yet a feeling of uncertainty and incredulity pervaded the minds of all: could one man really hope to hold all of Europe in his hand when he had not yet been able to control Spain and England? And further, what would happen if he failed? Such were the sobering thoughts which filled the minds of Italians at the end of a year which had seen unrivalled celebrations and gaiety go hand in hand with profound personal tragedies.

(e) 1812-1813: MOSCOW CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE OF LEIPZIG.

Napoleon had not visited Spain since the autumn of 1808, and as far as the French were concerned, the situation had since worsened. When in Paris for the baptism of the King of Rome, Joseph begged to be allowed to abandon the Spanish throne but was persuaded to carry on by the promise of reinforcements which never arrived. The wisest policy open to Napoleon in the Spring of 1811 would have been to evacuate this country he could not effectively hold and disregard the blockade he could not enforce. Instead he kept three hundred thousand raw recruits locked up in the peninsula for another two years. The inevitable result was Wellington's defeat of Marmot at Salamanca on 12th August, 1812, to be followed in June, 1813, by a decisive victory over Joseph at Vittoria when the French were forced to retreat across the Pyrénées.

Official publications urged the people to arms and stressed the amazing resources of Napoleon, but to many it seemed that the pendulum was really beginning to swing against Napoleon. Understandably, nothing to this effect was published in Italy, but a Tuscan exile, G. A. Braccini, found a welcome reception in London for his work commemorating "Le Glorie del General Marchese de Wellington, o siano i Voti D'Italia -- Poema Consacrato alle di lui ultime Vittorie riportate nelle Spagne, e solennizzate in Londra". This little-known work was far from being just a song in praise of Wellington: it also contained a violent attack on Napoleon/

Napoleon and a patriotic exposition of Italian national hopes for liberty and unity. He felt that the time had now come when the wrath of heaven would descend to stop the French tyrant because:

"Vittoriosi alfin sempre i tiranni  
Non son, nè il loro mal oprar eterno". \*

Men should take heart for this knowledge and prepare for the fall of this avaritious 'Tiger':

"Oro e sangue ei sol chiede agl'infelici  
Su cui pon l'unghie, e sua divisa orrenda  
È vincere o perir col Mondo intero". \*\*

Braccini was an educated, intelligent writer, and despite the difficulties of commenting on contemporary events, many of his opinions have stood the test of time. According to him, Europe was to find its encouragement to persevere from the example of Spain:

"Ben diede a noi l'Italia esempio grande  
D'energico valore e di costanza  
'Di poema dignissima, e di storia'". \*\*\*

He lamented the social and economic state of Tuscany and the slavery of the people:

"Servi siamo noi, ma servi ognor frementi  
.....  
Il bel Giardin d'Italia, ah! tutto ha guasto,  
E il commercio stagnò florido tanto  
Quando i Leopoldi, e i Medici regnarò!  
Ei/

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\* BRACCINI: "Le Glorie del Generale Marchese de Wellington",  
lines 46-47.

\*\* BRACCINI: Op.cit., lines 60-62.  
\*\*\* BRACCINI: Op.cit., lines 102-104.

Ei mise il colmo ai mali tuoi; ma dille,  
 Patria infelice, che tu senti ancora  
 Delli Scipioni, e dei Camilli in petto  
 Il nobil cuor: che dalle fredde Tombe  
 Degli estinti d'Italia antichi eroi  
 Sorger ponno gli spiriti, e un Bruto alfine  
 Rinascere puote a vendicar gli oltraggi  
 Che soffre inulta; a liberar il mondo  
 Da un tiranno oppressor". \*

Like Lomonaco, Braccini used the memory of Italy's past heroes to fire his own generation with military fervour in the service of their country. He realized that it was in the interest of Italy's geographical neighbours/that she should remain a weak, buffer State, fraught with internal divisions, and in the early nineteenth century French policy had conformed to this trend. But this very planning was beginning to have a counter-effect:

"...In questo solo unissi Italia tutta,  
 Che tutta i Franchi menzogner detesta". \*\*

This was an amazingly perceptive judgment of Italy's condition for a man who belonged to that era but it can perhaps be explained by the fact that the writer was living in exile and could therefore see the position more clearly than one living at home. The state of Europe was so critical in 1812 that Braccini even tried to encourage Wellington to carry on to the bitter end against Napoleon and not give up after his victory at Salamanca:

"ma rifletti  
 Che un'idra è il fier nemico; essa rinasce:  
 Temila, o grande: e ti rammenti omai  
 Che dannoso è il dormir sotto gli allori". \*\*\*

Rest/

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\*\* BRACCINI: Op.cit., lines 143, 148-159.  
 \*\*\* BRACCINI: Op.cit., lines 193-198.  
 \*\*\* BRACCINI: Op.cit., lines 240-243.



Rest would only be possible when a secure peace had been established as a result of Napoleon's irrevocable defeat. Then, Wellington like the author, could return to his home and enjoy a normal life in which all wars could be forgotten.

While Braccini was giving Wellington this good advice, Napoleon had begun his ill-advised invasion of Russia which was intended to be a final answer to pertinacious critics of the invasion of Spain. As the French advanced, the Russians retreated, and the further the French went, the more difficult it became for them to maintain their lines of supply, particularly in winter. Starvation and exposure to cold were the basic reasons for their failure in this campaign. Forty-thousand Italians were numbered among the French troops and the feelings of those left at home were understandably melancholic:

"E c'è la coscrizione

Come farò se gli tocca al mio damo?

E mi voglio vestir tutta di bruno.

O passegger, che vieni di lontano,

Di, non vedesti un bel garzon gentile?

Già da un anno per ordain del sovrano

Ei mi lasciò per pendere il fucile.

E m'ha lasciata sola a sospirare

Sin tanto ch'io nol vegga ritornare.

A/

A sospirar qui sola m'ha lasciata  
E, se non torna moio disperata". \*

The momentous encounter between the French and Russian armies took place on 7th September, 1812, on the banks of the Moskva river, some sixty miles west of Moscow; the Russians call the place Borodino. The organized slaughter resulted in fifty-eight thousand Russian and thirty thousand French losses. The ambulance arrangements on both sides were utterly inadequate, and wounded men were left to die among the dead. A week later, Napoleon reached Moscow to find it deserted. When he awoke the next morning, the city was in flames and the only course then open to him was to plan a retreat with the quarter of his army which still remained. They reached Smolensk/

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\* IN-MANNUCCI: "La Poesia Napoleonica in Italia", page 14.

This example of popular poetry is strangely reminiscent of a canzone by Rinaldo D'Aquino written in the thirteenth century:

"Giamai non mi conforto,  
né mi voglio ralegrare;  
le navi so(no) giute al porto  
e vogliono colare,  
vassene lo più gente  
in terra d'oltre mare:  
(ed io) oi me lassa, dolente,  
come degio fare"?

Smolensk on 10th November and proceeded to cross the Berezina -- an episode with such scenes of confusion and suffering that it is remembered in folklore as his culminating disaster. On the contrary, it was a last despairing victory for the French who managed to build two bridges on the icy river for the Emperor and his troops to cross and escape the Russians who were in close pursuit. This great human as well as political tragedy was of epic proportions and has been a source of literary inspiration to many. The best Italian contribution came from Giovanni Luigi Redaelli from Cremona. His was a spontaneous expression of grief and horror at this event which had also brought so much sadness to Italy. No other contemporary managed to portray with such effect the profound bewilderment felt by Italians when they heard of the catastrophe. Redaelli depicted with great realism the horror of a father dying in the snow, praying that his son beside him might die first. There was no attempt to dramatize or sentimentalize the scene: both were unnecessary as the facts spoke for themselves. He mentioned an Italian soldier whose last thoughts were for the liberty of his native land:

"Morrei felice, grida, se quel sole,  
A cui richieggo indarno un raggio amico,  
Mirasse in libertà l'itala prole.  
Ma/

Ma chi sciòr la dovea ne fu nemico,  
E a morir trasse in questo infausto lito  
I più bei germi di quel suolo aprico.  
Tardi ei sarà di tanto error pentito,  
Ma qual pro per l'Italia"? E in così dire  
Il fiato estremo è con la voce uscito'. \*

But the most outstanding feature of this poem was the poet's unprecedented understanding and pity for Napoleon. Unlike the majority of people, his immediate reaction was not to turn furiously against the Emperor and say that he deserved whatever Fate now had in store for him. Instead, Redaelli assumed a very mature attitude which showed not only a profound humanity but a sense of detachment which makes one think that the poet realized instinctively the difficulty of making a quick judgment of such a momentous period in history before time had allowed it to find its true perspective:

"Ma irata sorge contro a te la terra  
E chi la strada a te del regno aprì,  
Quel trono che innalzò, pentito atterra.  
Mertata sorte! ..... Ma non vil son io,  
Nè insulto tu da questo labbro udrai,  
Sacro de' carni all'incorrotto Dio.  
Te, /

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\* REDAELLI: "La Ritirata di ROSCA", Lines 55-63.

Te, quand'eri tiranno, io disprezzai,  
Chè i tiranni alma libera non cura:  
Ed or più grande ch'uom nol fosse mai  
Ti ronde agli occhi miei la tua sventura". \*

In these lines he anticipated Manzoni's famous comment on the death of Napoleon. It is regrettable, however, that Redaelli's poem should have remained almost unknown to the public for so many years. \*\*

Little was written in the months following the retreat from Moscow except a few satirical remarks. Behind the façade of wit and amusement, the people hid their sorrow and fear of future disasters which began to seem inevitable. One of the best-known satirical quips was the following:

"Fin dall'etade più remota e fosca  
Il Ragno sempre inviluppò la Mosca.  
Solo Napoleon, l'Eroe, il Magno,  
Fè che la Mosca inviluppasse il Ragno". \*\*\*

For the most part, however, "non era più tempo da apoteosi.  
Le/

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\*REDAELLI: Op.cit., lines 103-112.

\*\*The only published edition of Redaelli's poem is in:

Francesco NOVATI, "Studi critici e letterari", Torino, 1889,  
pages 170-172.

See also - APPENDIX -(pages -378-381).

\*\*\*IN-"Satire andate attorno in Venezia", page 17.

Le cose presentavansi nella loro nuda realtà; il vero appariva sotto le frasi sonore, sotto le magnifiche promesse; e si cominciava a vedere dove quella mano di ferro stava per condurci". To soldiers and civilians alike, the process of disillusionment had begun; it had been proved that their god-like leader was not invincible and that in itself was a most disturbing state of affairs for any nation. If he failed, on whom could they depend? Once again, the sadness of the situation for all concerned is the most striking feature of those months. Napoleon now faced a coalition of Russia, Prussia, Austria, Sweden and Britain who had agreed on a common plan of campaign aimed at his defeat. Then in June, 1813, Wellington's decisive victory over Joseph at Vittoria meant complete failure for the Napoleonic intervention in Spain.

At this point, it is interesting to note the sympathetic feelings of the Italian people: from Milan alone, a wealth of voluntary gifts of money and jewels were sent to help the Emperor in his great need. One of the Court dress-makers, Madame Ribier, sent three-hundred Lire, and the management of La Scala gave an evening concert, the proceeds of which were for 'Sua Maestà'. Official publications tried to encourage the people to arms by pointing out the surprising resources of Napoleon. Although war-weary and desirous of peace, Italians/

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\* DE CASTRO: "Milano sotto la dominazione napoleonica", page 368.

Italians were still prepared to endure war if it was to end all war. The following excerpt is typical of the feelings of the general public: "Noi abbiamo riveduti molti fra i nostri fratelli, amici e concittadini, gli abbiamo stretti al nostro seno e ci narrarono eglino stesso i sofferti travagli. Lasciarono essi, è vero, le terre nemiche, ma non furono vinti giammai; e se far si avesse potuto la guerra agli elementi, l'esercito di Napoleone sarebbe ancora in mezzo alla vinta Moscovia. Avremo pronta e sicura la desiderata pace, se tutti ci adopreremo onde secondare le mire e i disegni dell'eroe che regge i nostri destini; alla cui fronte, cinta di tanto alloro, non manca più che un ramo d'olivo; ramo che egli vuol cogliere, onde avere per sè le benedizioni di tutti i popoli e della riconoscente posterità..... Non si parla già di pace effimera o vile. Desiderino questa i nemici della patria o coloro che non vedono più lungi d'un giorno. E per noi e pei figli nostri essere deve quella pace che forma il voto dei buoni, quella pace che Napoleone vuol darci, e ch'egli vincitore propose più volte ai vinti, quella infine che è dettata dall'onore e dall'interesse dei popoli". \*

The year 1813 was looked upon as one of incomparable sadness by/

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\* Lettera di un alto impiegato al suo fratello a Padova --  
IN- "Considerazioni sugli avvenimenti politici e militari  
dell'anno, 1813," page 27.

by the Italian people. When the end of Napoleon's reign seemed in sight, they became increasingly attached to the instruments of his rule in Italy -- the order, and the hopes of unity which he had inspired. They had seen this edifice rising in front of their eyes; they had paid for it with their money, blood and sacrifices; they had often criticized it, but at the same time they admired it and were aghast at the thought that this well-planned structure was about to fall on their heads before it had had long enough to accomplish its aim. Even Monti felt glad that this year was at an end:

"Alfin sei morto, o maledetto e rio  
Anno decimoterzo, anno a le genti  
Portator della piena ira di Dio;  
Anno carico di sangue e di lamenti,  
Nella vorago dell'eterno oblio.  
Vanne sepolto, e l'uom non ti rammenti  
Che per gridar: il Tartaro ti chiuda  
Anno decimoterzo, anno di Giuda". \*

After the battle of Leipzig in October, 1813, men felt that they were witnessing the end of Napoleon's career, and those like Monti looked forward to "la quiete dopo la tempesta". Little did they realize that another great Napoleonic storm had yet to come.

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\* MONTI: "L'ANNO 1813".



(f) 1814-1815: THE SPELL IS BROKEN.

For six years, from 1808 to 1814, Italy had been administered by a more or less uniform system, and even in the Papal States the people had been taught to live in accordance with the Code Napoléon. During this time, critics were always told that a lasting peace would remove all the imperfections of the system, for at heart, Italians mostly admired Napoleon and wanted to believe in him, even in spite of themselves. However, after the Battle of Leipzig, public opinion in Italy changed considerably about Napoleon. Before his defeat, Italians had been anxious for his success because they feared for their own safety if he were defeated. Besides, there was no other authority to whom they could turn with assurance. Hence their sympathy and readiness to fight for Napoleon even after the disastrous Russian Campaign. But after Leipzig their sympathy turned to scorn: the spell was broken when news reached Italy that Napoleon had abdicated at Fountaine<sup>e</sup>bleau on 11th April, 1814.

Pius VII entered Rome in triumph on 24th May, the forerunner of reaction, for the Allies were determined to put the clock back by restoring all 'legitimate' rulers to the thrones of Europe. At first, the situation seemed straightforward and before any appreciable change could be felt by the general public, Vincenzo Ruelle from Bologna published a long poem entitled "L'Italia/

"L'Italia Liberata". The title meant 'liberation from war' and as such re-echoed the fervent hopes of all his compatriots. Instead of being a bitter work against Napoleon, this was a sincere cry of relief at the prospect of returning to a normal life where war and its effects would be unknown:

"Tornano le bell'arti a rinfiore,  
Torna il bifolco il proprio campo a arare,  
Il pastorello anch'ei deposte l'ire,  
Ritorna il proprio armento, a pascolar,  
Le meste spose, tornano a gioire,  
Cessano i genitori di lacrimare,  
Marte, e Bellona, spengono la face  
Cessa la guerra, e fa ritorno PACE". \*

This optimism was short-lived, however, for by the end of April the Austrian army had occupied Milan and proceeded to settle the fate of Northern and Central Italy before the Congress of Vienna met. Every trace of French influence had to be abolished and the people were expected to appreciate the return to the conditions of life which prevailed before "le déluge"; they had to recognize that their deliverance lay in Austrian-inspired paternal government. This settlement was hardly likely to be a happy one and it certainly did not give the Italian/

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\* V. RUELLÉ: "L'Italia Liberata", lines 256-264.

Italian people any degree of liberty or unity -- rather, it set out to increase their political and social divisions.

The bitterness of failure often hardens men's hearts and makes them lose all powers of careful reasoning and balanced judgment. In addition, widespread hardship and discontent grew, bankruptcies were frequent, commerce became stagnant, the countryside was infested with deserters and the towns with beggars. Against this background, one is not surprised to learn that opinions became somewhat extreme: the same exaggeration which formerly had been expressed as adulation now became a mixture of sarcasm and insolence, and of course, any anti-Napoleonic remarks were warmly received by the new authorities.

The Venetians were among the first to enjoy this opportunity of venting their scorn on the man who had outraged them at Campoformio. Undoubtedly, he deserved his fate, said Vittorelli:

"Trascorse Europa con fulmineo brando,  
E con imperioso sopracciglio,  
Ambi/

Ambi di tesser l'oro in sul vermiglio, \*  
 E dal trono segnò dei troni il brando.  
 Or va per calle insanguinato errando  
 Senz'oste, senz'ardir, senza consiglio  
 E il sacro nome del reciso 'Giglio'  
 Suona in bocca al Guascone ed al Normando.  
 Pallido in volto, attonito, proscritto  
 Fugge l'iniquo, e nella fuga acerba  
 Per compagno non ha che il suo delitto.  
 Qual destin t'attende, alma surperba?  
 Forse quel di Nabucco? Ah! in cielo è scritto,  
 Che a te manchi perfin la selva e l'erba". \*\*

Another anonymous sonnet diagnosed greed as the cause of  
 Napoleon's political indigestion, otherwise known as his  
 defeat:

"Troppo mangiaste, o Sire, e il vostro male  
 Nat'è dall'ingordigia, ed è sì fiero  
 Ch'a evacuar non basta un sol cristero,  
 Ma una purga vi vuol universale.  
 Il mangiar per nutrirsi è naturale,  
 Ma il voler divorar un Mondo intero  
 Non è cibo per voi così leggero  
 Che non possa costarvi il funerale.  
 Pigliate il mio consiglio, e risolvete;  
 Evacuar bisogna, e dare uscita  
 A tutto ciò ch'entro del corpo avete.

La/

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\* The Consular robes, like the Imperial ones, were purple except that the latter were embroidered with golden bees.

\*\* J. VITTORELLI: "La Sonora e terribile caduta di Bonaparte",

La Francia a vomitar già s'invita  
 E se l'Italia ancor non renderete,  
 Ho poca fede di tenervi in vita". \*

Venice was also the seat of much clever parody of religious verse which took the form of satire against Napoleon. These compositions were very popular with the people and from their tone it is impossible to tell whether they had been inspired by genuine hatred of Napoleon or by a desire to please their new masters. Perhaps the most likely explanation for them, however, lies in a combination of both factors together with the same kind of friendly anti-clerical spirit which is still such a source of amusement to present-day visitors to Italy. One feels that even Napoleon must have smiled if he ever read the following version of the "Dies Irae":

"Dies irae, dies illa  
 Quando MAGNUM in favilla  
 Cernet hominum pupilla.  
 Quantus horror est futurus  
 Quando Russus est venturus  
 Armis Galliam comprehensurus.  
  
 Iam tubarum audio sonum,  
 Cerno exercitus regionum  
 Vindicantes Deum et Thronum.  
 Stupefacta erit Natura  
 Et posteritas futura  
 Bonapartis pro jactura.  
 Tunc/

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\* ANON: "Il medico alla cura di Napoleone"

Tunc imperium laceretur  
In quo totum continetur  
Unde Mundus pessundetur.  
Totus orbis tunc ridebit  
Vere liber apparebit,  
Nil iniquis remanebit ..... " \*

The "Te Deum" as transformed into a mighty curse on the  
Emperor of France:

"Te Bonapartem damnamus, te schismaticum confitemur.  
Te aeternum inimicum omnis terra detestatur.  
Tibi omnes Diaboli, tibi Inferi universae Potestates,  
Tibi Principatus & populi incessabili voce proclamant:  
Satanas, Satanas, Satanas rebellis Domino Deo  
Pleni sunt Coeli et Terra horrendae constitutionis tuae.. " \*\*

They even went so far as to compose a "Gloria Bonaparti" :

"Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in Italia pax hominibus bonae  
voluntatis. Blasphemamus te; malediximus tibi, propter  
Magnam voracitatem tuam; qui protegis peccata mundi accipe  
maledictiones nostras; qui nunquam sedebis ad dexteram throni  
vade longe a nobis. Tu solus impius, tu solus despos, tu  
maximus inter sceleratos. Napoleo, cum Nestore et Tisiphone  
in ignem aeternum aeternum. Amen". \*\*\*

Many personal confessions of his faults were attributed to  
Napoleon which contained admissions of ambition, pride and  
greed, but one of the most humorous took the form of a dialogue:  
Confessore: /

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\* ANON: Sequentia Bonapartis - In- "Satire andate attorno  
in Venezia", page 22.

\*\* ANON: "TE DEUM", op.cit., page 19.

\*\*\* ANON: "GLORIA BONAPARTI", op.cit., page 19.

Confessore: Sapete press'a poco il numero delle chiese  
sconsacrate e saccheggiate e degli uomini  
ammazzati?

Napoleone: No, perchè la mia memoria si è gelata in Russia.

Confessore: Siete pentito di cuore d'aver commesso tali  
peccati che gridan vendetta al Cielo?

Napoleone: Sì, mi pento di non aver saputo prima d'ora che  
tali fatti sien peccati. \*

.....

Some felt that suicide would have been Napoleon's only hope of  
redeeming his image in the eyes of the world, but he who had  
thought so little of the lives of others, lacked the courage to  
take his own:

"Alma in seno serbar costante e forte,  
Gli è ver, tu mostri, poi ch'a ciglio asciutto,  
Vedi l'Impero e 'l Regno tuo distrutto.  
E te menato quasi infra ritorte;  
  
Ma gloria e onore aresti più, se a morte  
Offerto il petto avessi, allor che tutto  
Struggeva il ferro, e di sangue e di lutto  
Correano di Lutezia onde a le porte.  
  
Diriasi almen: incerto ancor saria  
Forse il destino della lotta ardita,  
Se cruda morte a'suoi non lo rapia.  
  
Or che dirassi nell'evento amaro?  
Prodigo e' solo fu dell'altrui vita,  
Ma della sua e'fu vilmente avaro". \*\*

As if this were not enough, Napoleon even became the protagonist  
of a comic opera, "La Snapoleonazione" (Cagliari, 1814), in  
which/

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\* ANON: III-De Castro: "La caduta del Regno Italico", page 4.

\*\* ANON: A Napoleone - III- "Satiro andato attorno a Venezia",

which the members of his family were cast as the other characters. The satire was on Napoleon's accredited belief in magic and superstition. A magician was called in by the family to unlock for them the secrets of the future. He did so by showing how the earth darkened at the mention of Napoleon's name. As a result, each member of the family decided to deny all connection with this dangerous name and finally even Napoleon himself succumbed with the words:

"Napoleone io fui, ma più non sono  
Nè più mai lo sarò".

This was a strange composition whose only purpose was to pour scorn on the entire Bonaparte family. It merely showed the ridiculous lengths to which some writers were prepared to go in order to add their cowardly, anonymous voices to the popular anti-Napoleonic propaganda.

But as the months passed, the bitterness and hasty anger of the people gradually wore itself out. Italians began to picture Napoleon as a lonely prisoner on the island of Elba, doomed for the rest of his life with only the memory of his reign for solace. One poet considered that his only pre-occupation must now be a spiritual one: he must strive to save his soul:

"Privo adesso del regno e dei soldai,  
Da tuti el gran conquistator deriso,  
Purga/



Purga a l'isola d'Elba i so peccai.  
Così per sempre el so destin deciso,  
Ghe resta quello che non manca mai,  
De conquistar el santo Paradiso". \*

Already a considerable change of attitude can be detected. These lines of dialect sprang from the lips of ordinary simple people and as they became accustomed to conditions under their new foreign rulers, they could not but remember the glory and majesty with which Napoleon had clothed his reign. To combat this reaction, several official works were commissioned by the Austrian authorities outlining the infamous career of Bonaparte; Chateaubriand's "Di Bonaparte, dei Borboni e della necessità di attaccarci ai nostri principi legittimi per la felicità della Francia e dell'Europa" was translated into Italian and published in Venice, but the Italian reaction showed no enthusiasm for his advocacy of the Bourbons and other legitimate rulers.

Redaelli showed that in spite of everything, the people were not blinded by events. Napoleon had not been the only dishonourable man, he said, and many who were ready to betray him would have acted as he did, given the opportunity. The following lines were his perceptive analysis of the state of Europe after the peace-loving nations had tried to re-make it to/

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\* ANON: "A Napoleone", IN- MANNUCCI, - op.cit., page 17.

to their own advantage:

"Tradito e vinto per virtude e inganno  
Chi molti ha vinto ed ha tradito tutti,  
Cessar dei troni vacillanti i lutti  
E ogni prence potè farsi tiranno.

I russi artigli sul Polono stanno;  
Prussia vuol d'Elba dominare i flutti;  
Brettagna ha i mani in servitù ridutti;  
Austriaci Italia gotizzando vanno.

Sul franco trono un re Borbone or siede,  
Innalzato da un popolo che ardio  
Trucidargli il fratello e'l figlio erede.

I frati a generar ritorna Pio;  
Spagna minaccia ai dotti atti di fede:  
Questa è la pace che ci ha dato Iddio". \*

Europe was far from being at peace when Napoleon left for Elba on 28th April, 1814. In Italy, the government as well as the people was in confusion: since the French defeat at Leipzig they had tried in vain to make a stand against Austrian suppression and many patriots felt the time was now ripe to proclaim Italian independence. Foscolo was among the most vociferous of this group. His sense of duty made him leave Florence to fight with the soldiers of the "Regno Italico" under the Viceroy, Eugène: "le sciagure della mia patria m'opprimeranno forse, ma non m'indurranno mai a servire la causa/

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\* REDAELLI: "La Pace dell' 1814".

causa di verun altro principe". (These were Foscolo's words to Fabre who at this time was just finishing his famous portrait of the poet). Foscolo wanted to fight on Italian soil for 'la libertà italiana', not for the personal future of Bonaparte\* and indeed he did not hesitate to sigh with relief when he heard of the latter's imprisonment in Elba. This timely removal of Bonaparte seemed to him to be Italy's opportunity to show her strength as a united nation, to step forward rather than into the past. It was for this purpose that Foscolo sent an address to the English General, Macfarlane, (30th April, 1814) asking him to use his influence with the Allied Powers to help Italy obtain independence and a constitutional monarchy. He asked for "una Patria forte, una Costituzione giusta, ed un Principe proprio", and promised to devote "tutti i suoi pensieri, tutte le sue forze, e tutto il suo sangue per riparare alle sciagure d'Italia". Foscolo claimed to speak for all his fellow-countrymen although the letter was officially from the Guardia Civica di Milano. Nevertheless, at the same time he was urging Italians to preserve their strength in arms and so keep alive the fame they had won when fighting under the French flag: "la libertà e l'onore stanno sempre nell'armi". He spoke to Italians about Italy with lofty pride, after the manner of Dante, Petrarch and Machiavelli and tried to arouse that spirit of militant/

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\* "Si sentiva soldato d'Italia e non di Napoleone" -- Donadoni, "Foscolo", page 107.

militant patriotism which could be admired and respected by the rest of the world even if they failed to reach their goal.

Foscolo was very disheartened by the outbursts of dissent and lack of agreement among Italians at this period when the future of the Kingdom of Italy hung in the balance. The truth was that the time was not yet ripe for them to govern themselves, and besides, national exhaustion could not be the best foundation on which to build a strong State. However, Foscolo's honesty and perspicacity were such that his dislike of Bonaparte did not prevent him from giving credit where it was due: Italy now had an identity and an army - essential factors which she had lacked previously but could now develop. "Non citai Napoleone se non come il maggior guerriero dell'età moderne ..... Tiranno era ..... Io lo abborriva sempre; lo stimava e sovente lo disprezzava: non ho mai potuto amarlo, e, le accerto - non ho mai potuto temerlo ..... Ma egli aveva un altissimo merito presso di me: aveva riuniti ed educati alla guerra sei milioni d'Italiani; aveva precariamente aggregati all'Impero gli altri paesi d'Italia, e tiranneggiatili in guisa da invocare il momento di scuotere il giogo ed unirsi a quel del Regno: ma bisognava che egli fosse sconfitto in Russia; altrimenti, sono certissimo che anche il Regno sarebbe stato lacerato in Dipartimenti francesi, uniti alla sua monarchia". #  
In/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera all'Albany, 23 maggio, 1814.

In this magnificent letter, Foscolo has expressed with amazing understanding the judgment which posterity was to give to the Napoleonic period in Italy. The credit side was in spite of rather than because of Napoleon, and his defeat in Moscow prevented him from ruining his creation of "il bello italo regno".

Perhaps the most significant feature of Italian reaction towards domination by Austria was loss of hope. Foscolo chose the hard path of exile rather than swear loyalty to the new régime, and in this he was not alone. He explained his position in a letter to the Countess of Albany (August, 1815): "L'avere abborrito la tirannide di Bonaparte che opprimeva l'Italia, non implica che io debba amare la signoria di Casa d'Austria. La differenza consiste, ch'io sperava che le frenesie di Bonaparte potessero aprire adito se non all'indipendenza d'Italia, almeno a tali magnanimi tentativi da onorar gl'Italiani: invece, il governo regolare dell'Austria preclude quindi innanzi qualunque speranza. Mi terrei forsennato ed infame s'io desiderassi nuove stragi all'Italia che ha bisogno di pace; ma mi terrei per più forsennato e più infame, se sdegnando di servire allo straniero antecedente, servissi allo straniero presente".

Napoleon's return from Elba, his daring "Hundred Days", defeat at Waterloo and banishment to St. Helena inspired feelings/

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feelings of awe and respect in Italy rather than bitter sarcasm. His fall seemed the predictable outcome of his pride and ambition but even this could not prevent men from remembering his splendid victories and outstanding accomplishments. It seemed extraordinary that this powerful monarch who had stupified the world should now be confined to a tiny, distant island which was watched with anxiety by the guardians of Europe. This was certainly a scene to provoke literary imagination:

"Mira, Ocean! quel prigionier son io  
Temuto in guerra qual signor del tuono,  
Che a mia voglia togliendo e dando il trono  
Turba d'imbelli re spinsi all'oblio.

Un trono io m'ebbi, e non mel diede in dono  
La sognata dai re grazia di Dio,  
Ma ad un nume mio pari, al brando mio,  
Terror del mondo, debitor ne sono.

Qui mi trasse il destino, e non l'Ispano,  
Il Russo, il gel di Scizia, o i re tremanti,  
O i fulmini temprati al Vaticano.

Qui pur son grande: e chi mai fia che vanti  
Aver per sua prigion l'ampio Oceano

E/

E per custodi suoi tutti i regnanti"? \*

The irrepressible pride and defiance which are here attributed to Napoleon were an unconscious transfiguration of Italy's own position in 1815. A basic unwillingness or inability to understand that the Europe of 1815 was very different to pre-Revolutionary Europe characterized the outlook of the statesmen who had defeated Napoleon.

"A Vienna c'è un bellissimo mercato  
E i popoli ce vennenno all'incanto;  
E a chi ne compra e chi ie paga un tanto  
Le consegneno er popolo legato.  
E lui in appresso s'arifà su quello  
Cor la tosa, cor latte e cor macello". \*\*

The Congress of Vienna removed all hope of independence from Italy by rendering her helplessly divided and subject to Austria. As a result, there was no spontaneous desire to celebrate Napoleon's defeat and look on his punishment as a well-deserved fate. Only an occasional anonymous pamphlet was published on this subject but these were factual accounts of his life and seemed almost as if the authors were trying to please the Austrians and at the same time say as little as possible against the fallen Emperor. One such work was entitled:/

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\* ANON: "Napoleone a Sant'Elena". IN-MEDIN, Op.cit.,page 8.

\*\* PASQUINADE: "Per la morte di Napoleone".

IN- Giovagnoli, Op.cit., page 259.

entitled: "Compendio storico di Napoleone Bonaparte, sua origine, sue militari imprese, e sua vergognosa caduta. Ossia - la commedia è finita"(1815), but inside, instead of a tone of sarcastic triumph the reader finds only eighty pages of dull biographical details. The explanation was not that the people were too weary to make further comments about Napoleon. On the contrary they were now awake to their position in a way that they had never been before: "Egli (Napoleone) solo bastò ad animare gl'Italiani; a dar loro opinioni, leggi, armi, sentimenti d'indipendenza, desiderio di libera patria; e sopra tutto rapidità tanta di moto, da far ch'essi mostrassero in pochi anni il cangiamento al quale sarebbero bisognate tre o quattro generazioni". \*

Patriotic ideals had been roused during a period of over fifteen years, but since Waterloo, these hopes had been stifled. Thus, Italy's disillusionment coincided with Napoleon's personal defeat, and being closely connected, the two became one and the same disaster in the minds of the general public. From this a more permanent image of Napoleon began to develop in the minds of Italians: he became a solemn figure of grandeur who had not only aroused unparalleled fear and admiration but had also given/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Frammenti di storia del Regno Italico".



given Italy a practical demonstration of how to govern herself. Although they grew to admire him in retrospect, they had learned one vital lesson - Napoleon's power was built on despotism and arms rather than on liberty, and it was for that reason that it failed. In other words, the fundamental importance of liberty was now more apparent than ever.

This was the point which Giovanni Battista Niccolini wanted to emphasize to his fellow-countrymen. He greatly admired Napoleon but not without recognising his weaknesses. In 1814 he commented thus to a friend: "alla tirannia dell'uomo succedeva quella delle massime". \* In his eyes, the Emperor of France was not just a remote, powerful individual; rather, he saw him as an ordinary human being struggling with his own personality and position. Everyone could understand a character whose pride and ambition would not let him yield to lesser mortals, and they could sympathise with him when his friends proved disloyal in the hour of need. By means of a very obvious allegory, Niccolini used this material in his tragedy, "Nabucco", to vindicate Napoleon immediately after his defeat.\*\* No other writer managed to express with such depth, vigour and splendour the story of the awe-inspiring and frightening deeds which/

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\* NICCOLINI: Lettera a M. PIERI, 15. 5. 1814.

\*\* Tragedy written in 1815 but first published in London in 1819, when the first secret societies were being formed in Italy.

which had led men into a new era in history and at the same time made 'countless thousands mourn'. The protagonist seemed larger than life when news of his victories was reported and when he sought supreme spiritual as well as temporal jurisdiction in Europe; but then, the greater glory, the greater the tragedy. Immense courage was needed for any man to recall the days of Marengo, Jena and Austerlitz at a time when the rest of the world was still trying to recover from the effects of Napoleon. Even when the work was first published in London in 1819, the thought of the Imperial Eagle was sufficient to strike fear into the hearts of all ruling authorities. Critics have therefore pointed out that it is unnecessary to ask whether or not "Nabucco" was a good tragedy: "è un gran lavoro, e basta". \*

The dramatic element of the play is the contrast between the iron determination of Nabucco (Napoleon) who trusts in his sword for the preservation of his throne, and the inexorable progress of fate which drags him to his ruin because he persists in following his own will. At the time of his greatest danger he was wisely advised by Arsace (Carnot) to grant the people a greater degree of liberty for by so doing they would readily forgive him for all they had suffered and he would save not only himself but also the whole nation from further tyrants. However/

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\* MEDIN: "La caduta e la morte di Napoleone nella poesia contemporanea", page 275.

However, rather than be forced to relinquish any of his power, Nabucco decided to drown himself in the Euphrates. There are two main scenes in this tragedy which are particularly worthy of note: Act II, Scene I between Nabucco and Mitrane (Pius VII) and Act III, Scene II between Nabucco and Arsace. In the first the age-old conflict between the spiritual and temporal rulers is shown in a powerful dialogue: Nabucco refuses to listen any more to Mitrane's courageous reproaches - "Vecchio, non più. .... Or che ti giova il Nume"?

But Mitrane has the last word: "A non tremar di te m'insegna". The second scene symbolizes the contrast between despotism and liberty, a contrast whose origins can be traced to the most distant history of civilization. Arsace in vain warns Nabucco of his fate if he continues to wage war. He even begs him to think of his own safety:

"abbi, o Nabucco, di te stesso pietà".

Nabucco's reply shows that already warnings are too late - he will have to destroy himself because he cannot live without glory:

"..... se caro il regno m'era più della gloria, io pace avrei, E voi catene".

Even after this, Arsace persists:

"Grande tu sei, se l'ossequisci; audace,  
Se nel tentarlo cadi".

He/

He asks Nabucco to think of how he will be remembered by posterity: "avrem noi solo guerra, e tiranno"?

Finally, in Act V, Scene VI, Arsace takes the wounded Nabucco from the battlefield. His first thought is "resta il terror del tuo nome", but Nabucco disarms him by saying:

"io so che fui necessario tiranno ..... Credimi .....  
in me l'eroe, non il tiranno s'odia".

Jealousy lay at the root of the hatred which men felt for Nabucco, and indeed this led many associates to desert him when he most needed their help. His grief as he contemplated the end of his life was the same as that of the exile at St. Helena as he looked back on the defection of his former friends. Yet even at this stage, his pride sustained him: he knew that his work of national construction had been beneficial and would be appreciated as such: "I miei nemici edificar dovranno/Colle ruine mie", and he derived some satisfaction from the feeling that he was leaving them with a task that was greater than themselves. Well indeed could Arsace then remark: "Ah! se perisci,

Chi sta fra l'uomo e i suoi tiranni"?

Nabucco tried to console him by saying that his example would endure and be a guide to men, but Arsace could see only a future in which tyrants would predominate. Nabucco then bade him farewell with a message of hope: his son would live to vindicate him, but with the sword. However, until that day should dawn, he proudly prophesied: "Ogni re sempre m'aspetti,

e/

e tremi".

It does not therefore surprise the reader to learn that this work had to remain in manuscript for four years. Indeed, it is surprising that it was allowed to be published while Napoleon was still alive.

(g) 1816-1821: THE END OF AN ERA.

Italy's close contact with European life during the period of the Revolution and Napoleonic Empire gave Italian patriots a more mature outlook on their problems as members of a national body or ethnic group. Their mental outlook had undergone such a profound transformation that they could no longer tolerate the return to that way of life organized by Austria in 1815 which was in fact a return to the Settecento. From a practical point of view, the situation was ridiculous: every small item of local government had to be sanctioned by Vienna, and this even included such details as clearing a canal or building a new road. Those whose ideals were Italian liberty and independence could only view the contemporary system with deep gloom. Some like Foscolo despaired completely of Italy's future: "L'Italia non può aver libertà perchè non v'è legge; nè v'è legge senza costumi; nè costumi senza religione; nè religione senza sacerdozio; nè patria, insomma, senza cittadini, non repubblica, perchè non vi è popolo; non monarchia, perchè non ci sono patrizii". \*

But this negative attitude did not represent the opinion of the majority of informed patriots. Many considered that the French Revolution had exposed the failure of the theory of the supremacy of reason but at the same time they recognised the value of the ideals behind the movement as a whole. Their aim was/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Sulla scrittura d'Italia".

was now to reconstruct and educate a new society in which the defects of the French Revolution would be removed and its fundamental concept, liberty, firmly adhered to. The story of this laborious work of reconstruction which was both political and social, is the story of the Risorgimento, and it was re-echoed in the literary field by the Romantic Movement, incorporating as it did the highest ideals of the Revolutionary movement.

"Risveglio dello storicismo, della nazionalità, della religione, della libertà, tensione lirica e anche nostalgica delle personalità, aspirazioni insofferenti delle circostanze presenti verso un ideale, talora nebuloso, talora, per esplicito riconoscimento, irraggiungibile: questo è il romanticismo che germoglia quasi simultaneamente e in tutta Europa". \*

In Italy, Romanticism found a natural affinity with patriotism as a movement against established rules, whether of literature, religion or politics. It also marked a break with Classical mythology and imitation of the Classics and emphasized instead a very simple literary principle: that art has for its object the truth and for its means of expression, interest. It was no coincidence that at this moment Italy did indeed have something concrete to revolt against, namely Austrian domination in the North, Bourbon in the South (supported by Austria) and the Papacy in the middle, with several other small divisions controlled indirectly by Austria.

This/

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\* CRODEO: "L'Età del Risorgimento", page 247.

This new literary and political atmosphere was in sharp contrast to the years before 1815 when Napoleon had been at the centre of everyone's thoughts. His sudden removal from the scene had forced men back to reality. They found life more or less unchanged -- the difference lay in their own mental attitude, but although they now had a definite goal, this in itself made them realize all the more the tremendous difficulties which would have to be overcome. Napoleon had taught them that the first prerequisite of a strong State was a large, well-trained army, but unfortunately Italy's potential force had been destroyed in the disastrous Moscow Campaign. In 1818 it was the young Leopardi from Recanati who reminded Italians of this melancholy truth. He also provided future generations with a sad picture of the lifeless state of his country at that time:

"vedo le mura e gli archi  
E le colonne e i simulacri e l'erme  
Torri degli avi nostri,  
Ma la gloria non vedo,  
Non vedo il lauro e il ferro ond'erano carichi  
I nostri padri antichi". \*

A few months earlier, Ludovico di Breme,\*\* the famous  
'pamphlétaire',/

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\* LEOPARDI: "All'Italia", lines 1-6.

\*\* Intellectuals found themselves giving up poetry for prose. Di Breme was one of the principal contributors to "Il Conciliatore" the 19th Century continuation of 'Il Caffè' and the first unofficial newspaper of the Risorgimento. It began in Milan in September, 1818 but was suppressed by the Austrians after one year (October, 1819). Its editor, Silvio Pellico, then worked for 'I Carbonari' until he was arrested in October, 1820. He was sent to the famous Spielberg prison in Moravia in April, 1822.



'pamphlétaire', had given the reason for this state of affairs: "Il sistema dominante in Italia è quello d'una studiosa inerzia del pensiero e d'una laboriosa ignoranza". \*

The masses were indifferent and soon became resigned to their wretched existence - a reaction which was not in the least surprising. Indeed, in view of their recent sufferings and the difficulties of police and censorship it is surprising that any spirit remained to oppose the established government. Since freedom of the press and of public meetings was absolutely forbidden by the authorities, all attempts to co-ordinate the ideas of these 'liberal' aspirants had to be done by means of secret societies of which the most famous was 'I Carbonari'. In common with other secret societies, they wanted to see a parliamentary government established, but apart from this rather vague ideal, their policies varied from place to place according to particular local conditions. They lacked both a centralized organization and a fixed programme and consequently any of their attempts to provoke insurrection were easily thwarted by the intervention of the Austrian army.

This then was the unsettled atmosphere in Italy during the years which followed the battle of Waterloo. It was very much a period of self-examination for the country as a whole, and gradually the more forward-looking sections of society began to put recent events in perspective. Had not Napoleon reduced the divisions/

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\* DI BENE: Lettera al MONTI, 26-2-1818.

divisions of Italy to three? And had he not initiated many reforms, particularly those of the legal system and the army? Since these basic plans were the obvious foundation for any practically-minded patriot, the feeling began to spread that perhaps Napoleon had not been sufficiently appreciated. On the other hand, they could excuse themselves by saying that his unavoidable (?) concentration on war had blinded them to his more positive plans for the remaking of Italy because of necessity, these latter were less immediately apparent as they needed time to mature.

Although there was no longer any pressing stimulus for adulatory verse, there were always a few writers who were anxious for fame, even if it only meant a place of honour among the annals of worthless literature. One cannot deny that Monti had been among the first to welcome the return of Austria with his two works, "Il Mistico Omaggio" and "Il Ritorno d'Astrea", written in 1815 and 1816, respectively. But then few had the personality and particular intellectual abilities of Monti and these put him in a rather unique position. Minor poets and masters of improvisation found themselves at a loss for words. Some found a solution in a contrasting form of poetry - 'poesia epica'. They knew that the epic was suitable for recounting an historical era but they forgot that its function was to give a complete picture of a certain stage in the progress of/

of a country's civilization, reflecting its traditions, customs, laws and military engagements. In ancient times, this vast amount of subject matter was naturally grouped around a hero because it was a natural instinct for a writer to concentrate on one particular character which he could then set within its more general framework. However, the poets who tried to use this poetic form in the early nineteenth century thought only about the hero and neglected the essential background of his era. To begin with, these men lacked the mental capacity to accomplish such a task; besides, the civilization of this new century contained so many different parts that it really defied limitation within the confines of one poem.

The poets lacked the correct type of material so they tried to find parallels in Homer, Virgil, Tasso and Ariosto, thus producing the most amusing anachronisms: the Emperor, his generals and those heroes mentioned in despatches were placed on a level with Achilles and Ajax or Orlando and Rinaldo, and Bonaparte became the new Alexander; they fought with shields, sought the guidance of the Sibyls and on occasions had even to combat the Harpies. Giusto Navasa's "L'Italia rigenerata da Napoleone il Grande", (see page 134) published in 1806, was the first 'Napoleonic Epic', although one would hastily withdraw such a description in normal circumstances. Immediately after the Russian Campaign, Girolamo Orti wrote his "La Russiade", but perhaps fate has been kind/

kind to him because only the title of his work can now be found. A little more than thirty years later, Domenico Castorino wrote a massive volume on the same subject entitled "Napoleonea Mosca" (1845, Torino) - a detailed, laborious work which could only have been written because its author felt the time was then ripe to revive the cult of Bonapartism.

The Anglophile, Bernardo Bellini, was certainly more ingenious in his choice of a subject: Caroline of Brunswick, the separated wife of the Prince Regent of England (George IV from 1820) lived in the Villa d'Este near Lake Como and was highly impressed by the skill of Bellini the improvisator. When her daughter, Charlotte, died, Bellini strangely thought he had found a perfect way of gaining the favour of the English Court by making the dead princess the heroine of an epic poem. The title, "Triete Anglico", was chosen as a reference to the three years from 1815 to 1817 during which England played so large a rôle in European affairs. These years also coincided with the marriage and death of Princess Charlotte. Throughout, the tone of the poem is that of a parody of heroic and terrible deeds set against a background of the supernatural, reminiscent of Tasso. Historical accuracy gave way to fantasy: Bellini tells us that when Napoleon left Elba one of the Sibyls warned him of his imminent defeat in battle but added that he himself would not be wounded. We are then/

then given a very graphic description of the Emperor continuing to fight even with a broken sword, then challenging Wellington to a personal combat which would have proved fatal but for the intervention of a cherub who dealt a severe blow on the head of the English General. Such was the blow that the angel's shield broke in two, the mountain behind them shook, and Napoleon was somehow transported into a thick forest where the very trees bent to welcome him. With a considerable effort, Bellini then managed to connect this event with the death of Charlotte\* which was to form the dramatic conclusion to the poem: in November, 1817, a cyclone similar to the one which ended the battle of Waterloo, struck the young princess and carried her off to the heavens where she was crowned by zephyrs.

It was only when Napoleon was safely enshrined on St. Helena that Bellini felt safe to speak out against both him and Murat. The poet's allegiance was now firmly on the side of Austria and the sovereigns of the Holy Alliance. He did concede, however, that Italy's future lay in the hands of God as well as Austria, although at the height of Napoleon's power he had composed a poem in favour of the Treaty of Tilsit. He continued to write in praise of the Austrian princes in the immediate post-Napoleonic period but by 1848 had composed a panegyric in favour of Charles Albert/

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\* In October, 1817, the death of Princess Charlotte was termed "inexplicable" but recent research has shown that it was occasioned by a violent attack of porphyria. See: British Medical Journal, 6th January, 1968, pages 7-18, Op.cit. page 115.

Charles Albert and in 1865, the invectives which he had used against Napoleon in 1818, were hurled instead against Austria in "*Inferno della Tirannide*". It would be all too convenient to scorn this fickleness on the part of the poet and thereby disregard the fact that considerable talent had been shown by him in dealing with a variety of very difficult subjects. Besides, had not Monti provided him with one of the most spectacular examples of political unreliability? And has this characteristic which is so '*pateticamente italiano*' \* not been repeated in a much more serious way in twentieth-century Italy? However, Bellini was only one voice among many. The dust had not yet completely settled on the Age of Napoleon and the restored rulers still faced a discontented country whose hopes of deliverance lay in their poorly-organized but widely-spread secret societies. It was against this unsettled background that Niccolini managed to publish his tragedy, "*Nabucco*". Hence the vital significance of the last words of Nabucco (Napoleon):

"Ed ogni re sempre m'aspetti, e tremi".

Undoubtedly, sympathy for the captive on St. Helena was growing in the years immediately prior to 1820, although it is difficult to assess because of the inevitable secrecy with which any favourable mention of him had to be surrounded. In spite of this/

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\* PRAZ: "*Bellezza e Bizzarria*", page 195.

this, a manuscript containing "Massimi e Pensieri del Prigioniero di Sant'Elena" was translated into Italian and published in Naples in 1820 along with transcripts of many of his speeches and a favourable account of his life. In this volume people felt they were being allowed to hear Napoleon's side of the story for the first time, and they found that his thoughts were surprisingly calm and reasoned, coming as they did from a man who had had such a tumultuous career. On government, he said: "In sostanza il nome e la forma del governo non fanno niente alla cosa. Basta che la giustizia sia resa a tutt'i cittadini; ch'essi abbiano un ugual diritto alla protezione, alle cariche, ai sacrificii e alle ricompense, e lo stato è ben governato". (page 215). Platitudes like the above were easily written and Napoleon knew that these were the only grounds on which he could appeal to the people. But it was also his attempt to leave a favourable memory of himself in the minds of the people, and for Napoleon's part it is only fair to say that he must then have been experiencing how great a sorrow it was "ricordarsi del tempo felice nella miseria".\* In spite of these circumstances, much of what he said was undeniably true: "lo spirito d'indipendenza e di nazionalità che io ho formato in Italia, sopravviverà alle rivoluzioni di questo secolo". (page 108) He also quoted Solomon to/

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\* DANTE: "Inferno", V, 122-123.

to confute those who had been too ready to criticise him: "non si può giudicare del merito di un uomo che dopo la sua morte". (page 98) Little did he think that within a year his words would be repeated with even greater conviction and emphasis by Manzoni when news reached him of Napoleon's death -- "... ai posteri l'ardua sentenza...."

In May, 1821 there was no widespread comment from Italian poets on the fact that this man whom they had all either admired or feared could trouble them no longer. However, on this occasion quantity was replaced by quality. All recognised that they had witnessed the passing of an extraordinary character, a man of vast dimensions whose like they would probably never meet again. The lowest level of literary comment took the form of a Pasquinade which stressed the grandeur of Napoleon but reminded everyone that all men are equal in death:

"Fu genio onnipotente,  
Fece tremare il mondo,  
Ora è sparito in fondo  
All'abisso del niente!

Ed è morto di male,  
È morto tale quale  
Come muore un ciociaro  
Un/



Un Papa e un pifferaro". \*

More thoughtful elements looked on Napoleon as "il redentore della patria", as someone who had aroused the spirit of liberty and independence even if he had not carried it to its logical conclusion. Like Pietro Custodi, they were therefore prepared to mourn him with dignity although they could not forget that

"egli i lacci afforzò di quei che rendere potea felici". \*\*

Custodi had been Secretary of the Ministry of Police since 1802 and in this capacity had worked closely with the Napoleonic government and knew its shortcomings as well as its good points. He was not bitter: he told the European rulers that at last they could relax for the Almighty had now assumed responsibility for the well-being of the Emperor. Manzoni praised his Ode on the subject and indeed, its particular merit lies in its personal, almost intimate tone which was only possible because of the poet's own involvement with the Napoleonic régime in Italy. Niccolini expressed a somewhat similar point of view -- sympathy for the Emperor yet at the same time a gentle censure for his lack of help to Italy: "Io non sono gran fatto devoto alla corona di ferro, credendo con un mio amico ch'ella sia fatta non coi chiodi che/

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\* PASQUINADE: "Per la morte di Napoleone I",  
IN- Giovagnoli, Op.cit., page 260.

\*\* P. CUSTODI: Ode - "In morte di Napoleone, 1821", Conclusione.

che trafissero nostro Signore, ma coi ferra di qualche cavallo  
de barbari che disertarono il nostro paese. Pure, quando la  
vedrai, di' un 'Paternostro' per l'anima di Napoleone, perchè  
Dio gli perdoni di non aver fatto all'Italia quel bene che  
'egli solo' potea". \*

Custodi and Niccolini represent the best comment which could  
be expected from minor poets who were also sincerely patriotic.  
Their thoughts were essentially of Italy rather than of Napoleon  
even when they heard of the latter's death. Nevertheless, this  
limited their works and prevented them from conveying a sufficiently  
broad image of the universal stature of this man. Perhaps they  
simply lacked the particular type of poetic inspiration which was  
needed for such a task. Fortunately, one man was able to provide  
a poem which answered the requirements of the most lasting of  
monuments. Such was the effect on Manzoni of the news of  
Napoleon's death that he could not rest until he had expressed  
on paper the profound, solemn feelings which he experienced at  
that moment. "Era un uomo che bisognava ammirare senza poterlo  
amare; il maggior tattico, il più infaticabile conquistatore,  
colle maggiori qualità dell'uomo politico, il saper aspettare e  
il saper operare. La sua morte mi scosse come se al mondo venisse,  
a/

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\* NICCOLINI: Lettera ad un'amica, 1821.

a mancare qualche elemento essenziale; fui preso dalla smania di parlarne o dovetti buttar giù quell'ode .....\*\*

The result was Italy's most lasting literary monument to Napoleon, and it may surprise some readers to know that it was composed within twenty-four hours and published a few days later as a result of a trick played on the official censors. \*\*

The grandeur of "Il Cinque Maggio" stems from the fact that Manzoni realized intuitively that at that moment poetry neither could nor should attempt to judge the man who had just passed from this world. The poet's task was therefore to express artistically the feelings of shock and amazement which almost overwhelmed/

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\* Manzoni to C. Cantù, 1821. IN- Pellerini, Op.cit., page 18.

\*\* Il Manzoni mandò subito una copia alla Censura, con la quasi certezza, peraltro, di non ottenerne l'autorizzazione alla stampa. E così fu; ma dallo stesso censore gli fu consigliato un piccolo trucco, più che legale del resto, perchè la sua ode fosse ugualmente diffusa. Il trucco era quello di rimettere volontariamente in vigore una disposizione di legge, ormai caduta in disuso, secondo la quale i componimenti dovevano essere presentati alla censura in doppio esemplare: qualcuno dell'ufficio, certamente, avrebbe sottratto la copia superflua per farla circolare. Infatti, in pochi giorni, tutta Milano, e non Milano soltanto, conobbe l'ode manzoniana".

IN- "Rarità Bibliografiche dell'Ottocento", pages 185-186.

overwhelmed him and also to recall the spectacular events which formed the career of that "uomo fatale" and struck all his contemporaries with awe. Manzoni's contribution was all the more noteworthy as he had remained silent while Napoleon was in power, and was therefore one of the few poets who could claim to speak with complete sincerity. His main thesis was that Napoleon had fused together "nova et vetera": he was not solely the restorer of order after the Revolution; nor was he just the continuation of that Revolution. He had not put new wine into old bottles but instead had erected a new organic structure based on the past. This eclectic policy had created a new era in history and had bridged the gap between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

" Ei si nomò: due secoli  
 L'un contro l'altro armato,  
 Sommessi a lui si volsero,  
 Come aspettando il fato;  
 Ei fe' silenzio, ed arbitro  
 S'assise in mezzo a lor".\*

Immediately afterwards Manzoni added: "E sparve",\*\* thus inferring that Napoleon had been prevented from completing the work he had begun - a belief which Napoleon himself wanted to spread from St. Helena. Future generations would have to judge the measure of his success, said Manzoni, as he described the former Emperor alone/

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\* MANZONI: "Il Cinque Maggio", lines 49-54.

\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit., line 55.

alone with his memories of the painful battles for which he had so often been responsible:

"E ripensò le mobili  
Tende, e i percossi valli,  
E il lampo de' manipoli,  
E l'onda dei cavalli,  
E il concitato imperio,  
E il celere ubbidir".\*

Contemplation of such scenes would have led any ordinary man to despair, but Manzoni thought differently. Since these events followed the poet's personal conversion to Catholicism, he felt able to envisage this extraordinary character in a supernatural setting where serenity replaced worldly grief and suffering. Manzoni also quoted his faith in the inscrutable designs of God who made man in His own image, to strengthen his claim against making a judgment about the Emperor:

"nui  
Chiniam la fronte al Massimo  
Fattor, che volle in lui  
Del creator suo spirito  
Più vasta orma stampar".\*\*

"Così le tragedie della storia possono riflettersi sulle vicende d'uno spirito elevato ed avere una forza incalcolabile nel dirigerne i moti. La spada d'un uomo solo che sollevava in urti tremendi un continente, eppure lasciava dietro di sé non soltanto la/

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\* MANZONI: Op.cit., lines 84-89.

\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit., lines 31-36.

la strage ma anche i semi d'una vita più libera e più giusta, doveva far meditare il pensoso Manzoni; e la soluzione del problema non poteva essere che quella affacciata nel "Cinque Maggio" da un'anima giunta forse all'affermazione di Dio anche per la contemplazione d'una tempesta così enigmatica. Tutti gli uomini non ignobili che vivono nelle grandi ore della storia, sentono più gravemente la nobiltà della propria anima e il dominio dello spirito sulla materia. Ogni tragedia ha in sé qualche cosa di misterioso, e perciò di divino: c'è chi lo sente, e non si ferma; c'è chi lo sente e ne esce trasformato".\*

It was thanks to Manzoni that Napoleon found such a dignified and lasting place in Italian literature where future generations could view him not only against a contemporary background but against an atmosphere of eternity.

"Dov'è silenzio e tenebre  
La gloria che passò". \*\*

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\* NOMICLIANO: "Manzoni", pages 18-19.

\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit., 100-101.

CHAPTER FOUR: NAPOLEON AND MONTI.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

### NAPOLÉON AND MONTI.

Monti's attitude towards Napoleon cannot be fully understood unless one examines it as part of the poet's whole literary career. Such a study enables one to grasp not only the essential human background from which both his conduct and output during the years under consideration cannot be isolated, but it also makes one realize the extent to which Monti himself was the victim of this unsettled age which he unwittingly represented with such accuracy. From even the most superficial analysis of the previous chapters, it is obvious that the thought of the period had been profoundly and irrevocably changed by contemporary events. Writers could not remain insensible to Napoleon: they had to be either for or against this dynamic force, and as a result they had to become involved with the world in which they were living.

When one examines the work of poets who lived either at the same time or shortly after Monti, the trend towards a portrayal of reality based on observation of daily life and recent history rather than imagination, becomes immediately apparent. Parini did not create a new ideal of civil and national life in any direct way, but amid the social corruption of the times he did manage/



manage to provide an ideal solution for personal salvation. His emphasis was on the dignity of man as an individual whose simple honesty contrasted sharply with the empty life of 18th Century society and with the agitation and revolution which characterized the last years of the century. Here was the poet who portrayed life as it really existed beneath the surface of contradiction and false appearances, and if he chose the negative art of satire, he did so because for him it was the best means of expressing a moral criticism of society.

Alfieri was also tormented by idealism, but in a much more dramatic way. By means of historical tragedies he expressed his own impetuous nature, the product of a vivid but lonely imagination. Hence the restless striving of his protagonists for peace or satisfaction which somehow eluded them. Already one can see Foscolo in embryo, but this moral world of Alfieri in which he lived as a solitary, haughty, <sup>9</sup>yet inspired poet, was both his strength and his weakness. Rather than a mythological or literary type of heroism, he was concerned with that more profound, prophetic heroism which could spread to become the religion of a nation.

Foscolo, on the other hand, was not content with patriotic idealism which was confined to the world of art and poetic imagination; he wanted to translate his sentiments into life. The/

The difficulty at this early stage was that he did not realize that his Alfierian ideals, although sincere, were the product of imagination and theory rather than personal experience. Hence, his attempt to assimilate them into normal life was bound to end in disaster, as in the suicide of Jacopo Ortis. Foscolo only found himself when he learned to accept the harsh reality which governs the world. From this point onwards, Italian literature no longer sought its inspiration from the world of fiction but turned instead to life itself. Manzoni brought this trend a stage further by means of a faith which enabled him to look beyond man for his highest ideals. Spiritual awareness enabled him to understand the various aspects of human nature which played their part in man's everyday struggle, and he used his observations to depict the unchanging reality of life, using as a background either the historical or contemporary scene.

In contrast with this developing trend, Monti stands out for his attempt to produce an almost mythical transfiguration of contemporary events. On the surface, his poetry seems to be inspired by historical developments, but in fact he used them as a means of returning to the world of visions, imagination and mythology. In a sense, one could almost say that his greatest enemy was reality. Indeed, it seems incredible that Vincenzo Monti, the official poet of the Napoleonic Age in Italy who recorded/

recorded its history in verse, felt neither deep personal involvement, emotion nor conviction about the daily source of his inspiration. Monti both wanted and seemed to be the official chronicler of contemporary events, the Poet Laureate who sang of Pius VI, the Austrian Emperor and Napoleon, as well as of the family of Napoleon. But in fact, Monti belonged to a different age: as a natural neoclassicist, he considered poetry as a design formed from simple, traditional patterns; but he also belonged to the unreal world of Arcadia which used mythology as a convenient escape from reality; and he had not remained unaffected by the northern influence of Ossianic-inspired writings - all of which had little in common with the new era dominated by political intrigue which began with the French Revolution. His position becomes clearer if one considers the different pictures of Napoleon which emerge from Manzoni's "Cinque Maggio" and from the thousands of verses by Monti: the French Emperor becomes immediately alive in the few verses written by Manzoni whereas in Monti's poetry, the reader is essentially conscious of an epoch whose protagonists are remembered by beautiful images and pleasant sounds. But poets can always choose to concentrate on either human or aesthetic feelings, and judgment of them depends largely on personal taste.

It is against this background that Monti must be considered for/

for from both a literary and a historical point of view, he represented the uncertainties and changes of this complex period of transition from the 18th to the 19th Century. Pius VI, Mascheroni and Napoleon were but the pretext for his work, the source of his imagination. At heart, Monti was content to belong to a poetic, literary world, and as a result, the subject matter assumed a position of secondary importance. Instinctively, he wanted to be the guardian of beauty in literature - hence his concentration on form, imagery and rhythm. In a word, he was responsible for allowing a literary era to take a last look at itself before it disappeared. When Leopardi said of Monti: "è poeta veramente dell'orecchio e dell'immaginazione, del cuore in nessun<sup>o</sup> modo",\* he was being rather harsh. Monti was concerned about personal feelings and about his country, but they were on a different level from his first preoccupation which was with his art. He could certainly be called a poet of aesthetic rather than human feelings, of technique and of beauty: a poet of poetry.

Monti's association with the world of letters spanned over half a century. It began in 1775 when at the age of twenty-one [years] he became a member of the Arcadian Academy of Ferrara and was given the name, Antonide Saturniano. At various stages in his career he was singularly fortunate in having influential acquaintances/

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\* LEOPARDI: "Zibaldone", Vol.I, page 55.  
(Ed. Mondadori)  
a cura di F. Flora.

acquaintances without whose help his rapid rise to fame would not have been so easily accomplished. In those early days, his host in Ferrara was Luigi Finotti, secretary to Cardinal Borghese, the Papal Legate. It is not surprising to learn, therefore, that within three years, arrangements had been made for Monti to move to Rome under the protection of His Eminence.

On 26th May, 1778, when Monti arrived in the Eternal City, he found himself part of a great gathering of artists, writers and poets - Tiepolo, Vanvitelli, Alfieri, Canova, Winckelmann, Mengs and Goethe were but the most famous of those who were attracted to Rome at that period. The present-day mind has to conjure up a picture of clerical dignity and pomp (in which nepotism was not unknown) closely allied with the more worldly life of the 18th Century salon in order to understand the particular position of these artists and writers. "S'intende che Roma, in fondo, resta pur sempre la città geratica, succursale d'una Corte che a tutti dà di che vivere, ma che tutto assorbe e incentra, alle cui spalle vegetano nobili, porporati, basso clero e borghesia. Più sotto non c'è che plebe: ignorante, ozieggiante, arguta, fanatica, manesca. Ma intanto nell'aureola di questo mecenatismo una accolta di menti elette vien risollevando l'ambiente intellettuale verso le idealità del più puro classicismo, favorite sì dal lento generale risveglio dell'epoca, sì da una delle più clamorose/

clamorose scoperte: il recente disseppellimento d'Ercolano e di Pompei (1783-1750) che ringagliardisce il culto d'ogni antichità pagana, ravvivandone la voga, con gran beneficio della cultura e dell'arte".\* In addition to this neoclassicism, Rome was also the cradle of the Arcadian movement and could boast of a certain Timio Nemeo among its members. This "shepherd" was none other than Pius VI. Indeed, during the Pontificate of Giovanni Angelo Braschi (1775-1799) the Court of Rome, under the direct patronage of the Pope and certain influential Cardinals, was the most impressive European centre of culture and classical art.

For almost twenty years, Monti belonged to this world. How did he react to it? One need not look further than 1799 to find the answer for in that year he published "La Prosopopea di Pericle" in preparation for the fifth anniversary of the election of Pius VI and also to celebrate the Pontiff's recovery from a serious illness. The discovery at Tivoli of a Greek column surmounted by a head of Pericles provided Monti with the idea of allowing the great Athenian to review the decline and rise of art and letters from ancient times until the late Settecento. Here Monti's voice was that of the courtier, anxious to flatter Pius VI:

"Tardi nepoti e secoli  
Che dopo Pio verrete,  
Quando lo sguardo attonito  
Indietro/

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\* E. Bevilacqua: Vincenzo Monti, pages 13-14.

Indietro volgerete,  
Oh come fia che ignobile  
Allor vi sembri e mesta  
La bella età di Pericle  
Al paragon di questa"! \*

Yet strangely enough, it was this type of impertinent evocation of the Age of Pericles which led Carducci to describe Monti as "ravvivatore del sentimento classico nella sua migliore espressione". \*\* In this work, the reader senses something of Monti's awe and enthusiasm for his surroundings but at the same time one feels that the author has kept a mask over his own private world so that we can only become acquainted with him in his official capacity. These fundamental characteristics were later to be recognised as the most unchanging feature of all Monti's art.

This poem was his first Roman triumph and it led directly to friendship with the Pope's nephew, Prince Luigi Braschi Onesti, who decided to employ the poet as his secretary. Monti was then established with security of position and this congenial environment inspired him to produce one of his most spontaneous and pleasing works which contains moments of true classical grandeur: "La Bellezza dell'Universo", (1781). The occasion of this poem was the marriage of his master to Costanza Falconieri in/

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\* MONTI: "La Prosopopea di Pericle", pages 89-95.

\*\* CARDUCCI: Opere V., page 463.

in the Sistine Chapel. For the poet, an introduction to the Pontiff was now assured, but even so, he must have been greatly encouraged by the kindness and enthusiasm with which he was received. "Non è possibile che io possa esprimervi la bontà con cui m'accolse. Fui introdotto dal mio padrone, ed il mio primo abboccamento durò per due buone ore. Chi può dirvi la sensazione che mi fece? Mi presentai pieno di timore, e ne uscii pieno di tenerezza; e quando gli baciai i piedi, nell'atto che stava per montare in carrozza per andare a fare una passeggiata, mi vennero agli occhi le lagrime". \* From that time onwards, Monti strove to identify himself more and more with the Papal Court and all its policies - hence his "Pellegrino Apostolico", (1782), a rather dull work, obviously exaggerated to create a favourable atmosphere for Pius VI's unprofitable journey to Vienna to persuade Joseph II to be less anti-clerical. Monti's efforts were not completely in vain, however, for he was rewarded with a papal pension of 50 scudi per annum. Although he was generally recognised as a poet who would have to earn his living by his pen, Monti was particularly fortunate in having found such a patron.

The following year produced a much more colourful incident and gave Monti the opportunity to prove his loyalty to his benefactors./

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\* MONTI: Lettera al Fratello, febbraio, 1782.



benefactors. Since May 1781, Alfieri had been living in Rome in order to enjoy the company of Louisa Stolberg, Countess of Albany, the estranged wife of Prince Charles Edward Stuart. This friendship seemed to be known to all except her brother-in-law, Henry, Cardinal Duke of York, but when the latter realized the situation, he immediately asked the Pope\* to banish Alfieri from Rome (March, 1783). This explains the dismay shown by Alfieri in his "Vita" when he mentioned his departure from Rome: "Lasciata la mia unica donna, i miei libri, la villa, la pace, e me stesso in Roma, io me n'andavo dilungando in atto d'uomo quasi stupido ed insensato".\*\* As a counter-blow, Alfieri published the sonnet he had written six years previously (see page 10) condemning Rome, "d'ogni vizio il seggio". Monti was pleased to reply with two sonnets violently attacking this man whom he knew he could never equal as a tragedian:

"Un cinico, un superbo, un d'ogni stato  
Furente turbator, fabbro d'incolti  
Ispidi carni che gli onesti volti  
Han d'Apollo e d'Amor insanguinato,  
In cattedra di poste, e nel senato  
Siede degli empî nell'errore involti,  
E dardi vibra avvelenati e stolti  
A Cristo, a Pietro, al successor beato.  
Bestemmia/

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\* The same Pius VI had recently refused the dedication of 'Saul' from Alfieri. ("Vita", IV, X.)

\*\* ALFIERI: "Vita", IV, X.

Bestemmia il maledetto altari e tempi  
E banditor di ree dottrine injusto,  
Declina il meglio, e si abbandona al peggio  
Ma il Ciel confonde la ragion degli empi,  
Nè per novelle scosse e per vetuste  
Della Sposa di Dio vacilla il soggio". \*

In later years, Monti tried to disclaim this sonnet by saying that he had been forced to write it 'col laccio al collo', but this was quite untrue and his second sonnet was even more forceful:

"Rabbioso cane che molesti e mordi  
gli ospiti tuoi, bandito e vagabondo,  
sovvertitor che Cristo addenti, e il mondo  
che non t'ascolta di latrati assordi;  
.....  
D'odio, d'ira, d'orgoglio, e di veleno  
ebro l'alma, ebro l'ossa, ebro le polpe,  
oh! sei tu Alfieri, e de' ribaldi il primo"?

Similar accusations could have been hurled at Monti himself before the end of the century when he decided to leave Rome and break with those who had befriended him, but in 1783 no-one would have considered such a possibility.

The French Revolution had no immediate impact on Monti for at that time he was preoccupied with more personal matters and was content to use his position as a safe shield against the growing/

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\* MONTI: Risposta colle stesse parole in rima al sonetto di V. Alfieri contro Roma che incomincia: "Vuota, insalubre region", 1783.

growing unrest in the outside world. In 1791 he married Teresa Pikler and the following year saw the birth of his daughter, Costanza. However, the knowledge that he could not remain isolated indefinitely, together with a general sense of foreboding about the future, made Monti rather sad and meditative. By 1792, he had reached the age of thirty-eight [years;] Parini was sixty-three [years old] and nearing the end of his career. The same year saw the death of Metastasio and it also marked the fourteenth birthday of Foscolo. This mention of the comparative ages of some of the main writers of the Age shows that as Monti was reaching his more mature years, he was inevitably becoming more of a solitary figure. Alfieri was nearest to him in years, being only five years older, but the difference in temperament and style was so great that the two men could well have belonged to different epochs. Monti knew in his heart that the world of Metastasio and Parini, with which he had been familiar in his formative years, no longer existed. Yet no one could expect a man of thirty-eight years who had been trained in the best Arcadian tradition, to be able to change his mental set considerably at that time of life, even if he wished to do so.

To such a person, the future must have seemed very uncertain, but for a few moments, Monti consoled himself by inviting other disillusioned/

disillusioned people to come with him to spend a quiet life in the country, away from the rigours of life at Court and in the cities. His Ode entitled "Invito d'un solitario ad un cittadino"\* is so straightforward and sincere that it stands out as one of his best compositions. It is also one of the few occasions when Monti, the poet, and Monti, the person, become one.

"Tu che servo di corte ingannatrice  
I giorni traggi dolorosi e foschi,  
Vieni, amico mortal, fra questi boschi,  
Vieni, e sarai felice

.....

Qui sol d'amor sovrana è la ragione,  
Senza rischio la vita e senza affanno.

.....

Ma dolce è il frutto di memoria amara;  
E meglio tra capanne e in umil sorte,  
Che nel tumulto di ribalda corte,

Filosofia s'impara.

.....

Fuggi l'empie città, fuggi i lucenti  
D'oro/

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\* Monti's inspiration for this Ode came from P. Letourneur's translation of Shakespeare's "Under the Greenwood Tree".

D'oro palagi, tane di serpenti

E di perfide belve". \*

In his ideal world, he wanted nature to be responsible for all the laws and rules governing society because, in his opinion, the bloodshed of the French Revolution had just demonstrated the failure of extreme faith in human reason.

"Ahi di Giapeto iniqua stirpe! ahi diro

Secol di Pirra! Insanguinata e rea

Insanisce la terra, e torna Astrea \*\*

All'adirato empiro".\*\*\*

This was the first time Monti found himself face to face with the contemporary world and it is significant that his spontaneous reaction was a simple profession of faith in the new appreciation of nature in its simplest forms - trees, water, light, sun etc.- an appreciation which was to be developed fully by the Romantic movement in subsequent decades.

The first definite effect of the French Revolution on Monti was to arouse in him a violent hatred of France which he had regarded until then as the spiritual and intellectual support of Europe. His attitude can also be considered an accurate assessment of the general climate of opinion in Italy - and this was not just confined to a select intelligentsia.. All levels/

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\* MONTI: "Invito d'un solitario ad un cittadino",  
1-4, 9-10, 21-24, 38-40.

\*\* Goddess of justice and honesty.

\*\*\* MONTI: Op.cit., 45-48.

All levels of literary ability were keen to discredit the happenings in France:

"O Santo Padre, dateci licenza  
d'ammazzar tutti quanti li Francesi;  
e se poi ci mettete l'indulgenza,  
andremo sino nelli lor paesi  
per estirparne affatto la semenza....."\*

For those of a more devout frame of mind, there were even "Preces mane et vespere recitandae ad divinam opem implorandam in presentibus Galliae calamitatibus". It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that Monti became the greatest exponent of the current Italian Gallophobia, and it is mainly against such a background that we must view his contribution entitled, "La Bassvilliana". This uncompleted epic poem, written between January and August, 1793, was an attempt to produce a complete poetic condemnation of the Revolution, "il più grande e il più funesto degli avvenimenti che siano mai accaduti sul globo".\*\* Undoubtedly this was an example of "poesia d'occasione": it was a work of daring (and imprudent) topicality but also a definite move on the part of the poet to connect art with life and politics. The occasion was the assassination of the French Republican emissary, Nicolas Jean Hugon de Bassville, in Rome/

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\* ANON: In- Bevilacqua - Op.cit., page 39.

\*\* MONTI: "La Bassvilliana" - Proemio.

Rome on 13th January, 1793 when he drove down the Corso wearing a hat decorated with tricoloured ribbon. This was a fortuitous pretext for the poet to exploit aesthetically the spectacular historical development which had given rise to this particular episode. "Per lui la rivoluzione si riduce a una stupenda occasione di poesia rappresentativa. Epperò l'attualità grandiosa non distacca, in fondo, il nuovo poema dalla cornice delle ispirazioni arcadiche". \* Monti was perfectly sincere in attacking the excesses of the Revolution and in his allegiance to throne and altar. Without something like prophetic vision it is extremely difficult to make accurate comments about contemporary events, while on the other hand, it is always easy to look back in judgment after fifty or one hundred years have elapsed. In 1793, Monti's self-appointed task was even more difficult than he could have imagined because no-one could have foreseen the extent of the political hurricane which, in fact, had only just begun. Therefore, as regards "La Bassvilliana", it would be unfair to censure this work in view of the poet's change of opinion in later years, for at the time of writing he gave a frank assessment of the situation as he saw it and he did so by means of the poetic techniques and training he had acquired during his lifetime.

After the episode of "La Bassvilliana", Monti continued as secretary/

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\* BEVILACQUA: Op.cit., page 41.

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secretary to the Braschi family as if nothing had happened. Contrary to his hopes in 1793, the French Revolution showed no signs of drawing to a close and indeed it seemed that before very long, Italy would have to defend herself from the revolutionary armies. Since 1792, Monti had shown tendencies which could be classified as 'moderately liberal' although opposed to any excess or violence. He had also shown that he was far from insensible to what was happening in the world around him, and from the beginning of his career he had seemed to be of an impressionable disposition. These factors would undoubtedly affect his reaction to the news that in the spring of 1796, General Bonaparte had arrived in Italy, promising liberty, equality and fraternity to all. "Voi vedete che la barriera delle Alpi e delle armi combinate non è sufficiente per trattenerne l'impeto; voi vedete che la spada repubblicana porta dappertutto la ruina e il terrore. Io spero tuttavia che la pace, per una necessità imperiosa, nascerà di mezzo alla guerra; ma siccome Dio solo legge nelle teste dei Principi, così l'umana prudenza ci comanda di cautelarci contro tutti i mali che possono ripararsi da noi medesimi".\* By June, 1796, (after the battle of Lodi) Monti was indeed in a very troubled state of mind: "Qua crescono sempre più i torbidi e non potete immaginarvi/

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\* MONTI: Lettera a Francesco Antonio Monti, Fusignano.  
30th April, 1796.



immaginarvi l'inquietudine del paese e il terrore de' galantuomini  
..... Io mi confondo in mezzo a tanti scompigli e sospiro la  
solitudine di Fusignano, anzi dell'Ortazzo in cui son nato.  
Se m'accade qualche disgrazia, ricordatevi che vi sono stato  
fratello, e abbiate cura di mia moglie e della mia figlia".\*

He was obviously finding it very difficult to decide whether  
to remain loyal to his traditional position, escape into a world  
of fantasy or uproot himself and join forces with the new school  
of thought whose ideas seemed incompatible with the old régime.  
He wanted to delay as long as possible before committing himself.  
Could he perhaps reconcile the best of Arcadia with the best of  
the Revolution and so become something of an 'Arcadian Jacobin'?  
Some of his close friends in Ferrara begged of him to return  
home to help in the cause of liberty, and in his reply to  
G.B. Costabili Containi in September, 1796, he showed that  
although he had made up his mind where his sympathies lay, he  
was not yet ready for action:

".....Questi figli di Romolo, ch'io ti do per la gente più  
scellerata, più ignorante e più stolta di tutto il globo,  
esultano di giubilo per questa guerra, e minacciano fin d'ora  
apertamente il massacro di tutti i così detti Giacobini. Non  
si può girar per le strade senza terrore. I commissari francesi  
sono partiti questa notte improvvisamente tutt'i, e non è rimasto  
che/

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\* MONTI: Lettera a F.A. Monti, June, 1796.

che il solo Cacault. Molti amici pure sono partiti, e molti altri ne partiranno per sottrarsi ai pugnali di queste eumenidi sacerdotali. Anch'io sono risoluto a fare altrettanto..... In mezzo a tanti deliri politici io mi trovo indisposto assai di salute, e vivo una vita sempre torbida e malcontenta. Sono un essere fuori del suo naturale elemento, e non posso guarire che con una berretta in capo, e quattro foglie di quel santo albero\* sulla fronte...."##

However, within a month, Monti's letter to Cardinal Busca, Secretary of State, gave quite the opposite impression, (24th October, 1796):- "Io sono ferrarese! e la mia patria riscaldata anch'essa dalla febbre di libertà, supponendomi qualche talento, e sperandone qualche profitto, non ha trascurato e non trascura d'invitarmi con offerte assai liberali a farmi partecipe dei suoi pericoli. La mia costante adesione al paese in cui vivo e alla persona del degno padrone, cui ho consacrato da molti anni il mio servizio e il mio cuore, mi hanno fatto coraggiosamente resistere alle sollecitazioni dei miei concittadini: e l'esser rimasto io fermo al mio posto fa fede abbastanza della nuova mia disposizione a non mescolarmi nelle turbolenze civili, dalle quali troppo aborrisce l'indole pacifica dei miei studi e delle mie opinioni ..... M'inchino al bacio della sacra porpora!"

It/

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\* l'albero della libertà.

\*\* MONTI: Lettera a G.B. Costabili Containi, Ferrara,  
22nd September, 1796.

It is impossible to say how much of this was sincere - perhaps it would be nearer the truth to think that this was how Monti would have liked to see himself but he felt it would have obliged him to confirm his allegiance to a sinking ship, even although he knew that was the only place where he could continue to work in the way for which he had been trained. This was a very difficult decision for a poet like Monti and it must not be lightly dismissed: his choice was between security and tradition on the one hand, and an uncertain future on the other. Once he had decided to gamble on the success of the new régime, being a late starter, he felt obliged to be ruthless with his conscience in order to succeed and ensure his own safety. This is where his unfortunately weak human nature became so obvious and his decision will always be criticized. Undoubtedly, he could not produce good work in this state of turmoil, but it cannot be denied that his utterances at this period give a striking impression of immaturity in spite of his years - the product, perhaps, of his unavoidably narrow upbringing and environment.

By January, 1797, he had made up his mind definitely to abandon his allegiance to the Papacy and had dedicated his first sonnet to Bonaparte. (It was published anonymously):

"Costei/

"Costei che nata fra 'l giumento e il bue  
Nuda e oscura in Betlemme ardl. chiamarse  
Di Dio la sposa (e forse degna il fue  
Finchè povera e casta al mondo apparse),

Venne adulta col vizio ad ammogliarse,  
E cielo e terra lacorò con due  
Contrarie corna, e l'orbe d'orror sparse  
Santificando le nequizie sue.

Or d'anni carca e di delitti a morte  
Tu la sospingi, o Bonaparte invito,  
E vendichi del mondo il lungo affanno.

Nè dir ben so se più ti debba, o forte,  
O l'uom che d'uomo alfin riprese il dritto  
O il nume che cessò d'esser tiranno". \*

These lines were written little more than a month before the humiliating Treaty of Tolentino which Bonaparte forced on Pius VI whereby the latter had to renounce Avignon and the legations of the Romagna as well as pay a huge indemnity of money and works of art. In February, a few days before the/

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\* On this occasion it would have been opportune to remind Monti of the sonnet he wrote in 1783 against Aflieri -- see pages 243-244.

the Treaty was signed, \* Monti wrote to a friend in Ferrara the following declaration to join the revolutionaries:

"Noi siamo alla vigilia della nostra redenzione, e di veder rotto un giogo che da diciotto secoli opprime la terra .....  
Roma ondeggia in una grande tempesta di sentimenti, ma quello dell'antica libertà sembra rinato nella maggior parte dei cuori..... Io sono irrevocabilmente risoluto di non respirare un momento più oltre quest'aria avvelenata. Son mesi e mesi che il mio cuore non prova più che palpiti di terrore, e mi scoppia in petto per allargarsi a quelli della libertà che mi costa tanti sospiri". \*\*

✓ Words cannot be found to excuse Monti's lack of integrity and loyalty at this period, particularly as he was still accepting hospitality and a salary from those whom he was decrying.

When General Marmont came to Rome to arrange the signing of the Treaty, Monti decided to flee with him. Consequently, during the night of 3rd March, 1797, he left secretly in the General's closed carriage for Florence. In many ways, this was the most significant date in Monti's life - he had crossed his Rubicon.

Monti had placed himself in a very awkward position: he was a suspect, a known adherent of the Papacy and therefore an enemy of the Revolution. His task was now to prove his apparent change of heart and make men forget his past. In order to do so, /

\* Treaty of Tolentino: 19th February, 1797.

\*\* In- Bevilacqua: Op.cit. page 57.

so, he had to stoop to rather despicable levels: witness his letter from Bologna to Salfi, one of the main Jacobin leaders, (18th June, 1797) in which he tried to excuse himself for writing "La Bassvilliana" and called it "quella miserabile rapsodia". His letter was published on 12th July, 1797 in the "Termometro Politico" and in the same journal on 18th August, Salfi replied saying that he would pardon Monti if the latter gave proof of his complete change of heart in his subsequent writings and in his way of life. As a result, Monti probably felt obliged to over-emphasise his zeal in order to be taken seriously and he was determined to do everything in his power to cancel the memory of 'l'Abate Monti' and so establish his new rôle of 'il Cittadino Monti'. The desperation with which he immediately tried to find favour with the new authorities arouses in the reader pity rather than disgust or scorn. Indeed, the first three poems written after he left Rome give an impression of infatuation and exuberance typical of a very young, inexperienced poet. Settembrini considered them "delirii repubblicani" and certainly no-one would think that they were the product of a well-known poet, then in his forty-fourth year, who had already spent twenty years as a court poet in Rome.

The first of these works, "Il Fanatismo", begins with the kind of dogmatic rhetoric which we now readily associate with demagogues:

"Dolce dell'alme un<sup>i</sup>versal sospiro,  
Libertà, santa dea, che de' mortali  
Alfin/

Alfin l'antico adempi alto desiro,  
 --Vieni ed impenna a questo canto l'ali,  
 Libertà bella o cara; ..... " \*

In this and in "La Superstizione", the Catholic Church is named as the fount of all evil in the world and the cause of all unhappiness:

"E di sangue per lui larga cloaca  
 In Vatican s'è fatta, ove il tiranno  
 I suoi crudeli sacerdoti indraca". \*

He then goes on to examine "le colpe orribili diverse Della romana meretrice" throughout the centuries with the disastrous result that:

"È trasmutato in dio tiranno e fero  
 In dio di sangue un dio d'amor, che tutto  
 Nel perdono fondo suo santo impero". \*

7, final

The poem comes to an end with a wild prophecy of doom for England, "l'ambiziosa mercadante avara".\* Monti could think of nothing more discourteous than to call her "la seconda Roma" because ".....in te sola (Roma) crudel, si pasce e vive la discordia d'Europa".\* However, he warned England that power is always short-lived -- "E tu cadrà; nè sì lontana è l'ora".\*

According to Monti, superstition had always been used as the secret weapon of religious terror -- the only means by which the Vatican continued to exist and support that

"Chiercata turba, che l'ignava plebe  
 Di fole assonna, e tutti ingegni abbassa".\*\*

But/

\* MONTI: "Il Panatismo", 1-5; 16-18; 122-4; 151; 163-4; 167; 181.  
 (This is an obvious parody of Dante: "La Divina Commedia",

Paradiso, XVI, 115).  
 \*\* MONTI: "La Superstizione", 60-61.

But surely the poet himself had belonged to that privileged group until only a few months previously? Nevertheless, he saluted Bonaparte as the "Veltro" who was going to liberate both Italy and the world from the evils of the Church. He had waited for him, he said:

"Te invocando, famoso alto guerriero,  
Che, superate alfin le cozie porte,  
Tremar le chiavi in man facevi a Piero.

.....

Deh! t'affretta, lo dicea: volgi lo sdegno  
Contro costei, che nata in servitute,  
Tutto del mondo avea sognato il regno.

Mena il brando fatal; spezza l'incude  
Che le celesti folgori temprava;  
Rendi Roma alla gloria, alla virtude;

La fonte chiudi dell'error, che prava  
Gl'intelletti avvelena: e questa druda,  
Qual venne al mondo umil ritorni e schiava".\*

Monti also felt the need to excuse himself for having remained in Rome so long. The spirit of Bassville had appeared to him one night, he said, and told him to leave but he was persuaded by his wife and child to remain. By this mention of the French "martyr", Monti tried to make amends once again for writing "La Bassvilliana" and also re-affirm his personal friendship with the victim. In fact, the last lines of "La Superstizione" read like a poetic version of Monti's letter to Salfi which was written/

\* MONTI: "La Superstizione", 128-130; 137-145.

1.129: "le cozie porte" = Cottian Alps. Caesar used this route in 58 B.C. (Alpes Cottiae).



written shortly beforehand:

"Così di padre e di marito cura  
costrinsemi mentir volto e favella,  
e reo mi feci per udir natura:  
ma non merta rossor colpa sì bella".

The third expiatory poem, "Il Pericolo", was written in great haste and published on 10th September on the occasion of the coup d'état in Paris on 4th September (18 fructidor) which brought to light an obscure plot organized by the royalists - hence "Il Pericolo". It was one of Monti's worst compositions but for him the end justified the means because he knew that Salfi had written in the "Termometro Politico" of 23 August: "Mi compiacchio di tirare un velo sull'epoca infelice della schiavitù vostra ..... Le prime 'prove espiatorie de' vostri errori politici' mi promettono un successo degno ..... Io attendo la continuazione ..... "

At last Monti could consider that he had been officially accepted by the new régime and as proof of this, he was appointed secretary in the 'Ministero degli Esteri' with responsibility for the re-organization of Emilia and the Romagna. (The appointment was made at the end of August, 1797). However, acceptance by the State did not necessarily bring complete personal satisfaction to Monti. He was still in a very unsettled state of mind and had to face endless humiliating reminders of his recent 'volte-face' as well as difficult economic/

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\* MONTI: "La Superstizione", 248-251.

economic circumstances. His correspondence at this period proves his doubts about the future and his misgivings about the path he had chosen for himself: "Vi sono momenti nei quali mi brucerei volentieri il cervello", he wrote on 25th July, but even when his position had been established his outlook remained troubled. On 5th September in a letter to Costabili Containi he said: "Più contemplo la libertà cisalpina, più resta dubbio il pensiero se la nostra prosperità vi abbia guadagnato o perduto. Altronde questa libertà è per molti di noi un licore troppo potente, che soggioga l'intelletto, imbriaça il cervello, e ci fa essere più malati che sani. In somma non v'ha, né può esservi Repubblica sicura, senza costumi, senza virtù: e noi, lo dico con dolore, noi ne siamo poveri, poverissimi". Monti certainly sounds ill at ease; he was disillusioned and felt he could never really belong to this new society. Further, the sincerity with which he phrased his disappointment cannot but arouse the sympathy of the reader. The following melancholy thoughts concluded the letter: "Se mi domandi i miei sentimenti, ti dirò con candore che desidero una redenzione qualunque siasi. Non ho mire ambiziose....., avrei amato un destino a cui l'invidia non giunga; ma questo flagello degli uomini onesti mi si è attaccato alla carne, e non spero mai di liberarmene, a meno che non prenda il partito di divenir scellerato per divenir fortunato. Comprendi da questo che sarò sempre infelice".

What/

What else could he now do but continue to write what would please those in authority? Just as his aim had been to attain personal recognition from Pius VI when he first went to Rome, now his greatest desire was to capture the attention of Bonaparte. Since before he left Rome, Monti had been working on a serious mythological work whose hero, Prometheus, symbolized humanity's struggle against fate and adversity. As circumstance changed, Monti decided it would be opportune to try to finish the poem and make it his first substantial literary offering to Bonaparte. "Io avevo scritto, per contentare mio Padrone, la cantica di Bassville contro i Francesi: ..... Il Governo francese adunque era fortemente irritato contro di me ..... Il diritto dunque di salvarmi mi poneva nella imperiosa necessità di placarli .... La venuta in casa mia dell'Aiutante medesimo di Bonaparte mi ha conciliato l'animo del Generale, e finalmente me ne ha guadagnata ancora la protezione e la stima. .... Ecco il perchè ho dedicato a Bonaparte il poema del 'Prometeo'."

Then in a more diplomatic way, Monti stated in the 'Prefazione non inutile' his two reasons for undertaking this work: "la prima, di promuovere l'amore dei Latini e dei Greci, dai quali è molto tempo che ci discostiamo con detrimento sommo della nostra poesia; la seconda poi, di meritar bene d'una patria libera, scrivendo finalmente da uomo libero". Here was the natural/

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\* MONTI: Lettera al fratello - 14th June, 1797.

natural neoclassicist, the established Arcadian poet, showing more than general awareness of the new mood of Europe: the power of the privileged minority over the under-privileged majority had at last been questioned and rejected in favour of the Rights of Man, and from this moment the new word, nation, and particularly "una patria libera" became of prime importance. The first canto begins with Prometheus' vision of the history of mankind and ends with Apollo's description of Bonaparte's "glorious Italian campaign of 1796". The other two canti contain a poetic account of the life of Prometheus described in such a way that the reader is left in no doubt about the intended comparison between this classical hero and the young French General. Lest there be any doubt about this parallel, Monti made definite reference to it in the Dedication: "Zelatore ardentissimo dell'indipendenza del cielo da cui traeva l'origine egli (Prometeo) combattè lungamente e con valore e con senno contro il despotismo di Giove, e divenne co'liberi suoi sentimenti il flagello perpetuo dei congiurati aristocratici dell'Olimpo. Voi avete fatto altrettanto co'despoti della terra; e in ciò solo vi siete mostrato dissimile da Prometeo, ch'egli fu perdente, e Voi vincitore ..... Beneficò egli il genere umano sepolto da/

da Giove nelle miserie per la funesta dote di Pandora;  
 e Voi beneficate i popoli sommersi nel fango della schiavitù,  
 restituendoli ai naturali loro diritti, ..... Per lui  
 insomma rinacque la natura a nuova vita; <sup>e</sup> per Voi rinasciamo  
 noi pure, noi oppressi ma non vili Italiani, ad una nuova  
 morale, recuperando la perduta nostra ragione e spezzando il  
 giogo di ferro sotto il quale ci ha fatto gemere diciotto secoli  
 la superstizione congiurata colla tirannia....."

In these last lines, Monti shows that true patriotism lay  
 beneath his adulation of Bonaparte. He sincerely hoped that  
 this man would be Italy's salvation and he was sure that his  
 country's troubles would be alleviated since fate had now  
 decreed that the Revolutionary leader sent to them should be  
 a man with Italian blood in his veins:

"Deh l'ascolta, per Dio ! deh forte avvolgile  
 le man nel crine venerando, e salva la;  
 ch'ella t'è madre, e le materne lagrime  
 al cor d'un figlio la pietà comandano". \*

This appeal was soon to be made in a more forthright way by  
 Foscolo/

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\* MONTI: "Prometeo", I, 740-743.

Foscolo but nevertheless, evidence of this noble spirit does give credit to Monti - credit which is often denied him because of over-emphasising his flattery of Bonaparte. But in view of Monti's particular position, it was inevitable that he should write words of adulation. One has to search below that surface to find the deeper significance of Monti's works and thereby understand that personal interest was not his only inspiration. Like all honest citizens, Monti saw the need for a strong leader who could control the exuberance and excesses of the Revolutionaries and put their ideals into practice in an atmosphere of peace. He also felt that Italy needed the strength and unity that only such an ideal leader could provide.

The same patriotic beliefs inspired Monti to write: "Per il Congresso di Udine" (August, 1797). This Congress dealt with the ending of the war between France and Austria which was to decide indirectly the fate of Italy. In the poem, Monti stressed the importance for Italy of these negotiations for peace:

"Agita in riva dell'Isonzo il fato,  
Italia/

Italia, le tue sorti; e taciturna  
Su te l'Europa il suo pensier raccoglie". \*

Yet he was ready to reproach his fellow-countrymen for allowing themselves to be in such an undignified position:

"Oh più vil che infelice! oh de' tuoi servi  
serva derisa"! \*

His genuine distress is reminiscent of Dante's outburst:

"Ahi, serva Italia, di dolore ostello....."\*\*\* But Monti  
did not feel the need to abandon hope because

"L'itala fortuna

Egra è sì, ma non spenta. Empio sovrasta  
Il fato, e danni e tradimenti aduna:  
Ma contro il fato è Bonaparte; e basta.

.....

Morti sì, ma non vinti,  
Ma liberi cadremo, e armati, e tutti": \*

Undoubtedly this was a fervent patriotic cry to arms which reflected the anxiety as well as the hopes of Italians.

Further, when Monti went on to say that "l'italo onor dal sonno è desto",\* he was speaking the truth although he did not realize that this process of re-awakening would continue until at least 1859. However, his general awareness of the contemporary situation and the sensitive, direct manner in which/

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\* MONTI: "Per il Congresso di Udine", 1-3; 12-13; 30-33;  
51-52; 89.

\*\* DANTE: Purgatorio VI, 76.

which he tried to express himself combined to make this one of Monti's finest political works - "rimane sempre una delle più belle e lodate liriche del Monti perchè essa assume quel tono di dolore, di sdegno e di rampogna che è forse la qualità più propria e costante della poesia nazionale italiana, e desta echi più profondi nella nostra coscienza".\*

Unfortunately, the Treaty of Campoformio (17th October, 1797) brought little consolation to Italy and her interests were not considered except as supplementary to those of France. The Emperor, Francis II, ceded Belgium and his territories on the left bank of the Rhine to France in return for Salzburg, Venice and the Venetian lands between Lake Garda and the Po, Istria, Dalmatia and the Bocche di Cattaro; and the rest of the Venetian territory went with Modena, Ferrara, Bologna and the Romagna to the French-inspired Cisalpine Republic. France took the Ionian Islands and the Albanian possessions of Venice. Those Italians who had looked with hope and idealism to the young French General, could now draw only one conclusion: that they had been betrayed and neutral Venice had been sold to Austria, her ancient enemy. Before leaving, the French also robbed/

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\* PETTENAZZI: "La Poesia Napoleonica in Italia", page 25.



robbed the Venetian Republic of everything of value they could carry away: they pillaged and destroyed the Arsenal, stripped the gilt fittings from the "Bucintoro", the ceremonial barge, and carried off the famous bronze horses from St. Mark's to adorn the conqueror's triumphal Arch on the Place du Carrousel.

Perhaps at the time Napoleon did not realize how this rather thoughtless move which seemed to him politically expedient, would damage his image with the Italian people. On the one hand he had given them peace and also satisfied to some extent the hopes of Lombard patriots; but at the same time he disappointed the Venetians and ensured their permanent hostility. Henceforward it was not difficult for Italian patriots to assess Bonaparte's sincerity when he claimed that he had Italy's good at heart.

It is very interesting to compare the reactions of Foscolo and Monti to this Treaty: the former produced a daring outburst such as one would almost expect from a highly impressionable twenty-one-year-old:- "Il sacrificio della/

della patria nostra è consummato: tutto è perduto.....";\*  
while on the other hand, the latter preferred to be diplomatic.  
Bonaparte had undeniably brought peace to Italy and even  
although it had been at almost any price, Monti decided to  
concentrate on praising this aspect in order to avoid criticis-  
ing the other highly disagreeable issue:

"Dolce brama de le genti,  
Cara pace, al fin scendesti,  
E le spade combattenti  
La tua fronda separò".\*\*

Without condoning Monti's attitude, it is not difficult to  
understand why he reacted as he did. Indeed, most people  
would have done the same thing in the same circumstances.  
He tried to make a popular appeal to all wives and mothers  
by reminding them that their days of lonely worry were at an  
end; they would not only be able to rejoice to have their  
families reunited but could look with special pride on any  
of their family's wounds knowing that they had been received  
in such a noble cause. Life would now return to normal once  
again, but in spite of this Monti warned all young men to be  
alert to the possibility of future attack from "l'alemanno  
augello infido".\*\* In such an event, they would have to be  
prepared/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis", lines 1-2.

\*\* MONTI: "Per la Pace di Campoformio", lines 1-4; 52.

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prepared to fight for liberty or death, he said, but reassured them that "fortunato chi per la patria morirà".\* This contribution from Monti was incredibly lacking in enthusiasm and conviction. He merely confirmed his support for the party in power and included a few patriotic platitudes without saying anything of consequence. Such a lack of personal involvement on the part of the poet seems to indicate something of the moral struggle from which he was undoubtedly suffering. One can sense the conflict between his absent-minded attitude to life in general and his need to reassure the authorities that he was on their side in order that he could survive economically.

It was regrettable that Monti allowed himself to be so completely influenced at this point by material needs. He had decided to praise everything done by the French and that even included Bonaparte's order to remove the eighty-one-year-old Pius VI from Rome to Valence in February, 1798. This "Pellegrino Apostolico" who had given his patronage to Monti for twenty years was now called "un ingombro così vil", and even "l'ultimo dei nostri" by his former devotee. Again one wishes that Monti had kept silent instead of showing such disloyalty which only reflected his weakness of character. His position was still somewhat insecure as far as the authorities/

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\* MONTI: "Per la pace di Campoformio", 58-9.

authorities were concerned because of petty jealousy and intrigue by Lattanzi in the Senate House and by Gianni in "Il Monitore Italiano" who said Monti was a man of intelligence but no loyalty. By August, 1798, although Monti had been ably defended by Foscolo,\* the damage had already been done by insinuation. These were difficult days for any Italians who were truly patriotic: the Cisalpine Republic was indirectly a French vassal-state and such was the disillusionment of the officials that many of them resigned, following the example of Alessandro Verri and Parini. Paradisi who had befriended Monti was also obliged to leave at this period, but in a precarious way, Monti managed to survive in office.

On 21st January, 1799, the Government decided to celebrate with great pomp and ceremony the sixth anniversary of the execution of Louis XVI. This was an attempt on their part to arouse flagging Republican spirit in the North, and to mark the occasion, Monti was commissioned to write a lyric which could be set to music and performed at La Scala. Within twelve days he produced an "Inno" in which "il buon rege" of "La Bassvilliana" became "il vil Capeto", "lo spergiuro". It was a rousing Jacobin composition in praise of "libertà, che del ciel sei figlia"\*\*\* but it also showed a further development in Monti's own/

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\* April, 1798 --p.321.

\*\* MONTI: Inno per la festa del 21 gennaio, 1799, anniversario del supplizio di Luigi XVI, line 22.

own position: whether or not he really supported the French Revolutionaries, he was now profoundly impressed by Napoleon's personal qualities as a leader. At the time of writing, Napoleon had left Italy and was vainly seeking further glories in Egypt. Hence --

"Fin del Nilo sponde sentiro  
Di tua luce la dolce virtù:  
Di tua luce ancor essa s'infoca  
Stanca l'Asia di ceppi, ed invoca  
Bonaparte, il maggior de' mortali,  
Che geloso fa Giove lassù.

Coro: Bonaparte ha nel cielo i rivali,  
Perchè averli non puote quaggiù".\*

Monti was sincerely over-awed by this personality and even when he no longer pretended to agree with Napoleon's policies his feelings of almost involuntary admiration still remained.\*\*

Apart from one's initial distaste on moral grounds, this poem captured with great accuracy the mood of the Italian people at that moment in their history: "è indimenticabile, perchè è la più gagliarda interpretazione della nuova fede, delle nuove speranze e anche delle nuove illusioni onde erano posseduti allora gl'Italiani più eletti .....\*\*\* It is also worth mentioning that Monti was rewarded with 180 Lire and an appointment /

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\* MONTI: "Inno per la festa del 21 gennais, 1799"; - 53-60.

\*\* ".... era un uomo che, malgrado de' suoi tanti difetti, nell'abbagliata immaginazione degli uomini avea più del divino che dell'umano". Monti, lettera a Carlo T. Fores, Cremona, 30.11.1825.

\*\*\* Zumbini: "La Poesia di V. Monti", page 147.

appointment to the post in the Brera college which Parini had recently vacated. Unfortunately, this situation was short-lived for while Napoleon was still in Egypt, the Austro-Russian troops defeated the French in Lombardy and the Cisalpine Republic collapsed like a pack of cards. As a result, on 28th April, 1799, Monti fled for safety from Milan to Paris where he was befriended by Ferdinando Mareschalchi -- a welcome host to many other Italian exiles including Gianni.

Sufficient evidence has now been given to show that a deep dichotomy existed between Monti's interior and exterior image. As regards the former, a definite evolution can be traced: from a conservative he became a moderate liberal with a sincere love for "una patria libera"; unfortunately, he was unable to defend his opinions and at the same time remain true to his conscience. In fact, he never had the strength of character to mould events to suit his purposes: instead, events controlled him. However, to counter this, "non vanno dimenticati nella storia delle idee e dei programmi del poeta, la dispersione, lo abbandamento, la confusione, a volte improvvisi, a volte lenti e durevoli, che furono determinati dal repentino mutamento degli avvenimenti di cui fu spettatore ingenuo e impreparato, e della delusione che in lui nacque, vedendosi inaspettatamente posto dinanzi ad una realtà ben diversa da quella sperata".\* Monti was/

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\* F. ALLEVI: "Vincenzo Monti", page 112.

was first of all a poet and secondly a patriotic pacifist with liberal tendencies. It was his misfortune that he lived during an exceptionally drastic period of historical change which was of such a nature that he had to adapt to it in order to survive in a prominent position. In other words, one has to conclude that he was the victim of very unusual circumstances.

Monti's conduct during his period of exile goes a long way towards restoring his good name. He did not try to blame anyone for the physical and economic hardships he endured, nor did he try to earn a living by any means other than by writing poetry. He seems to have been able to accept the situation with amazing detachment and be psychologically self-sufficient within his own artistic world. Had he been a real opportunist he would never have been so content to live in the present and try to forget about making diplomatic plans for the future. It almost seemed as though he had found the quiet life he advocated eight years previously when he wrote "Invito d'un solitario ad un cittadino". While in Paris in 1800, Monti finished the Roman tragedy, "Caio Gracco" which he had begun two years previously. In it he continued the theme of a united, prosperous Italy which he had first popularized in his "Prometeo", (1797). One of the most memorable scenes is in Act III when Caio/

Caio asks the citizens if liberty for Italy is to be considered a crime and receives the reply:

Primo                    "No, Itali sian tutti, un popol solo,  
Cittadino:              Una sola famiglia.

Popolo:                Tutti, e fratelli".\*

In this the voice of Monti is the forerunner of the Risorgimento and it was an important contribution towards conditioning the minds of the people for the future. Thus, even by 1800, Monti had been able to put his finger on the one essential aspect of the new era on which Italians would have to concentrate. Few people have given him credit for looking forward in this way from comparative darkness to the rise of national consciousness.

Monti's two-year-old period of 'withdrawal' from the pressure and confusion of the political scene came to a sudden end when Napoleon defeated the Austro-Russian armies at Marengo on 14th June, 1800 and thereby enabled all Italian exiles to return home:

"Bella Italia, amate sponde,  
Pur vi torno a riveder!  
Trema in petto e si confonde  
L'anima/

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\* MONTI: "Caio Gracco", III, 248-250. Monti had several sources for this tragedy, particularly A. Verri - "Notti Romane" (I, V and VI) and Shakespeare - "Coriolanus" and "Julius Caesar".



"L'alma oppressa dal piacer".\*

News of "la liberazione d'Italia" filled Monti with such joy and hope that he took the opportunity to stress again the theme of "una patria libera" which he had emphasized in "Caio Gracco". While this lyric lacks the quality of a masterpiece, its spontaneity and freshness of approach have given it great popularity. Without servile flattery Bonaparte is spoken of as Italy's man of destiny - "dove è Bonaparte/sta vittoria e libertà.....",\* but Monti's preoccupation was with the beauty of his country which was being sullied by foreign oppressors - a theme which recurs so many times in the poetry of the Risorgimento.\*\* Such deep affection for Italy redeems the weakness of character shown by Monti at other times; further, by expressing himself in simple language his feelings were more easily understood by the general public and it was in this way that he made his contribution "per fare la patria".

In 1800 Monti was deeply troubled about Italy's political and social condition and he realized that only disaster would result from the abuse of liberty. Besides this, he had been subjected/

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\* MONTI: "Per la liberazione d'Italia", 1-4; 43-44.

\*\* "Il giardino di natura/No, poi barbari non è".

MONTI: "Per la liberazione d'Italia", lines 31-32.

This theme was certainly not original on the part of Monti. Dante spoke of "Il giardin dell'impero" (Purg.VI, 105) and in the canzone "Italia Mia", Petrarch spoke of Italy as "del mondo la più bella parte", line 56.

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subjected to continuous persecution from jealous rivals like Gianni and Lattanzi whose efforts to discredit him had produced increased hardship. Consequently, he felt that the time was now ripe to describe the contemporary scene as it affected him personally as well as publically: "Sono occupato in una seconda 'Bassvilliana'. La morte di Mascheroni, a cui unisco quella di Parini, Verri e Spallanzani,\* me ne ha dato il soggetto. Molti ne rimarranno scottati; ma è giunto il tempo d'una onorata vendetta: e per dió! me la voglio prendere per istruzione della mia patria, lacerata da tanti birbanti".\*\* Lorenzo Mascheroni, the scientist and poet from Bergamo, who died in Paris on 14th July, 1800, had been a companion in exile of Monti. The latter's plan was to follow the soul of Mascheroni to heaven and then recount its conversations with Parini and other Italians of note about the state of their country. The inspiration behind this poetic vision came obviously from Dante. From the outset, Monti's intention in writing "La Mascheroniana" was not simply to praise Napoleon. This work was essentially an expression of distress and a courageous declaration of "amor patria". "Le cagioni del piangere sono tante. Guai a colui che a' di nostri ha occhi per vedere e non ha cuore per fremere e lagrimare! Lettore, se altamente ami la patria e sei verace italiano, leggi: ma getta il libro, se per tua e nostra disavventura/

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\* Lazzaro Spallanzani, (1729-1799) - Italian naturalist, and Professor as well as Director of the museum at the University of Pavia.

\*\* MONTI: Lettera al Cons. Cav. Giuseppe Bernardoni, Parigi, 18 agosto, 1800.

disavventura tu non sei che un pazzo demagogo o uno scaltro mercatante di libertà".\* The "pazzi demagoghi" are the constant object of Monti's "onorata vendetta" for both his instinct and experience had taught him the value of "il giusto mezzo". The most important parts of "La Mascheroniana" are Parini's powerful outbursts against the First Cisalpine Republic and those of Verri and Ariosto against the Second. One is almost amazed to hear Monti blame first the French Government and armies in Italy and then those unworthy Italians who profited from political changes to gain power and wealth at the expense of their country. Bonaparte is not mentioned in this indictment, and Monti states more than once that all these errors occurred in spite of him. But nevertheless, by describing the splendour of Bonaparte's military and political glory and praising his vast undertakings, Monti was indirectly drawing attention to that shadow of inefficient government which did reflect on the French leader whether he liked it or not. It is also worth noting that praise of Napoleon and excuses for the behaviour of his representatives in Italy were placed in the mouth of Mascheroni. In this way, Monti cleverly reflected the genuine reaction of his friend, "quest'alma gentil" (Canto I, 7.) who was noted for his humility and charity towards all men, and therefore was not necessarily expressing his own point of view. Thus, when Mascheroni tells Parini:

he/ ".... A noi (Napoleone) fece libertà ritorno",\*\*

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\* MONTI: "La Mascheroniana" -- Introduzione.  
\*\* MONTI: "La Mascheroniana", II, 145.

he is met with the reply:

- "Libertà? di che guisa? Ancor l'orrore  
Mi dura della prima, e a cotal patto  
Chi vuol franca la patria è traditore.
- A che man è commesso il suo riscatto?  
Libera certo il vincitor lei vuole;  
Ma chi conduce il buon volere all'atto?
- Altra volta pur volle, e fur parole;  
Chè con ugn'a rapace arpie digiune  
Fèro a noi ciò che Progne\* alla sua prole".\*\*

The only possible conclusion to be drawn from such a speech is that Monti was doing his best to give Napoleon a serious warning. In fact, this was Monti's intention throughout the whole poem but it had to be subtly expressed in order to achieve any good. It is important not to underestimate the poet's sincerity and courage in revealing himself with such fair-minded patriotism at a time when the fortunes of Napoleon were in the ascendant.

At the beginning of 1801, Monti returned to Italy, ostensibly to occupy the Chair of Eloquence at the University of Pavia to which he had been appointed by order of Napoleon (although he did not actually go to Pavia until 1803). However, his sadness and disillusionment were increased when he saw for himself the effects of French overlordship. ".... Comincio a pentirmi del mio eroe. Egli rimanda Bruno nella Cisalpina, vedi se si può aver/

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\* Progne, wife of Tereus, King of Thrace, killed her son, Itys, in a fit of jealousy.

\*\* MONTI: "La Mascheroniana", II, 148-156.

aver coraggio di proseguire. Nulladimeno, l'abitudine di lodar un uomo che finora mi è parso il più grande di tutti, mi ha fatto nuovamente cadere nelle sue lodi, dimenticando i mali orribili che i suoi generali ci hanno cagionati. Vedilo nei versi che ti trasmetto.\* Io li ho scritti per ordine del Governo, la cui prudenza ha troncate due strofe, che il doloroso sentimento delle nostre miserie mi avea suggerite e dettato .... Te beato che nulla vedi in distanza, e non senti che per consenso! Vi sono momenti nei quali vorrei esser bruto, e ruminare come bruto. Finirei coll'andare al macello, ma almeno non avrei meco un altro carnefice, la ragione".\*\* Three months later he seemed even more distressed: "Mi sono proposto di scrivere e parlare libero come l'aria. Sono così inorridito dell'attuale ordine di cose, che il vivere dove vivo, mi è morte. Il diavolo si porti questa libertà bugiarona".\*\* Montani was not deceived, but being a pacifist at heart, he was convinced that any worthwhile solution of Italy's problem would come from discussion rather than combat. His official poetic commemoration of the Cisalpine Congress which took place in Lyons (December, 1801) gives an exact picture of his attitude of mind with regard to Italy and Napoleon. Peace and liberty were his ideals, and because of/

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\* "L'Ode Per la Pace di Lunéville", February, 1801, - a poem of little value, similar to the one written for the Treaty of Campoformio.

\*\* MONTI: Lettera all' Alberto Fortis, 4 maggio, 1801.

\*\*\* MONTI: Lettera al Mareschalchi, 10 agosto, 1801.

of this he urged his fellow-countrymen to realize their position of servitude and secure legislation to restore their freedom. He spoke with great frankness, and although he gave Napoleon just praise, he put greater stress on telling him what Italians hoped to achieve by means of his help. Finally, he offered the French ruler some very sincere advice:

"Onore

Gerto è sublime debellar gli alteri:  
Ma gloria, se ben guardi, è più verace  
Conquistar l'alme e compor genti in pace".\*

On only one other occasion was Monti so outspoken: when he delivered his inaugural address to the students at Pavia\*\* he quoted Dante to describe the condition of the Italian Republic in 1803: "Ahi serva Italia, di dolore ostello,  
Nave senza nocchiero in gran tempesta,  
Non donna di provincie, ma bordello"! \*\*\*

Monti was certainly not an ingenuous onlooker, unable to understand the difference between the theory and practice of politics, and in both his life and work it is abundantly clear that his "italianità" was an integral part of his whole being.

During the next few years no particularly controversial events affected Italy and consequently there was nothing in the political/

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\* MONTI: "Per il Congresso Cisalpino in Lione", 101-104.

\*\* The address was entitled "Su la necessità di onorare i primi scopritori del vero in fatto di scienze". It was delivered on 26th November, 1803.

\*\*\* DANTE -- "Purgatorio", VI, 76-78. (see page 265).

political sphere to inspire a literary masterpiece. The position was more one of stagnation, and as time went on opposition to the authorities became increasingly difficult. For the most part, poets were obliged to follow the only safe course and write impersonally in praise of their French overlord - a course which produced an inevitable lack of dignity in their work. Poetry became again "poesia d'occasione", and just as the Arcadians had been ready to produce verses for every birth, marriage and death, so now the custom developed to sing of every notable event which affected Napoleon - his Coronation, marriage to Maria Louisa of Austria, the birth of his son, the King of Rome, and his many military victories. In the absence of any of these specific occasions, poets were always able to look back on Marengo and the Egyptian Campaign, praise "Il Datore di Pace" or inveigh against England who had resisted attack from the First Consul.

In the period from 1804 to 1815, Monti did not differ from the majority of writers: he also contributed a wealth of "poesia d'occasione" but although it brought him economic stability his output during this period has often been dismissed by subsequent generations as the insincere work of a flatterer.\* This/

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\*Monti, on the other hand, insisted that provided poetry had fervour and beauty of expression it could be a work of art without necessarily reflecting the truth about a given situation.

This judgment has even been extended (as a result of these works) to his entire career by people who claimed that art must be a sincere representation of the personal outlook of the writer. Monti knowingly took the risk of being judged unsympathetically, but in view of the unusually complex circumstances as well as his own needs and capabilities, he felt he was following the only course open to him at that moment. In April, 1805, a few weeks before Napoleon's coronation in Milan, Monti wrote to Cesarotti: "..... Io vo toccando la corda pindarica per l'Imperatore Napoleone.

Il Governo mi ha così comandato, e mi è forza obbedire. Dio faccia che l'amor della patria non mi tiri a troppa libertà di pensieri e che io rispetti l'eroe senza tradire il dovere di cittadino! Batto un sentiero ove il voto della nazione non va molto d'accordo colla politica, e temo di rovinarmi. Sant'Apollò mi aiuti, e voi pregatemi senno e prudenza".\*

His immediate task was to explain to the Italian people how they would benefit from having Napoleon as their King, and although Monti did this with a certain amount of flattery by comparing their "deliverer" to a god-like being:

"E in maestade alteramente onesta

Un guerrier discendea pari ad un dio".\*\*

he/

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\* MONTI: Lettera a Melchior Cesarotti, Padova; Milano,  
6 aprile, 1805.

\*\* MONTI: "Il Beneficio", 65-66.



he also took care to point out the more practical side of the whole issue. He did this by means of a vision entitled "Il Beneficio" in which the spirit of Dante became the poet's mouthpiece: because of their vulnerable position, Italians had to strengthen their links with France until such time as their common enemies were defeated, for only in this way could they preserve the life of the Kingdom of Italy. This was a common-sense attitude for anyone concerned about the future of Italy and it must also have seemed reasonable to contemporaries who would have heard of Napoleon's promise to give the Italian crown to "più giovine capo" as soon as possible. Besides this, as he had always maintained that his intention was to make the Italian nation free and independent, Italians could not do more than try to exploit a situation which they were helpless to change. During this 'interim period' in their history Monti urged diplomacy and tact: Italians were to receive Napoleon graciously as their King and rather than dwell with foolish pride on their past glories they were to work with him to plan their own future. If they did so,

"E1/

"Ei (Napoleone) più ricca, ei più bella e più temprata  
la farà".\*

These words were full of hope rather than conviction for we know from Monti's correspondence that by 1805 he was both disillusioned and tired of Napoleon. However, in spite of this personal feeling, his love of Italy was so great that he wanted to do all he could to help her make the best of her position. Again, we are confronted with Monti's sincere patriotism. Even in complicated circumstances, this guiding principle can be traced in all his work:

"E fido al fianco mi reggea lo stile  
Il patrio amor che solo mi consiglia".\*

This poem maintained the precarious balance between patriotism and adulation so well that it was praised by all and Monti was officially named "Poeta del governo Italiano" with a fixed annual income. This meant that it was now his official duty to record the grandeur of the Age of Napoleon in appropriate verse. By December, 1805, the spectacle of the battle of Austerlitz and the Peace of Pressburg had dazzled the minds of most Italians. Indeed, at that time it would have been difficult not to have been swept up in enthusiasm for the young/

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\* MONTI: "Il Beneficio", 199-200; 237-8.

young French leader who had defeated armies of veterans and was promising to give people a new life in which they would enjoy the benefits of the Revolution without any of its excesses. As if this were not enough, the central character in the drama was Italian by birth. Monti had already told his compatriots of this amazing coincidence:

"l'anima altera  
Che nel gran cor di Bonaparte brilla  
Fu dell'italo sole una scintilla".\*

By the end of 1805 his confidence in Napoleon had been greatly restored, and as if to complete the poet's "conversion" he was chosen as one of the Italian delegation which was sent to Vienna to congratulate the Emperor personally on his recent victory. This experience fired Monti to write a long poem, an "epicolicirico" covering the whole career of Napoleon,\*\* but after three months his enthusiasm began to fade when he realized the extent of the task he had undertaken and the additional difficulty of having to produce a continuous song of praise: "Altro che un Inno è quello che scrivo! Mi sono messo in un mare che non ha sponda, nel mare delle imprese Bonapartiane; e/

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\* MONTI: "Per il Congresso Cisalpino in Lione", 76-78.

\*\* MONTI -- Lettera al Cesarotti, 24 gennaio, 1806.

e in due mesi che navigo, mi sono allontanato appena dal lido. Quando sarò a buon porto ho in animo di recarmi a Padova per comunicarvi il mio lavoro, e prender consiglio, perchè realmente qui non ho persona da cui ricevere aiuto".\*

The result was an unfinished historical novel in verse entitled "Il Bardo della Selva Nera". He chose to express himself in "poesia bardita" because it allowed him to use different types of supernatural imagery which were pleasing to the Emperor, even although his inspiration came partly from an English source, namely "The Bard" by Thomas Gray. Monti wanted to invent a plot, however artificial, into which he could introduce the Napoleonic story and a bard was a convenient alternative to classical or mythological characters. In this case, the bard and his daughter looked after a Franco-Italian soldier wounded in the battle of Ulm, and when the latter began to recover he told his benefactors about the glories of his military master. From a realistic point of view, the subject matter was too contrived to be convincing - the soldier spoke in glowing terms of the Egyptian and Syrian Campaigns even although these had been unsuccessfully concluded as far as Franco was concerned. But this was essentially one of/

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\* MONTI - Lettera al Cesarotti, 15 maggio, 1806.

of Monti's "professional poems", an excellent exercise in poetic technique and invention which was greatly appreciated by those for whom it was intended - the title, "Istoriografo del regno d'Italia", being but one token of official esteem. Yet Monti never managed to work up enough enthusiasm to complete this grand scheme. After the defeat of the Austrians under General Mack at Ulm in October, 1805, Napoleon completely destroyed the Russo-Austrian armies at Austerlitz in December; after Austerlitz, the Prussian forces were annihilated the following October at Jena, and by July, 1807, the French Emperor had reached the peak of his power in Europe with the Treaty of Tilsit. One would imagine that this catalogue of glory would have been an inexhaustable fount of inspiration to someone in Monti's position. Instead, even with the prospect of plenty of new material ahead, he was unable to proceed beyond the first few lines of the eighth canto. His convenient explanation was that words were inadequate to describe the magnitude of contemporary events but it is more likely that Monti felt unbearably tied by this mighty task and wanted to be free of it. This seems a reasonable assumption in view of the fact that he wrote two subsequent poems which were a chronological continuation of his "history of Napoleon" although on a smaller scale and both works were complete in themselves.

The/

The first, "La Spada di Federico II", (November, 1806) was a highly imaginative and amusing account of the French Emperor's visit to the tomb of Frederick II of Prussia after the battle of Jena. Monti had just finished reading "Macbeth" before he embarked on this composition, and he had been considerably impressed by the figure of Banquo. In Monti's poem, the appearance of a blood-stained hand prevented Napoleon from removing the ceremonial sword, but when reminded that

"Tu ben sette, a fondarlo, anni pugnasti,  
Io sette giorni a riversarlo: e basti",\*

the spirit of Frederick realized he was now facing "la giusta vendetta di Dio".\*\* There is a pleasant atmosphere in this poem: there is no bitterness from Frederick II, nor is there excessive adulation of Napoleon. Indeed, one is surprised to note the great understanding which is expressed for the former Prussian leader when faced with the humiliating defeat of his army. Considering the circumstances under which this was written as well as Monti's own position, this was a remarkably objective comment.

In 1809, he made one more unsuccessful attempt to conclude the theme of "Il Bardo": "La Palingenesi Politica". It failed/

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\* MONTI: "La Spada di Federico II", 55-6; 128.

\*\* MONTI: Introduction to "La Palingenesi Politica".

failed partly because he concentrated on the ill-fated Peninsular War where any French successes were of an ephemeral nature, instead of mentioning Eylau, Friedland and Wagram. Again, we must remember that the outcome of the war in Spain could not have been foreseen by Monti, and his intention was to stress the aspect of political revival or renewal which Joseph Bonaparte was expected to produce in Spain, in accordance with Napoleon's plans for the internal reorganization of all under his rule. Monti spoke of a kind of master-mind "che riempiendo oggi di se stessa tutta la terra e precisamente l'Europa, ritoglie questa bella parte del mondo all'antico funesto caos dei suoi sistemi politici, ne riordina i discordi elementi, ne ristaura le membra, e le informa di miglior vita".\* Monti's choice of subject matter is important for anyone trying to assess the poet's sincerity. He had so many divided loyalties -- poetic, moral, political and sentimental -- which he was at pains to balance in order to survive, and by 1809 the effort was becoming almost impossible. Already it was obvious to him that Italy was not benefiting from having had to fight for Napoleon, but he could see that she stood to gain from political, social and economic reorganization. Hence his decision to concentrate on praising this side of Napoleon's strategy/

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\* MONTI: Introduction to "La Palingenesi Politica".

strategy rather than producing further adulation of victories that had already become part of history.

It is only by such examination of Monti's poetry that one can reach the real Monti and appreciate his constant devotion to his art and his "italianità" - all of which seems in contrast to his public image of thoughtless flattery which has long been greatly over-emphasized. Effective political commentary in verse was obviously not Monti's natural choice of subject. He was more at home when faced with a comparatively non-controversial topic around which he could weave a pattern of beautiful imagery until it became an artistic masterpiece. In other words, his most suitable rôle was as "Il Cortegiano", the poet paid to sing the praises of his master within the somewhat rarified atmosphere of the court; where the poet produced work from a sense of duty rather than sincere admiration and affection, where true praise was replaced by unashamed adulation.

During this period, Monti composed three works which could be called "odi cortigianesche": the first "In occasione del parto della Viceregina d'Italia", was written in March, 1807 to celebrate the birth of a daughter to Augusta Amalia and Eugène de Beauharnais. As an ode, it is almost perfect with something of the cold beauty of a marble statue. The second ode combined mythology/



mythology and allegory to celebrate Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise of Austria: "La Jerogamia di Creta", (1810)\*. The wedding of Jupiter and Juno in Crete was a convenient allegory which Monti worked out very carefully and impersonally as one would do if challenged with an interesting exercise. It would be true to say that Monti was so well-disciplined in his duties as Court Poet that he could completely submerge his personal feelings and yet produce a work of art. His third "ode cortigianesca" also fitted this description: it was written in April, 1811 to mark the birth of Napoleon's son, the King of Rome, and was entitled, "Le Api Panacridi in Alvisopoli".\*\* Monti would have preferred to let the event pass without mention, but was persuaded to write something suitable and repeated the theme of likening Napoleon to Jupiter as he had done fourteen years earlier in his "Prometeo". Monti was disgusted that Napoleon's son should be called "Re di Roma", and he was sure that before long the fortunes of the French Emperor would change. "Costui fa cose da raffreddare un vulcano. Non vedi quel ch'ha fatto in Ispagna e con quella famiglia? Precipiterà sè e la famiglia sua, e noi quanti siamo a lui devoti. Una sola buona cosa ha fatto, l'organizzazione di questo regno: ma poi, come tratta noi Italiani?/

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\* See page 171.

\*\* See page 178.

Italiani? Si rende nemici tutti i re d'Europa, che alla fine trionferanno. E noi cadremo con lui".\* This was an extremely far-seeing view of the political developments of the next few years, and it was to Monti's credit that as Napoleon's fortunes declined he remained silent and immersed himself in non-political literature such as the translation of the "Iliad". Like so many other Italians, he was sad to see the approaching collapse of the Kingdom of Italy and hoped vaguely that things would improve.\*\* However, any expectations of this kind were short-lived for the Allied armies entered Paris on 30th March, 1814 and by 28th April the Austrians had reclaimed Milan as the rightful masters even before the Powers met to decide the distribution of the Napoleonic Empire. Italians now faced a future of harsh servitude, and lest there <sup>be</sup> ~~by~~ any doubts in their minds, the Emperor, Francis I, informed them that from henceforward they would have to forget their Italian nationality. It was also a very dangerous time for Monti although he tried to detach himself as much as possible from worrying about his own future. "Il mio destino presso il nuovo Governo è ancora pendente,/"

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\* MONTI: Lettera al Lampredi, 1811. See Cantù: "Monti e l'età che fu sua", page 96.

\*\* MONTI: Note the few lines written by Monti on 1st January, 1814, entitled "L'Anno 1813"; see page 177.

pendente, ma qualunque debba essere, vivo tranquillo".\* In this spirit of resignation he accepted the news of his dismissal as "Istoriografo del Regno d'Italia" and with it the removal of his official pension, but it is not surprising that in this troubled atmosphere, he was unable to work: "I miei studi hanno bisogno di compagnia, anzi d'aiuto: ed io son qui solo in mezzo alle vampe d'un sollione che mena al delirio; e sono già più giorni che non si può d'alcuna maniera aver capo nè allo scrivere, nè al leggere, nè al meditare".\*\*

He watched the opening sessions of the Congress of Vienna with increasing distaste and recognised the various delegates as wolves ready to snatch at their prey which in this case was a collection of oppressed nations. Monti rightly scorned this gathering and warned them that before long they would become a victim of their own intrigues:

"Come si aduna degli armenti ai danni  
Stuolo di lupi che Appennin rinsera,  
Così sull'Istro, o perfidi tiranni,  
Voi vi adunate a desolar la terra.  
Proclamando la pace i vostri inganni  
Hanno/

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\* MONTI: Letter to his son-in-law, Giulio Perticari,  
30th May, 1814.

\*\* MONTI: Letter to Giulio Perticari, 4th August, 1814.

Hanno i dritti dell'uom posti sotterra,  
Hanno di libertà tarpato i vanni.  
E questa è pace? E qual'è mai la guerra?

Ma l'un sull'altro invan si rassicura;  
Invan credete di calcar le sfere:  
È già presso a crollar l'empia impostura.

Struggitor di sò stesso è un reo potere,  
L'amistà fra i tiranni è mal sicura,  
E le fiere talor sbranan le fiere".\*

Monti's reaction to this disappointing Congress was very similar to that of Redaelli (see page 206) particularly when he asked if this was the peace for which all had been longing for so many years (line 8) when it was obvious that for Italy "peace" meant total subjection to a foreign power. In these circumstances, this sonnet in which Monti openly scorned the gathering at Vienna was a striking act of courage, and if in future years he sang the praises of his new masters\*\* instead of perhaps following Foscolo into exile, he is to be excused rather than justified. One must stop and take note of the difference between the two men before passing judgment. Foscolo was nearing the prime of his years, had no family responsibilities and by temperament was more inclined to an animated life than the/

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\* MONTI: "Il Congresso di Vienna"

\*\* MONTI: 1815 - "Il Mistico Omaggio".  
1816 - "Il Ritorno d'Astrea".

the seventy-year-old Monti who would have had to leave his family at a time when he felt infirm and in need of company. In addition, while steadfastness of character is a great virtue, the reality of daily life goes a long way towards weakening it, even in spite of the individual, particularly when in Monti's case, his life was made so trying by the difficult course of events which he witnessed during the years under discussion. Since he knew he was helpless to prevent the return of the Austrians, he merely wanted to establish a 'modus vivendi' which was as amicable as possible for, in his opinion, no benefit could be achieved for himself or indirectly for his country by open hostility.

When speaking of Napoleon and Monti, the danger lies in over-simplification - in seeing Monti either black or white. He can only be judged against a combined assessment of his poetic, political and personal background. Of his poetry, Croce said: "Nel Monti, l'immagine non manca mai. Nè io credo che egli operasse e parlasse contro coscienza, ma piuttosto che i diversi avvenimenti e le contrastanti dottrine gli accendessero a volta a volta il fuoco dell'immaginazione, ed egli rimanesse sempre fedele allo stesso partito, a quello della bella letteratura".\* His art was first of all a literary creation/

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\* CROCE: "Poesia e non poesia", page 26.

creation rather than a poetic transfiguration of life with a practical purpose or a moral, political or social message. Monti was trained to believe that art equalled beauty and as such was a means in itself. Consequently, he replaced personal feelings by the elegant use of classical and mythological references; he used hypothesis, circumlocution, fantasy and exaggeration with such artistry and skill that his poetry even seemed spontaneous at a first glance. Amid all this concentration on beauty of style and expression it is indeed difficult to find the real Monti -- but this was also his intention. "Il Monti fu poeta: qui sta la sua vocazione, la sua unità, la sua gloria, la sua scusa".\*

However, in spite of his dedication to his art he never forgot that he was first and foremost an Italian poet. This aspect of his life and art was forcibly developed by his contact with Napoleon. Indeed, the latter was responsible for Monti's adaptation of his poetry to the contemporary scene even although the results were not always ideal from either point of view. Monti dedicated his work to his literary and patriotic ideals to the best of his ability, and he would have liked to be remembered as the man who honoured Italy by means of her language. Two years before his death, he composed some lines "Pel Giorno Onomastico della mia donna Teresa Piklet", (1826) among which can/

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\* CANTÙ: "Alcuni Italiani Contemporanei", Volume I, page 166.

can be found his most suitable epitaph: with great sincerity and simplicity he was trying to warn his wife that he felt death was near, but reminded her that she would always be able to say with pride:

"Io fui l'amore  
Del cantor di Bassville,  
Del cantor che di care itale note  
Vestì l'ira d'Achille".\*

No-one could have given Monti a better-deserved testimonial or one that was more adequate. He did his best to adapt his literary ability and his Arcadian spirit of "flectar non frangar" to an era for which both were basically unsuited, but by making this effort he brought art into direct contact with life and thereby helped to ease the transition between the Arcadian era and that of the Romantics. If, at the beginning of the 19th Century one did not feel satisfied with Monti's attitude and felt that art must not only be beautiful but must also be a reflection of truth and goodness; if one felt sure of one's convictions and were prepared to suffer even exile rather than follow Monti; if one felt that this was the only course open to a sincere patriot, then one would not belong in spirit to the Age of Monti but would herald a new era. Such a figure was Foscolo.

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\* MONTI: "Pel giorno onomastico della mia donna, Teresa Pikler",  
lines 19-22.

CHAPTER FIVE: FOSCOLO'S IMAGE OF NAPOLEON.



CHAPTER FIVE.

FOSCOLO'S IMAGE OF NAPOLEON.

Although the most significant years of their lives coincided with the same period of political upheaval and unrest, Monti and Foscolo represent the two extremes to which men of letters were driven by Napoleon's intervention in Italian affairs. Monti was not the kind of person who could have become a "liber'uomo" because for him, compromise seemed the only sensible way to deal with the outside world. When he adapted this philosophy of life to his poetry, the result was often a carefully worded but impersonal comment on events. As has been said in the previous chapter, he was more interested in "art for art's sake" than in the use of art as a means of transmitting his ideals to the general public in order to enlighten them about a particular situation. This meant that his work did not follow that pattern of moral and social criticism combined with patriotic idealism which had been so firmly established by Parini and Alfieri. But then Monti was not cut out for the rôle of either teacher or prophet. He was the traditional figure of a poet who depended on the favour of a patron and consequently he was more likely to provide the kind of literary commentary on the Napoleonic era in Italy which would receive official approval. Without detracting from Monti's art one could perhaps say that he concentrated on beauty rather than truth. His work is to be considered not only as an interesting contribution in itself but as/

as a definite turning-point in the country's literary development. Furthermore, with Monti, one feels that the eighteenth century had reached a fitting conclusion.

Foscolo, on the other hand, was a complete contrast. He was very young, and although only eighteen years old in 1796, he was a confirmed follower of Alfieri, determined to be a "liber'uomo" in every possible way. While Alfieri had been content to provide the theoretical arguments in favour of liberty, Foscolo felt that the time had come to combine theory with a personal attempt to put these ideals into practice. From this moment, he assumed the rôle of a man with a mission which was literary and political at the same time. No other writer grasped as forcibly as he did Italy's urgent need to overcome her internal dissension in order to be able to reconcile the new French-inspired ideology with national independence. Yet this kind of transformation could not be produced by sudden change: it had to evolve gradually with the help of diplomacy and foresight. We know that no clearly-defined solution to such a complex problem could have been found, but although aware of this, Foscolo's youthful enthusiasm made him wildly optimistic. At this stage his idealism and sentimental heroism tended to separate him from other blind revolutionaries but this characteristic was as much a product of his background as his lack of experience.

Foscolo was born on 6th February, 1778, in Zante, an island off/

off the west coast of Greece, where his father, Andrea, who belonged to a noble Venetian family, practiced as a doctor. His mother, Diamante Spathis, was Greek, and for the first fourteen years of his life he studied the works of classical writers in this somewhat isolated Italo-Greek environment. It was only in 1792, a few years after the death of his father, that he first set foot in Italy with his mother. Venice became their second home\* and the young writer was able to broaden his cultural <sup>formation</sup> under the guidance of the classicist, Angelo Dalmistro, who in turn introduced him to Cesarotti, Ippolito Pindemonte and other important literary figures in Italy. He was firmly opposed to the Venetian government's attitude of neutrality to the French Republic and was outraged when he learned that they had refused Lallemond's offer of an alliance with France in September, 1796. The democratic party was quick to accuse the aristocracy of cowardice and greed, and Foscolo made himself the mouthpiece of this opposition by writing a sonnet\*\* after the manner of Alfieri in which he predicted that the Italian people would follow the French example and revenge themselves on their tyrants:

"O di mille tiranni, a cui rapina  
Riga/

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\* This city was a logical choice because the Ionian Islands were under the control of the Venetian government during those years.

\*\* "A Venezia" -- sonnet published in the Venetian "Anno Poetica", 1797.

Riga il soglio di sangue, imbelli terra!  
'Ve mentre civil fama ulula ed erra,  
Siede negra Politica reina;

Dimmi: che mai ti val se a te vicina  
Compra o vil pace dorme, e se ignea guerra  
A te non mai le molli trecce afferra  
Onde crollarti in nobile ruina?

Già striscia il popol tuo scarno e fremente,  
E strappa bestemmiano ad altri i panni,  
Mentre gli strappa i suoi man più potente.

Ma verrà il giorno, e gallico lo affretta  
Sublime esempio, ch'ei de'suoi tiranni  
Farà col loro scettro alta vendetta".

Foscolo must be credited with considerable perspicacity in this condemnation of neutrality. The position of the government was that it had resigned itself to the hopelessness of senility rather than attempt to grow old gracefully by keeping in line with new developments and ideas. The old aristocracy lacked both the strength and courage needed to break with the past and so made the first of a long series of errors which led almost inevitably to the final catastrophe.

It was the same hatred of tyranny which inspired Foscolo when/

when he wrote his first tragedy, "Tieste", which he dedicated to Alfieri.\* It was performed in the Teatro Sant'Angelo in January, 1797, and although even Foscolo realised it had little artistic value, it was a public affirmation of the poet's attitude of open opposition to the government and as such it was given a great reception by the audience. However, the direct result was that in April, Foscolo had to escape to the Cisalpine Republic to avoid persecution by the Venetian authorities: "Abbandonai la mia patria per viver libero: rinunziai per l'indipendenza, ch'ho sempre adorato, alla gloria, ai comodi ed ai miei genitori. Baciai le terre repubblicane con/

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\* "Al Tragico dell'Italia oso offrire la prima tragedia di un giovane nato in Grecia ed educato fra' Dalmati ..... Voi avete de'diritti su tutti coloro che scrivono agl'Italiani, benchè l'Italia "vecchia, oziosa e lenta" non può, nè vuol forse ascoltare. Nè forse ve la offrirei se non sperassi in me stesso di emendare il mio ardire con opere più sode, più ragionate, più alte; più, insomma, italiane. Addio. Niccolò Ugo Foscolo".

con la divozione del vero democratico, e mi feci campione della libertà sacrificandole tutto".\* As soon as he arrived in Bologna he joined the "Legione dei Cacciatori a Cavallo" and after a few days became a "brigadiere". However, before the end of April he found that his health was not equal to the demands of cavalry warfare: "sento per altro che il mio fisico non corrisponde al sentimento della mia anima, e che una salute spossata dalla terzana e tormentata da una ferita che m'impedisce gli uffizi del soldato, mi consigliano a lasciar con onore un impiego che non è fatto per me".\*\* He recognized that he was both physically and temperamentally unsuited to a life of military discipline and so decided to throw himself into the task of trying to instil into his fellow-countrymen an appreciation of the revolutionary armies as well as an understanding of the ideals they represented. (This coincided with the policy of the Democratic Party of which Foscolo was 'Segretario provvisorio' for a short time during 1797). "Forse potrò essere utile agli uomini con la penna non potendo essere/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera a Giuseppe Rangoni, Bologna, aprile, 1797.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit.

essere con la spada".\* Ippolito Nievo has left a very interesting assessment of the poet at this stage of his career when he was obviously full of youthful exuberance. Nievo describes Foscolo, aged nineteen years, as he appeared to contemporaries in Venice in 1797: "in fondo in fondo egli aveva una buona dose di presunzione e non so se la gloria del cantor dei "Sepolcri" abbia mai uguagliato i desideri e la speranza dell'autor di "Tieste". Allora meglio che un letterato egli era il più strano e comico esemplare di cittadino che si potesse vedere; un vero orsacchiotto repubblicano ringhioso e intrattabile; un modello di virtù civica che volentieri si sarebbe esposto all'ammirazione universale; ma ammirava sè sinceramente, come poi dispregiò gli altri, e quel gran principio dell'uguaglianza lo aveva preso sul serio; tanto che avrebbe scritto a tu per tu una lettera di consiglio all'Imperatore delle Russie, e si sarebbe stizzito che le imperiali orecchie non lo ascoltassero. Del resto sperava molto, come forse sperò sempre ad onta delle sue tirate lugubri e de'suoi periodi disperati, giacchè temperamenti uguali al suo, tanto rigoglioso di passione e di/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit.

di vita, non si rassegnano così facilmente nè all'apatia nè alla morte. Per essi la lotta è un bisogno; e senza speranza non può esservi lotta".\*

He firmly believed that Italy was about to attain liberty and independence as a combined result of the impact of the French Revolution and the intervention of General Bonaparte. He confirmed this theory at the end of April, 1797, by writing an "Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore",\*\* in which he poured forth/

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\* NIEVO: "Confessioni di un Italiano", Cap. XI.

\*\* Foscolo dedicated this Ode to the City of Reggio and prefaced the first edition with the following letter: "A voi che primi veri Italiani,<sup>e</sup> liberi cittadini vi siete mostrati e con esempio magnanimo sc<sup>u</sup>oteste l'Italia già sonnacchiosa, a voi dedico, chè a voi spetta, quest'Oda che io<sup>su</sup> libera cetra osai sciogliere al nostro liberatore. Giovane, qual mi sono<sup>io</sup> nato in Grecia, educato fra' Dalmati e balbettante da soli quattro anni in Italia, nè dovea, nè potea cantare ad uomini liberi ed italiani. Ma l'alt<sup>ro</sup> genio di libertà che m'infiamma e che mi rende Uomo, libero, e Cittadino di patria non in sorte toccata, ma eletta, mi dà i diritti dell' Italiano, e mi presta repubblicana onergia, ond'io alzato su me medesimo canto <sup>BONAPARTE</sup> Napoleone Liberatore e consacro i miei canti alla Città animatrice d'Italia".



forth all his illusions and ideals:

"Italia, Italia, con fulgenti rai  
Sull'orizzonte tuo sorge l'aurora  
Annunziatrice di perpetuo sole".\*

He hoped that the French would change Italy but by that he meant they should inspire and teach her to recover something of her former vitality and national spirit. On no account did he want Italy to become a subsidiary part of another régime. She now had the opportunity of becoming a dignified nation and he emphasised the necessity of personal courage and steadfastness as without them they would derive no real benefits from a sudden infusion of 'liberty'. Foscolo was remarkably sensitive for his years and his enthusiasm was not without reservation. He seemed aware of the fact that there was no simple solution to the country's problems and he warned Bonaparte that it would be unwise to disturb the country by invasion unless he regarded it as the most expedient way of introducing the ideals of the French Revolution to Italy:

"Deh, mira come flagellata a terra  
Italia serva immobilmente giace,  
'Per disperazione fatta sicura'!  
Or perchè turbi sua dolente pace,  
E furor pazzo e improvvida paura  
Le/

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\* FOSCOLO: Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore, VIII, 1-3.

Le movi intorno di rapace guerra?  
Piaghe immense rinserra  
Nel cor profondo: a che piagar suo petto,  
Forse d'invidia oggetto  
Per chi suo gemer da lontan non sente"?\*

Although this Ode is generally considered the best of Foscolo's youthful poetry, it is at times a rather confused composition, rhetorical and forced rather than spontaneous, although undoubtedly sincere. Nevertheless, it is important because it testifies to the poet's initial reaction to Bonaparte which was one of unconditional admiration for the young victorious general who seemed to be in the process of eradicating Italy's most serious problems: not only would he destroy the power of the Hapsburgs but he would also put an end to all political and clerical tyranny. Such a person could not be other than the herald of liberty and of Italy's new destiny provided the people co-operated in the right way:

"Ve' ricomporsi i tuoi vulghi divisi  
nel gran Popol che fea  
prostrare i re col senno e col valore,  
poi l'universo col suo fren reggea";\*\*

Apart from this clear statement of his political theory,  
Foscolo/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., V, 1-10.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., VI, 11-14.

Foscolo also showed in this early work an awareness of the fact that political reforms were of little value if not combined with social, religious and economic renewal. He was careful to point out that Bonaparte would be particularly blessed by Italians because he planned for the economic prosperity of the masses:

"I desolati lai  
non odi più di vedove dolenti,  
non orfani innocenti  
che gridan 'pane' ove non è chi 'l rompa".\*

The country people would also bless him because they would appreciate their newly-acquired equality of rights as citizens,

"E come benedice  
il cittadin villano  
tergendo il fronte, Libertà felice"! \*\*

This Ode contains the first expression of many of the political and social theories which Foscolo defined more clearly in his subsequent writings and it is important to note this early record when tracing their development.

Events in Venice suddenly changed Foscolo's plan to deliver personally the first copies of his Ode to Reggio: Bonaparte took advantage of a revolt against the French (Pasque Veronesi, aprile, 1797) to force the Venetian Republic to change its form/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., VIII, 7-10.  
\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., VIII, 20-22.

form of government and give control to a democratic provisional government nominated by Bonaparte. This imposition was accepted unwillingly by the authorities on 12th May and Foscolo hurried back to Venice, eager to join the enthusiastic crowds who ingenuously welcomed the French and planted the Tree of Liberty. He was immediately appointed 'segretario particolare' in the new government and worked with great devotion in the hope of renewing the old state and protecting it from the extravagances of demagogues (while keeping in mind the possibility of external dangers). His state of mind at this period is expressed in his Ode "Ai Novelli Repubblicani" in which he solemnly declared that he would prefer death rather than sacrifice liberty, and would fight "contro il furore della licenza prima motrice della tirannia".\* Although this poem was dedicated to his brother who had enrolled in Bonaparte's army, the message was meant to inspire all young people to feel that death was the only alternative to liberty. It was at this time that Foscolo first began to have doubts about Bonaparte's intentions, and the fact that the General is not mentioned once in this Ode would suggest that the poet had begun to lose some of his faith in him. In addition, it would be unrealistic to suppose that Foscolo could still have remained/

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\* FOSCOLO: Dedicà dell'Oda: "Ai Novelli Repubblicani", 1797.

remained ignorant of the likelihood of the cession of Venice to Austria although naturally, he would have wanted to avoid such disillusionment until the last possible moment.

The whole question of Venice is so central to Foscolo's relationship with Bonaparte that it is necessary to keep the facts of the situation constantly in mind if one is to attempt to remain an impartial observer and see accusations and counter-accusations in perspective.\* Bonaparte's Italian Campaign was directed primarily against Austria and his plan of attack was based on a threefold advance on Vienna. Jourdan, in command of the army which had lately won distinction in the Netherlands, was to advance by the valley of the Main; Moreau by the Danube; Bonaparte himself was to attack in North Italy and to take the Austrians in the flank. Although a brilliant plan, it presupposed a degree of co-operation between three armies too widely separated to make it a practical proposition. Both Jourdan and Moreau had to retreat before the victorious Archduke, Charles, and by contrast, Bonaparte's great success in North Italy was all the more splendid. By April, 1797, he had completely destroyed all Austrian power in Italy, crossed the Isonzo into Austrian territory, and obtained from the Archduke the preliminary arrangements/

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\* There is a very interesting objective account of this period in Maurice Rowdon's recent book, "The Fall of Venice", 1970, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson).

arrangements for the Treaty of Leoben. By this treaty, Belgium was to be given to France, the Emperor agreed to surrender his possessions on the Left Bank of the Rhine and recognise the Rhine as the frontier of the French Republic. Such an advantageous peace seemed almost too good to be true, but in fact, there was also a secret clause which promised that Austria would be compensated for the loss of Lombardy (west of the Oglio) by the possession of Venice, with its territories on the mainland of Italy (east of the Oglio) and in the Adriatic.

From Bonaparte's point of view, the situation was both difficult and complex. Time was against him and he was most anxious to achieve fame as the Revolutionary General who made peace with Austria. Besides this, he knew that his army lacked food and reinforcements and could neither stay where it was nor march on Vienna with any hope of success. Thus, for both personal and official reasons he had to choose between certain defeat if he continued the fight against a reinforced Austrian army and limited victory if he could negotiate a treaty which would satisfy Austria. The wealth and weakness of the Venetian Republic made it an ideal object for victimization but there was one technical detail which neither Bonaparte nor Austria dared to/

to overlook: this decadent, defenceless oligarchy was neutral territory. It is impossible to doubt that Bonaparte's own feelings towards the Venetian government were inspired by strong personal animosity and he regarded it as both effete and tyrannical: "Venise, qui va en décadence depuis la découverte du cap de Bonne-Espérance et la naissance de Trieste et d'Ancône, peut difficilement survivre aux coups que nous venons de lui porter. Population inepte, lâche et nullement faite pour la liberté; sans torres, sans eaux".\*

While Austria hesitated to accept Venice lest it should provoke international reaction, two incidents occurred which gave Bonaparte the pretext for occupying Venice and the mainland in the name of France. (These incidents were the "Pasque Veronesi" in which several hundred French troops were killed, and the firing on a French ship by the Venetians). Resistance on the part of the ruling oligarchy was useless, and matters were further complicated by the existence of a considerable group of native malcontents who were only too ready to turn against the government. The terms of surrender to the French were relatively moderate because Bonaparte wanted to keep the territory calm until it could be used in the final terms/

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\* Napoléon Bonaparte: Lettre au Directoire, Nombello, 27 mai, 1797. (Collection Impériale, 1836).

terms of peace with Austria. His instructions to the local commanders in Venice were quite explicit: "Je désire .....  
.... qu'en général on se conduise envers les Vénitiens avec générosité, et qu'on ne nous fasse pas hair par eux comme on a fait à Ancône et ailleurs".\* The embarrassment of being the representative of the Rights of Man and at the same time disregarding the basic right of a neutral state's liberty was now technically overcome: Venice had shown herself hostile to France and had been defeated, therefore the victors were free to dispose of the territory as they wished. In the meantime, a pretence was made of reorganising the new Venetian Republic on liberal lines: a Tree of Liberty was planted in front of St. Mark's, a copy of the Rights of Man was placed under the paw of the Venetian lion, and a Democratic Constitution was planned by Bonaparte at Passeriano and sent to Venice. This was only a hypocritical façade but it encouraged the Venetians to believe that the French were acting from philanthropic motives.

Bonaparte was also influenced at this period by the serious unrest in the Directory in Paris which made it all the more vital for him to make a name for himself as a victorious leader. It must also be remembered that this lack of decisive leadership from/

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\* Napoléon Bonaparte: Lettre au citoyen Hallen, Nombello, 21 mai, 1797. (Collection Impériale, 1817).



from Paris had meant that he had to rely on his own resources during 1797 and could not turn to the Directory for help at any crucial moment. However, for the most part, this state of affairs suited Bonaparte and in August, 1797 he sent General Augereau to Paris in answer to a request for help from the Directory. It was with his help that the coup d'état of 18 Fructidor (4th September, 1797) was effected. Thus, the new Directory established its control thanks to its alliance with the army, and after such a service it was unlikely that the Paris Government would be able to press effectively any doubts they had about Bonaparte's policy of peace with Austria. On the other hand, as far as the Austrians were concerned, the news of Fructidor and the breaking off of Anglo-French peace negotiations (19th September) convinced them that there was no hope of waiting for better terms. Consequently, negotiations were concluded at Campoformio on 17th October, 1797, six months after the preliminary agreements at Leoben. From Passeriano on 10th October, 1797, Bonaparte sent the Directory the following clear statement of his reasons for signing this treaty:

"..... J'ai profité des pouvoirs que vous m'avez donnés et de la confiance dont vous m'avez revêtu, pour conclure ladite paix. J'y ai été conduit:

1) Par/

- 1) Par la saison avancée, contraire à la guerre offensive, surtout de ce côté-ci, où il faut repasser les Alpes et entrer dans des pays très froids.
- 2) La faiblesse de mon armée, qui cependant a toutes les forces de l'Empereur contre elle.
- 3) La mort de Hoche, et le mauvais plan d'opérations adopté.
- 4) L'éloignement des armées du Rhin des Etats héréditaires de la Maison d'Autriche.
- 5) La nullité des Italiens; je n'ai avec moi, au plus, que quinze cents Italiens, qui sont le ramassis des polissons dans les grandes villes.
- 6) La rupture qui vient d'éclater avec l'Angleterre.
- 7) L'impossibilité où je me trouve, par la non-ratification du traité d'alliance avec le roi de Sardaigne, de me servir des troupes sardes, et la nécessité d'augmenter de six mille hommes de troupes françaises les garnisons du Piémont et de la Lombardie.
- 8) L'envie de la paix qu'a toute la République, envie qui se manifeste même dans les soldats, qui se battraient, mais qui verront avec plus de plaisir encore leurs foyers dont ils sont absents depuis des années, et dont l'éloignement ne serait bon que pour établir le gouvernement militaire.
- 9) L'inconvenance d'exposer des avantages certains et le sang français pour des peuples peu dignes et peu amants de la liberté, qui, par caractère, habitude et religion, nous haïssent profondément".\*

If/

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\* Napoléon Bonaparte: Lettre au Directoire, Passeriano, 10 octobre, 1797. (Collection Impériale, 2296).

If one accepts the fact that in war, the most important consideration for a General is to win, then one must also accept that sometimes conventional moral standards have to be overlooked. Having conceded this first step, Bonaparte was able to find many other sensible reasons for his conduct and when criticised in Paris, he had no difficulty in justifying his actions on both technical and idealistic grounds; "La République française n'est liée avec la municipalité de Venise par aucun traité qui nous oblige à sacrifier nos intérêts et nos avantages à celui du Comité de Salut public ou de tout autre individu de Venise ..... Je sais bien qu'il n'en coûte rien à une poignée de bavards, (i.e. the Ministers in Paris) que je caractériserais bien en les appelant fous, de vouloir la République universelle. Je voudrais que ces messieurs vinssent faire une campagne d'hiver. D'ailleurs la nation vénitienne n'existe pas: divisé en autant d'intérêts qu'il y a de villes, efféminé et corrompu, aussi lâche qu'hypocrite, le peuple d'Italie, et spécialement le peuple vénitien, est peu fait pour la liberté. S'il était dans le cas de l'apprécier, et s'il a les vertus nécessaires pour l'acquérir, eh bien, la circonstance actuelle lui est très avantageuse pour le prouver: qu'il la défende! Il n'a pas eu le courage de la conquérir même contre quelques misérables oligarques .....

Au/

Au reste, la République française ne peut pas donner, comme on paraît le croire, les Etats vénitiens; ce n'est pas que, dans la réalité, ces Etats n'appartiennent à la France par droit de conquête, mais c'est qu'il n'est pas dans les principes du Gouvernement français de donner aucun peuple".\*

But this explanation did not in any way soothe the feelings of patriotic Venetians, particularly men like Foscolo for whom the Treaty of Campoformio meant the complete disintegration of their idealist world. For Foscolo, the treaty had only one meaning: a betrayal of trust and the exchange of people like market produce. All his fierce anger was directed at Bonaparte, the man whom he held directly responsible. So great was his feeling of dismay, that the treaty became not only a turning-point in the life of this nineteen-year old poet but also the yardstick by which he measured all Bonaparte's subsequent actions.

Together with many leading liberals, Foscolo left Venice for the comparative safety of Milan and in a moving letter to Containi Costabili, one of the members of the Cisalpine Directory, he immediately offered his services to the Cisalpine Government: "Poichè gl'interessi delle grandi nazioni han destinato Venezia alla schiavitù, quei Veneti repubblicani/

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\* Napoléon Bonaparte: Lettre au citoyen Villetard, Trévise, 26 octobre, 1797, (Collection Impériale, 2318).

repubblicani che in faccia alla loro nazione giurarono libertà deono cercare un'altra patria più degna dell'uomo libero. Generosa, la repubblica Cisalpina costituisce cittadini attivi tutti quei Veneti che, per fuggire il servaggio, ricorrono nel suo seno. Io mi son uno di questi: voi mi conoscete nemico della tirannide anche prima della veneta rivoluzione; dopo la quale io sono stato, fino al dì della mia emigrazione, Segretario del governo provvisorio della mia patria. Io scelgo per patria la Cisalpina, e le tributo in omaggio i miei pochi talenti e il mio braccio".\* Foscolo became a journalist and was co-editor of the political "Monitore Italiano" with Custodi and Gioia. His life in Milan now gave him the opportunity of meeting many famous people, particularly men of letters, the most notable of whom were Paradisi, Parini and Monti. Parini made the greatest impression on him as the representative of dignity and wisdom. Despite the difference in age, he felt a strong affinity with this older man who taught him his first lesson in the art of quiet opposition to a distasteful régime which he was powerless to alter. At this particularly difficult moment in Foscolo's life, such a friendship was invaluable because in spite of his recent political disillusionment, Foscolo was still a Republican and a moderate Jacobin/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera al cittadino Containi Costabili, Milano,  
20 novembre, 1797.

Giacobin and this made him just as opposed to any excesses of democracy on the part of Italians as he was to any attempt to inflict on them French military oppression. Consequently, his position in Milan was a very delicate one which demanded considerable tact and patience. Foscolo's description of one of his conversations with Parini best illustrates his own frame of mind and the degree to which his youthful fury was assuaged by the voice of common sense and experience: "Mi parlò a lungo della sua patria, e fremeva per le antiche tirannidi e per la nuova licenza. Le lettere prostitute; tutte le passioni languenti e degenerate in una indolente vilissima corruzione; non più la sacra ospitalità, non la benevolenza, non più l'amore filiale; - e poi mi tesseva gli annali recenti, e i delitti di tanti omiciattoli ch'io degnerei di nominare se le loro scelleraggini mostrassero il vigore d'animo, non dirò di Silla e di Catilina, ma di quegli animosi masnadieri che affrontano il misfatto quantunque e' si vedano presso il patibolo - ma ladroncelli, tremanti, saccenti - più onesto insomma tacerne. A quelle parole io m'infiammava di un sovrumano furore e sorgeva gridando: "Ché non si tenta? Morremo? Ma frutterà dal nostro sangue il vendicatore". Egli mi guardò attonito: gli occhi miei in quel dubbio chiarore scintillavano spaventosi, e il mio dimesso e pallido aspetto si rialzò con aria minaccevole - io/

io taceva, ma si sentiva ancora un fremito rumoreggiare cupamente dentro il mio petto. E ripresi: "Non avremo salute mai? ah se gli uomini si conducessero sempre al fianco la morte, non servirebbero sì vilmente". Il Parini non aprì bocca; ma stringendomi il braccio, mi guardava ogni ora più fisso. Poi mi trasse, come accennandomi perché io tornassi a sedermi. "E pensi tu", proruppe, "che s'io discernessi un barlume di libertà, mi perderei, ad onta della mia inferma vecchiaia, in questi vani lamenti? o giovine degno di patria più grata! - Se non puoi spegnere quel tuo ardore fatale, ché non lo volgi ad altre passioni?" Allora io guardai nel passato - allora mi voltava avidamente al futuro; ma io errava sempre nel vano, e le mie braccia tornavano deluse senza pur mai stringere nulla, e conobbi tutta tutta la disperazione del mio stato".\*

Two other incidents serve to complete this picture of Foscolo during his early days in Milan. In April, 1798, he rushed to defend Monti from the literary and political critics by testifying to the latter's sincere patriotism: "Italiano si mostrò sempre/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis", Lettera del 4 dicembre, 1798.

sempre ed amatore della sua patria e propugnatore della di lei verace libertà".\* Foscolo had been greatly infatuated by Monti's wife, Teresa Pikler - a fact which would in part explain this impetuous gesture but it also shows something of his generous nature which disregarded practicalities, lacked a precise awareness of reality and was therefore more likely to meet with disillusionment both in public and private life. The other incident is significant because it shows how much he stressed the importance of heritage and tradition at a time when young people were all too ready to want to think only of the present and the future. His sonnet, "All'Italia",\*\* which/

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\* FOSCOLO: L'Esame su l'accuse contro Vincenzo Monti.  
(Opere, V, page 19). See also page 243.

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"Te nudrice alle Muse, ospite e Dea,  
Le barbariche genti che ti han doma  
Nomavan tutte; e questo a noi pur fea  
Lieve la varia, antiqua, infame soma.  
  
Ché se i tuoi vizi, e gli anni, e sorte rea  
Ti han morto il senno ed il valor di Roma,  
In te viveva il gran dir, che avvolgea  
Regali allori alla servil tua chioma.  
  
Or ardi, Italia, al tuo Genio ancor queste  
Reliquie estreme di cotanto impero;  
Anzi il toscano tuo parlar celeste  
  
Ognor più stempria nel sormon straniero,  
Onde, più che di tua divisa veste,  
Sia il vincitor di tua barbarie altero".



which he wrote in 1798 "per la sentenza capitale proposta nel Gran Consiglio Cisalpina contro la lingua latina" stresses the grandeur of the Latin tongue and the fact that it was the one living link with their country's past glory. By emphasising the historical value of the language he was also trying to indicate that Italy's independence could not just result from new ideas produced at the end of the eighteenth century but must be firmly based on the particular culture and ideas they had inherited from ancient Italy. "Non è piccolo merito del Foscolo l'avere, fin dal 1798, annodata la civiltà latina coll'italiana cominciando fin d'allora a dare alla questione dell'indipendenza il carattere storico idealistico che mantenne sempre".\*

As far as Foscolo himself was concerned, this was the crucial period when every literary contribution he made was important in the sense that it brought him new experience and enabled him to develop his own ideas and construct theories about Italy's future. From this period, his ideas never changed fundamentally - they merely evolved and, in some cases, became more extreme as his mood became more pessimistic. However, by the end of 1798, Foscolo showed that the formative years of his life were completed when he produced/

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\* F. MOMIGLIANO: Il Nazionalismo di Ugo Foscolo, page 210.

produced "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis". His outlook was profoundly melancholic; the hero (in whom it is easy to recognise the author) feels defeated and is unable to cope with life. "Jacopo è tutt'insieme un italiano, un filosofo, un innamorato; e una qualità dà colore all'altra. L'Ortis narve, e fu, la più magnanima affermazione d'italianità, in un momento in cui l'Italia stava per essere assorbito dal prepotere francese".\* This book contains all the elements one would expect after knowing something of the author's personality and background: not only does he emphasise the value of the past (thus foreshadowing "Dei Sepolcri") but he embodies it in those feelings of resistance to French power as well as that sense of disappointment, bitterness and despair which then characterised "il partito italiano". When the initial enthusiasm for the French armies began to wear off and when the people became accustomed to the new laws and proclamations, they began to have second thoughts about their liberators and were inclined to look back with nostalgia on the past which the new régime seemed determined to destroy. To Foscolo, the Treaty of Campoformio was a perfect example of this lack of consideration for the past because it failed to respect the heritage of an ancient Republic, now weak and in/

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\* E. DONADONI: "Ugo Foscolo - pensatore, critico, poeta".  
page, 518.

in decline; and furthermore, on the personal level, it was the cause of his becoming a displaced person on Italian soil. Thus for him, the Treaty had assumed a position of much greater significance than it would otherwise have merited, and it led him to look on France and its democratic régime with a feeling which closely resembled Alfierian scorn. His intense aversion to the new overlords of Italy runs through the whole of "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis" and constitutes the most vivid part of the book. Fundamentally, Jacopo is "un bandito" and his correspondence contains a very obvious indictment of Bonaparte and the French.\* All the aura of glamour which surrounded the young French General is removed and Foscolo reveals him in his true light as a cruel, hypocritical tyrant. He compares Bonaparte to ancient rulers like Nadir Shah and Selim I, both of whom slaughtered almost thirty-thousand men, but concludes with almost neurotic insistence that although they committed greater atrocities, they had not been hypocrites and were therefore less contemptible. Jacopo Ortis (or Foscolo) was at a complete loss when he realised that the new Constitution sent by Bonaparte from Passeriano to Venice for ratification, was merely a gesture to blind the people to the true facts of the situation because "il trattato di Campoformio era già da più/

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\* Foscolo's anti-Napoleonic sentiments were so strong that even the French translation of the book was banned.

più giorni firmato e Venezia era trafficata; e la fiducia che l'Eroe nutriva in noi tutti ha riempito l'Italia di proscrizioni, d'emigrazioni, e d'esili".\* It was his fervent love for Italy which made him abhor this Treaty with such intensity but although he did not realise it himself, the episode had helped to develop his own theories about how Italy was to achieve independence. He now had first-hand experience to disprove the idea that "la libertà si possa comperare a denaro" and he did his best to explain this to his fellow-countrymen using Jacopo Ortis as his mouthpiece.

In 1798, there were still many ingenuous patriots who believed that the French armies were inspired by philanthropic motives and that foreign soldiers were willing to leave their homes and risk death in order to liberate Italy.\*\* Foscolo wanted to shatter/

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\* FOSCOLO: Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis, Lettera del 17 marzo, 1798.

It seems almost certain that this letter, dated 17 marzo, 1798, was not written until 1816 when Foscolo was in exile in Switzerland although he wished to give the impression that it had been included in the original edition published at the end of 1798. If this later date is the correct one, it proves the continuity of Foscolo's thought with regard to those years. His opinions were merely confirmed and hardened by subsequent events.

\*\* It took many years and much suffering before Italians fully appreciated this simple truth. See Manzoni, "Adelchi" - Act III, Chorus, "Dagli atrii muscosi, dai fori cadenti ..." in which Manzoni calls the Italian people "un volgo disperso che nome non ha". (1822).

shatter the sentimental idea that because of Bonaparte's Italian blood he was different from other conquerors and could therefore be expected to have genuine sympathy for Italy. In Foscolo's opinion, this fact was irrelevant: "Che importa ch'abbia il vigore e il fremito del leone, se ha la mente volpina, e se ne compiace"?\* A person like Bonaparte would never help Italy: "la natura lo ha creato tiranno: e il tiranno non guarda a patria; e non l'ha".\*\* This was the greatest formal condemnation of Napoleon in Italian literature, and indeed, the sentiments expressed could not have been stronger, whatever the language.

But the personal contribution of Jacopo Ortis was quite negative: his melancholic philosophy, sentimentalism and patriotism only lead him to suicide. From the first lines of the book, he appears as one who has been defeated rather than a rebel: "Il sacrificio della patria nostra è consummato: tutto è perduto; e la vita, seppure ne verrà concessa, non ci resterà che per piangere le nostre sciagure e la nostra infamia".\*\*\* And/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis",  
Lettera del 17 marzo, 1798.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit.

\*\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit. Lettera del XI ottobre, 1797.

And he was quite happy to look down from the Euganean Hills on his "sciagurato paese" as one who stood apart from the crowd, too absorbed in the abstract concept of liberty which he had found in classical writers to make a positive attempt to understand the present. His idea was that "solo chi sa morire, è degno di vivere".\* However, Jacopo Ortis inspired many young Italian patriots: some were so carried away that they followed his example in every detail, but others modelled themselves on the author and looked around to see how they could continue the fight for Italian independence, regardless of personal loss or sacrifice. "Innumerevoli furono coloro che in quel potente libro attinsero la fiera passione che li condusse a disprezzare per la patria la felicità e la vita".\*\* Mazzini looked on this work as a second Bible and knew it all by heart, and in succeeding decades, men were glad to believe Foscolo's assurance that Italy would regain some of her former glory and position: "il gener umano d'oggi ha le frenesie e la debolezza della decrepitezza; ma l'umano genere, appunto quand'è prossimo a morte, rinasce vigorosissimo".\*\*\*

Even/

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\* E. DONADONI: Op.cit. page 535.

\*\* C. CATTAREO: "Ugo Foscolo e l'Italia", page 289.

\*\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit. Lettera del 4 dicembre, 1798.

Even more impressive was his daring assertion of the power of the press: "Se avete le braccia in catene, perchè inceppate da voi stessi anche il vostro intelletto, di cui né i tiranni, né la fortuna, arbitri d'ogni cosa, possono essere arbitri mai?.....  
... L'umana viltà vi mostra terrori e pericoli; ma voi siete forse immortali? Fra l'avvilimento delle carceri e dei supplizii v'innalzerete sovra il potente, e il suo furore contro di voi accrescerà il suo vituperio e la vostra fama".\* Foscolo did his best to practice what he preached and felt it was his moral duty never to allow fear of punishment to prevent him from saying and writing what he believed to be the truth.

News of the Austro-Russian invasion early in 1799 (when Bonaparte was in Egypt) made him leave his novel unfinished and rush to the defence of his country. From the records available, Foscolo seems to have been a fairly good soldier and he distinguished himself several times in battle, particularly at Cento and Genoa. He is to be remembered in the same way as Byron and Santarosa, as the predecessor of Nievo, Mameli and Abba: the kind of person whose very presence among the other soldiers was a privileged experience for them.

This was a very anxious year for Italy, caught between French overlordship and Austrian invasion, but even from this weak position/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit. Lettera del 4 dicembre, 1798.

position Foscolo did his best to point out to the French the advantage to be gained by them from the creation of a strong Italian state: "La Francia non può sperare salute senza l'Italia; e voi quindi siete nella necessità di vincere o di perire ..... Ma per vincere avete bisogno degli Italiani, e per aver pronto, fermo, leale il loro aiuto, conviene dichiarare la indipendenza d'Italia".\* In a general way his idea was a good one but when he began to plan the re-organisation of the state in more detail he showed that his ideal was an absolute ruler yet at the same time he wanted to have a constitution which would ensure equality of wealth and opportunity for all - a rather unrealistic suggestion but excusable when produced by a twenty-one year old idealistic patriot.

The return of Bonaparte from Egypt and the coup d'état of 18 Brumaire (9 novembre, 1799) gave Foscolo renewed hope of a solution to his country's problems and explains why he prefaced the second edition of his "Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore" with a letter of dedication to the new ruler of France. He admitted that Italy's defeat of Austria was due to internal weakness but went on to say that it was now the duty of Bonaparte to defend them and re-establish their liberty - if only to make amends for the Treaty of Campoformio.\*\* Foscolo had no qualms about accepting/

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\* FOSCOLO: Discorso su l'Italia al Generale Championnet, 9 ottobre, 1799.

\*\* "... per fare che i secoli tacciano di quel trattato che trafficò la mia patria, insospetti le nazioni e scendè dignità al tuo nome". Foscolo - Seconda Dedicà dell'Oda a Bonaparte. See also page 45.



accepting a temporary dictatorship - "è vero (purtroppo!) che il fondatore di una repubblica deve essere un despota".\* but at the same time, he offered some sensible advice to this General who was on the threshold of becoming a dictator (this dedication was written just a few days after the coup d'état of 18 Brumaire): he must beware of excessive ambition and remember that even Caesar did not aim at world domination before he had crossed the Rubicon. He also pointed out that large-scale revolutions always aroused fierce passions which were, to a large extent, the product of men of outstanding mental ability whom the ruler must be able to recognise. If he followed this advice, Bonaparte could be certain to achieve supreme power and immortality.

These words of warning were not without a veiled threat to Bonaparte and, in fact, this Letter of Dedication is to be seen as a prelude to the much longer "Orazione a Bonaparte pei Comizi di Lione" which Foscolo was induced to write almost two years later. By January 1802, Foscolo had gained quite a considerable range of experience and understanding of his country's problems at different levels, and the honesty and sincerity with which he studied what he found were sufficient to ensure the production of a very important report. He was always ready to grasp any opportunity/

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\* FOSCOLO: Seconda Dedicà dell'Oda a Bonaparte. (novembre, 1799).

opportunity to publicize his feelings about his country and consequently, when Ruggia and Sommariva, two members of the Cisalpine Republic, forced him to write the official speech of welcome to Napoleon at the Congress of Lyons, he agreed and wrote with such frankness that the speech could not be read in public. Foscolo had been very clever: as expected, he praised Bonaparte, but he did it in such a way as to expose the government which had so weakened the Cisalpine Republic. He denounced the social climbers and the greed and corruption of those "incliti e sublimi ladri" (men like Ruggia and Sommariva who had commissioned the speech) and asked Napoleon to end their misrule and reform the laws, army and society in general. His attitude was not one of adulation but of resigned acceptance of "l'uomo fatale" whom Italy had to endure because he alone had the strength to cure her of corruption. "Tu alto, solo, immortale dominerai l'eternità, pari agli altri grandi nelle gesta e nei meriti, ma niuno comparabile nella impresa di fondare nazioni".\* This was a true statement of Foscolo's hopes at that time when it seemed that Napoleon was going to found an all-Italian state and he went on courageously: "Ma tanto titolo al cospetto dell'Europa e delle universe genti future tornerà a sanguinosissima ingiuria, ove/

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\* FOSCOLO: Orazione pei Comizi di Lione.

ove questa repubblica, quantunque figlia del tuo valore e del tuo senno, continui a rimanere ludibrio di ladri proconsoli, di petulanti cittadini e di pallidi magistrati".\* Although Foscolo was never admonished for producing such a document, it did not endear him to the authorities by whom he was irrevocably branded as a revolutionary. He was tolerated because he was a well-known writer and as such it was in the interests of the government to maintain apparently friendly relations with him. Foscolo's 'republican fervour' soon faded as he saw the Italian Republic becoming a military dictatorship only nominally ruled by Italians. The fundamental antithesis between himself and Napoleon gradually increased and Foscolo refused to give up the fight. His friendship with Melzi and some of the most powerful Italian ministers protected him for some time from official censure but by now he was considered as a danger to the régime and a trouble-maker, yet one whom it was better to humour than inhibit because of his widespread public support. This was exactly how Foscolo was treated by men like the Viceroy, Eugène de Beauharnais.

The years following 1802 were monotonous and rather frustrating for Foscolo: he hoped in vain for some important military or diplomatic position either in France or Italy but only in the study of/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit.

of literature was he able to find satisfaction. However, this long period of enforced seclusion from the public was not lost in spiritual inertia; instead it was filled with research and preparation - an essential prelude to a phase of intense literary creativity. Foscolo was now even more anxious to help Italians to realise their present position, to help them develop a conscience as citizens and prepare for the day when their country would be a nation. But how could he convey such sentiments when they would obviously offend the French overlords?

By the end of 1806, Napoleon was at the height of his power, having been so recently successful at Ulm, Austerlitz and Jena, and therefore criticism of him had to be very subtle. Foscolo was one of the few writers able to produce such criticism and at the same time convey a message which was profoundly patriotic. His Ode, "Dei Sepolcri" is one of the finest examples of this kind of literature: it was directed to the minds and hearts of all Italians, and the extent of its appeal was incalculable. Foscolo's vision of Italy encompassed much more than the Napoleonic period and consequently, he did not try to comment on the contemporary scene as if it were a unit in itself. Instead, by turning for inspiration to the past, to tradition, which could never be destroyed or forgotten and whose influence on the present could/

could not be undervalued, Foscolo hoped to point out the importance of looking for continuity in history. Italians must see the present foreign invasion in its true perspective which meant seeing it within the framework of the country's past. Foscolo exposed the antithesis between past and present and showed that Italy was not to be discouraged by the presence of foreign armies nor should she feel that her only hope of salvation lay in foreign help. She must realise that the influence of the past was still strong enough to overcome the present and ensure that Italy would rise again. It was only with such an attitude of mind that Italians could find hope. This is the positive meaning of the poem and its message of hope would have been unthinkable to someone like Jacopo Ortis. Here Foscolo shows his deepest feelings of "italianità". He asked that Italians must be inspired by the memory of a man like Hector, the bravest of the Trojan Chiefs, who fought against the Greeks until he was killed by Achilles. Men of all ages who are ready to sacrifice themselves for their country can expect lasting recognition of the same type as was given to Hector:

"E tu onore di pianti, Ettore, avrai  
ove fia santo e lagrimato il sangue  
per la patria versato, e finché il Sole  
risplenderà su le sciagure umane".\*

Foscolo/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Dei Sepolcri", lines 292-295.

dislike of the French leader, is obvious through-out this poem, although always in an indirect way.\* Foscolo's silence is often far more eloquent than words. He described the world of society in Napoleonic Italy in terms very reminiscent of Parini:

"Già il dotto o il ricco ed il patrizio vulgo,  
decoro e mente al bello Italo regno,  
nelle adulate roggie ha sepoltura  
già vivo, o i stemmi unica laudo".\*\*

These were the people who from cowardice had accepted the Constitution planned in Lyons in 1802; consequently, they had been forced to choose flattery as a mean of self-preservation and support against fear. This "patrizio vulgo" feared for its life but it did not realise that already it was spiritually dead and could only find consolation in the silent fame of its family crests instead of the more worthwhile praise due to brave deeds and acts of personal courage -- the only praise which would ensure recognition beyond the grave or "lasting life" in Foscolo's eyes

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\* Ostensibly, the poem was written in response to the Edict of S. Cloud, 1804 (in operation in Italy, 1806) which forbade burial in churches and within city walls. Instead, there were to be suburban cemeteries with common graves and no tombstones -- in accordance with the principle of equality. Foscolo was particularly sad because Parini, who died in 1799, was buried in an unmarked grave in the Porta Comasina cemetery in Milan. (See "Dei Sepolcri", lines 51 seq).

\*\* FOSCOLO: "Dei Sepolcri", lines 142-145.

The poet himself was not lacking in this kind of personal courage. These were the years of Napoleon's greatest victories but his arch-enemy was still England. Thus, anyone who dared to speak other than abusively of England was immediately labelled anti-French. Foscolo did more than that: he reminded his readers that as well as Austerlitz and Jena they must not forget the battles of Aboukir Bay (1798) and Trafalgar (1805) where Napoleon's fleet was destroyed by Admiral Nelson, "il prode",

"che tronca fe' la trionfata nave  
del maggior pino, e si scavò la bara".\*

"Dei Sepolcri" is at times a hymn of exaltation and at other times it is a lament for Italy. Foscolo has suggested that others may find hope through the influence of the past, but his own personal conclusion was more pessimistic. He found himself unable to praise any living person in his poem - even Parini and Alfieri were now dead - and one senses that Foscolo felt very much alone, at home with the dead rather than the living, a stranger in his own country, an admirer of England, of her freedom and liberty, and above all, an admirer of the past./

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\* FOSCOLO: "Dei Sepolcri", lines 135-136.

"la trionfata nave" refers to the "Oriente", the finest ship captured from the French at Aboukir Bay (10th August, 1798). Nelson was said to have carried a hollowed-out section of its mast as his coffin. It was used for this purpose after the Battle of Trafalgar (21st October, 1805).

past. Foscolo is no longer the figure of the disillusioned trembling adolescent as exemplified in "Jacopo Ortis"; he is now a mature person, but in a very natural, primaeval way. He now feels acutely aware of "l'alterna onnipotenza delle umane sorti"\* in a much more sensitive way than Jacopo Ortis. This is a fundamental concept in Foscolo's thought with which he became so preoccupied that in the last analysis it dispelled all his hopes in the re-birth of Italy. This progression of sentiment can be traced in "Dei Sepolcri" - from the description of Italy's grandeur in S. Croce, he moves to a picture of the battle of Marathon; we notice that his righteous anger gives way to tears and the mood of epic pride becomes elegiac lament, first of all through the mouthpiece of Electra and Cassandra who predicted the fall of Troy, and finally through the voice of Homer. In Foscolo's mind, the fall of Troy is to be interpreted as Italy's fatal servitude: for him, the Greek world has become the Italian world of the nineteenth century.

It was after the publication of "Dei Sepolcri" that Foscolo's own personal situation seemed to improve, if only for a short time. In 1808, he was given the Chair of "Eloquenza" at the University of Pavia - a post which gave him an ideal opportunity to prove that he would never become the servile tool of any régime./

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\* FOSCOLO: "Dei Sepolcri", lines 182-183.



régime. His opening lectures were awaited with widespread interest. Would he take this opportunity to state openly his dislike of Napoleon and show his determination to remain independent as a writer? The custom was to make one's first lecture a panegyric to the Emperor but as one would expect, Foscolo refused to do this and he would not even listen to Monti's persuasions that he should add some words in praise of Napoleon at least in the published version.\* Instead, Foscolo saw this as an ideal opportunity of continuing this lofty mission of educating the nation. Consequently, it comes as no surprise to learn that his inaugural lectures were entitled "Dell'Origine e dell'Ufficio della Letteratura" and "Sull'Origine e Limiti della Giustizia". His packed audiences were primarily youthful, although by no means exclusively so, and he considered rightly that this was the most important section of the community to try to educate and form before its members became too set in their ways. His audiences and his readers were the first generation of Italy's Risorgimento and he addressed them eloquently/

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\* It was an unfortunate coincidence that all Chairs of "Eloquenza" were suppressed by government decree a few months after Foscolo assumed office. This hardened his attitude to the authorities but in no way affected the content of his first lectures.

eloquently with words full of the highest ideals which could ever inspire man, full of patriotism and civil dignity. He also urged Italians to study the history of their country because political resurrection could only come when each individual felt inspired to emulate with pride the glorious political, military and intellectual feats of their forefathers.

In 1809, this was very much a case of a voice crying in the wilderness and even if much of what Foscolo said can be dismissed as impractical idealism from the point of view of strategic administration, nevertheless, there is always a place for the charismatic type of figure just as there is always a need for the careful, realistic planner who can interpret the ideals and make them work at a practical level. Foscolo's rôle was the charismatic one and it is most impressive to note that not even when Napoleon was at his most formidable did he shrink from fulfilling what he felt was his mission in life. Knowing this, it is a surprise to learn of the one occasion when he deviated slightly from his record of complete sincerity as a writer. He wrote a very stolid, factual article in the "Giornale Italiano" (7th April, 1811)\* to celebrate formally the birth of the King of Rome and he also prepared four official inscriptions for the military monument which was designed for the event.\*

However, /

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\* FOSCOLO: Opere -- Edizione Nazionale, VIII, 339-343 and  
Introduzione page CXVlll & CXVlX.

However, he did his best to explain his action and exonerate himself from blame by showing it was only a case of making the smallest possible concession when faced with overwhelming pressures both official and domestic: (he was still trying to support his mother from his restricted financial resources): "Dio aiuti l'Italia! - Anch'io per compiacere agli amici e commilitoni esultanti, banchettanti, festeggianti, ho dovuto fare iscrizioni ed auguri: ma io non ho festeggiato, e mi basta di essere spettatore ed uditore soltanto; ed ho lasciato che altri si faccia onore di quelle iscrizioni profetiche che secondo me non possono fare onore ad anima nata. E mi pareva anche che la fortuna mi facesse le boccacce e le fiche quand'io Ugo Foscolo seduto con tre altri dottori andava stendendo certo articolaccio di giornale politico: 'et incurvavit se homo et humiliatus est vir; ne ergo dimittas mihi.' E solo mi pare d'essere assoluto dinanzi a me stesso dacchè ho dissimulato il mio nome; ed ho anche impedito che si pubblicassero in stile barbaro le usate ciarlatanerie".\*

During/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera a Giambattista Giovio, XI aprile, 1811. See also Foscolo's letter to Ugo Brunetti, 23rd March, 1811, in which he again explains the difficulty of his position at this time.

During these months, Foscolo's attention was wholly absorbed in completing his tragedy "Aiace", which when it was first produced in Milan (December, 1811) was claimed by his enemies to be a direct criticism of Bonaparte, Moreau and Fouché. This was a false criticism although from a superficial glance at the work one can understand why people, especially those opposed to Foscolo, were ready to assume that he was using the stage to make veiled political allusions to contemporary figures. In fact, the model for Ajax, the sad champion of liberty, was an idealised picture of Ugo Foscolo himself, the Italian always ready to protest against despotic tyranny. Ajax is essentially a continuation of the spirit of Jacopo Ortis and "Dei Sepolcri" in both of which can be seen a developing projection of the spirit of Foscolo, one of the most egocentric of poets. Thus, in so far as one is reading "Aiace" as an autobiographical picture, and one is aware of the author's background and attitude to Napoleon, then one can easily read a double meaning into the text which Foscolo did not consciously intend e.g. in Act II, Agamemnon (?Napoleon) says to himself:

"Son tale omai  
che, mentre il mondo m'obbedisce e ammira,  
nessun<sup>~</sup> può amarmi ....."

and/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Aiace" - Act II, Scene XI, lines 304-306.

and a few lines further on, Ajax gives his verdict on the same ruthless character, "il Re dei regi" -- (again perhaps a reference to Napoleon at the height of his power?):

"Cupo,

solitario, assoluto, in te ogni dolce  
senso a studio palliasti. A pochi aperto  
fu il padiglio, ch'era a principio albergo  
d'accoglienze, di gloria, e di conviti;  
ove la fede e l'amor patrio, e tutte  
virtù guerriere avean premio ed esempio".\*

Ajax was a solitary character among the Greeks (as was Foscolo himself among the Italians), but he had won their affection. They believed that he was the only person worthy of having the arms of Achilles, and he was in no way modest about asserting that he was the only person in the country who deserved such an honour. If one is looking for an autobiographical parallel, one could say here that Foscolo considered himself as the sole representative in Italy of the glorious traditions of the country's past, especially of liberty. But we must remember that this is an idealized self-portrait. The hero is akin to Ortis; he is a potential hero, one who thunders in vain against wrongs and tyranny; he is even more pessimistic than Ortis. In Ajax, Foscolo was really trying to reconcile the apparent contradiction between his thought and his life. He was trying to/

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., Act II, Scene XI, lines 365-371.

to ask the question: was the patriotic movement which he seemed to be advocating in *Ortis* and in *"Dei Sepolcri"* not leading towards inevitable ruin? This was the tentative conclusion Foscolo had reached by the end of 1811.

Temperamentally, he was in great need of a change of milieu: Milan had become insufferable for him and now thanks to the political row caused by *"Aiace"* he was forced to leave the city but in the eyes of all patriots he was really leaving as a brave, persecuted 'martyr' who had dared to speak the truth about Italy's foreign oppressor. This suited Foscolo very well and ensured him a warm welcome in Florence from the Countess of Albany whose dislike of the Emperor was no secret. He spent two quiet years in Tuscany between 1812 and 1814. It was a vital period of peace which gave him time to think over the last twenty years of his life and try to put them in perspective. These were two most important years in Foscolo's life\* - important for the establishment within himself of a more serene equilibrium. As far as the figure of Napoleon was concerned, /

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\* Walter Binni has recently made a profound study of this period of Foscolo's life: *"Vita e poesia del Foscolo nel periodo fiorentino, 1812-1813"*, - in *"Carducci e altri saggi"*,

Torino, 1960.

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was concerned, we can feel much more confidence in Foscolo's subsequent remarks (whether or not they differ from his previous statements) because we feel sure that this is the voice of mature reason plus experience whereas in his earlier days he was guided more by instinct.

The Foscolo who returned to Milan in November, 1813, after the battle of Leipzig and volunteered his services to Eugène de Beauharnais, was the Foscolo who is so familiar in our mind's eye from the elegant portrait which had just been completed by Fabre - a portrait which pleased the author so much that he would like to have seen as many copies made from it as possible.\* His first reactions to the political scene are worthy of note: the defeat of Napoleon made him very clearly aware of the immediate alternative for Italy and he wrote to the Countess of Albany saying that the general opinion that Napoleon wanted other than the prosperity of the Kingdom of Italy was utter stupidity and even this proud adversary of Bonaparte went on to express the hope that if given the chance "il suo genio" would be able to save Italy "da che è pure sangue italiano."\*\* A month later he was still in the same frame of mind: "Le nostre forze stanno tutte nel Genio invincibile dalla Fortuna dell'Imperadore nostro, il quale vorrà e saprà ad ogni modo salvarci; e libererà presto o tardi nuovamente l'Italia".\*\* Foscolo was motivated by the most/

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\* The fortune of this portrait constitutes a most interesting story in itself: vid Mario Praz: "La Casa della Vita", pages 342-344 and "Gusto Neoclassico" - "Un Carme e un Ritratto", pages 243-344.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla Contessa D'Albany, 15 novembre, 1813.

\*\*\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla Contessa D'Albany, 13 dicembre, 1813.

most sincere hopes for the good of Italy when he wrote these letters. They do not indicate a complete volte face but must be read together with his remarks in another letter written a few months later where he explains his own position as a soldier and writer with great clarity: "Io ho (invece) stimato di mio dovere di tentare con tutte le mie forze che l'Italia potesse in qualche modo risorgere. Però abbracciai il partito delle armi da giovinetto; la libertà, o se non altro l'onore stanno sempre nell'armi; ..... e non stampai sillaba che io non possa giustificare come diretta alla libertà dell'Italia". As the letter continues, Foscolo presents a very wise, objective judgment of Napoleon: "Non citai Napoleone se non come il maggior Guerriero dell'Età Moderne; e tale era, e tale ancora lo reputo".\*

Foscolo was not suffering from hero-worship when he wrote thus, as is proved by the renewed conviction with which he makes his subsequent condemnation of the Emperor as an individual:

"Tiranno era, e sarebbe in ogni evento incorreggibilmente"  
Tiranno quel nostro conquistatore; era con pensieri sublimi d'animo volgarissimo; bugiardo inutilmente; gazzettiere e droghiere universale; ciarlatano, anche quand'era onnipotente di forze; io lo abboriva sempre, lo stimava talvolta, e sovente lo disprezzava; non ho mai potuto amarlo, e, (le accerto), non ho mai potuto temerlo".\* This reads as quite an eloquent character-/

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character-sketch of Napoleon, the Tyrant; but Foscolo was determined to be honest and he did recognise that as far as Napoleon and Italy were concerned there were definitely two sides to any argument: "Ma egli aveva un altissimo merito di me; aveva riuniti ed educati alla guerra sei milioni d'Italiani".\*

This explains why, even after Leipzig, Foscolo felt he could still trust Napoleon's ability as a soldier and perhaps even trust in the good fortune he had known for so long. Consequently, he re-enrolled as a soldier in 1813, in the hope of helping in some way the independence of the new Regno d'Italia because he realised that its maintenance and development were essential for the growth of the rest of Italy: a strong united Northern Italy would be the nucleus to which all other sections of the country could be united. It was indeed fortunate that Napoleon had been defeated before being able to complete his plans for Italy and no-one recognised this more than Foscolo: "aveva precariamente aggregati all'Impero gli altri paesi d'Italia, e tiranneggiatili in guisa da evocare il monumento di scuotere il giogo ed unirsi a quei <sup>del</sup> Regno; ma bisognava che egli fosse sconfitto in Russia; altrimenti sono certissimo che anche il Regno sarebbe stato lacerato in dipartimenti francesi, uniti alla sua Monarchia. Prevvidi prima, poscia vidi con piacere le sue sconfitte e mi parve/

parve prossimo il giorno fausto all'Italia....."\*

This was an amazingly accurate analysis of the Napoleonic Era in Italy - amazing because it is always extremely difficult to assess contemporary events in a balanced way and also because it shows how much the author himself had matured from his earlier emotional outbursts against the Emperor. Nevertheless, although his judgment was quite correct, those living at the time had the difficult task of trying to find out what would be the next step towards fulfilling their ultimate aim. This was when Foscolo's pessimism increased. He had hoped briefly that after Leipzig, Italian independence could have been proclaimed in some way or other and even sent a letter to the English General, Macfarlane, asking him to use his influence with the victors to ensure for Italy "una Patria forte, una Costituzione giusta, ed un Principe proprio".\*\* But this was merely a case of wishful thinking because Foscolo was reluctant to face the dismal reality of the almost superhuman work of national reconstruction which lay ahead. His rôle was not to plan patiently the intricacies of diplomacy/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla Contessa D'Albany, Milan, 23 maggio, 1814. See also page 208.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Indirizzo alle Potenze diretto al Generale Inglese, Macfarlane, 30 aprile, 1814.

diplomacy and administration which the country would now need for the next stage of her evolution, and as a result, his reaction was a rather sad display of hopeless resignation:

"L'Italia è cadavere: e non va tocco nè smosso più omai, per non provocare più tristo il fetore; e odo talvolta alcuni pazzi che vanno fantasticando vie di resuscitarla; per me invece la vorrei seppellita meco, e inondata da'mari, o arsa da qualche nuovo Fetonte che le precipitasse addosso con tutto il cielo in fiamme, e che tutti quattro i venti ne disperdessero le ceneri, e che le nazioni presenti e avvenire si dimenticassero l'infamia del nostro secolo".\*

In the last analysis, it was Foscolo's Classical world which made him remote from his own age. He felt misunderstood but in fact, he was the one who could not understand that a new era had begun. Just as Alfieri was able to translate the "Aeneid" while the mobs were proclaiming the "Revolution" in the streets outside, so Foscolo wrote a commentary on Cavalcanti and meditated on "Le Grazie" during the last months of the Napoleonic Age. He appreciated the beauty of the past and wanted only to destroy with one sweep the present with its chaos and misery, but since this was impossible, his courageous solution was silent withdrawal from the scene and exile. In any case, he could not bring/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla Contessa D'Albany, 12 ottobre, 1814.

bring himself to make the required act of allegiance to the Austrians who had now returned to Milan: "... tradirei la nobiltà incontaminata fino ad ora del mio carattere col giurare cose che non potrei attenere, e con vendermi a qualunque governo. Io per me mi sono inteso di servire l'Italia, né come scrittore, ho voluto parer partigiano di Tedeschi, o Francesi, o di qualunque altra nazione ..... io professo letteratura, che è arte liberalissima e indipendente, e quando è venale non val più nulla". The letter finishes with a word of consolation to his mother: "se dunque, mia cara madre, io m'esilio e mi avventuro come profugo alla Fortuna ed al Cielo, tu non puoi né devi né vorrai querelartene; perché tu stessa mi hai ispirati e radicati col latte questi generosi sentimenti, e mi hai più volte raccomandato di sostenerli, e li sosterrai, con la morte".\*

In this frame of mind, he left Italy and sought refuge in Switzerland. He felt nothing but scorn for the fellow-countrymen he left behind: "Gl'Italiani non hanno mai saputo ciò che si vogliono; pare che tutte le loro forze intellettuali si sieno educate alla chiacchiera, all'astio, e al malcontento di tutto e di tutti".\*\* It is not difficult to appreciate Foscolo's point/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla famiglia, 31 marzo, 1815.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla Contessa D'Albany, 24 giugno, 1815.

point of view, particularly as this was certainly the most decisive moment in his life: the moment which showed his courage and also his weariness; his scorn and yet his unwillingness to participate in the struggle. This really marked the end of the conflict he had endured from the age of nineteen years between his heart which longed for liberty and his reason which urged him to tolerate the "lesser evil". Foscolo's exile was the dignified application of Jacopo's suicide to the poet's own personal situation. With the defeat of Napoleon, Foscolo's particular rôle ended because the new Italy needed leaders who were prophets of hope rather than "filosofi gementi", and Foscolo was aware of this intuitively if not consciously. He had been the most authentic representative of "italianità" in Napoleonic times but from now on, the struggle against Austria was going to be different. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that if Foscolo had had to choose between Austria and Napoleon, he would have picked the latter: under Napoleon he was still able to hope, whereas even that was impossible under Austrian rule: "L'avere abborito la tirannide di Bonaparte che opprimeva l'Italia, non implica che io debba amare la signoria di Casa d'Austria. La differenza consiste, ch'io sperava che le frenesie di Bonaparte potessero aprire adito se non all'indipendenza d'Italia, almeno a tali magnanimità/

magnanimi tentativi da onorar gl'Italiani: invece, il governo regolare dell'Austria preclude quindi innanzi qualunque speranza. Mi terrei forsennato ed infame s'io desiderassi nuovi tumulti e nuove stragi all'Italia che ha bisogno di pace; ma mi terrei per più forsennato e più infame, se sdegnando di servire allo straniero antecedente, servissi allo straniero presente. Le necessità della Nazione Italiana non hanno che fare co' miei doveri".\*

Foscolo's comments on the contemporary scene were not just confined to letters: He tried to write a short history of the "Regno Italico" and his thoughtful conclusion to this attempt to provide a definitive judgment is merely a confirmation and continuation of the earlier clear analysis expressed in haste in his letters to the Countess of Albany: "Egli (Napoleone) solo bastò ad animare gl'Italiani, e dar loro opinioni, leggi, armi, sentimenti d'indipendenza, desiderio di libera patria, e sopra tutto rapidità di moto, da far ch' ei mostrassero in pochi anni il cangiamento al quale sarebbero bisognate tre o quattro generazioni. Ma egli, nel trasfondere quasi istaneamente questa "attività" la serbava pur sempre in suo arbitrio e poteva moderarla/

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\* FOSCOLO: Lettera alla Contessa D'Albany; Agli ultimi di agosto, 1815.

moderarla, accrescerla, estinguerla a sua posta ad un tratto, con la prontezza con che l'avea comunicata. Però l'Italia, al cadere di Bonaparte, ricadde nell'antico suo stato di servitù, e fra pochi anni forse non presenterà vestigio alcuno di avoro sì potentemente operato nella generale rivoluzione d'Europa. Ai dì nostri vincerà sempre chi saprà meglio strascinare per le orecchie la moltitudine dei credulissimi animali chiamati genere umano, pronti sempre a fidarsi a chi li pasce di speranza, e a tremare sotto la sferza di chi, dopo averli ingannati, li opprime. Però gli Austriaci s'affrettarono in Italia ad accaparrare scrittori che esagerassero i danni del passato despotismo francese".\*

His assessment of the recent past was accurate but when he looked to the future the problem was so vast that he could only shake his head: "Considerate l'Italia, e vedrete non può aver libertà perchè non v'è legge; nè v'è legge senza costumi, nè costumi senza religione, nè religione senza sacerdoti; nè patria insomma senza cittadini. Non repubblica, perchè non v'è popolo; non monarchia, perchè non vi sono patrizi. Resta il governo assoluto; tutte le altre miserie civili somigliano alle infermità; il despotismo alla morte: or nulla importa, o si poco da non farne tanti clamori, d'essere governati da un despota/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Frammento di storia del Regno Italico", 1815.

despota lontano per via di satrapi, o da un despota imminente; perchè, ad onta d'ogni sua generosa volontà, il principe che verrebbe in Italia, sarebbe costretto ad essere despota".\*

The only way Foscolo could justify the dichotomy between his thoughts and his actions was to take refuge in sweeping generalisations -- always a sign of weakness, ignorance or fear: in his opinion, the country was totally corrupt, there was nothing good in Italy at present and therefore destruction would be the ideal solution so that the country could be rebuilt in the tradition of its great heritage; desperate measures were now needed to save the country -- she must be purged. When speaking of Dante's century, Foscolo said: "Allora, come oggi, a rifare l'Italia avrebbe bisognato innanzi tutto disfarsela".\*\* Such a view of a Golden Age resulting from the destruction of present wickedness is unrealistic and shows a kind of naivety which stems from despair. Foscolo never changed his mind about Italy, and the failure of the Revolutionary movements in 1820 and 1821 merely strengthened his point of view.

But Foscolo was on surer ground when he was talking about the/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Della Servitù d'Italia", 1816 (Edizione Nazionale, Vol. VIII, page 278. See also page 196.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Edizione Nazionale, II, page 297.



the past, and after 1821, he was able to look back and give posterity his final judgment on the Napoleonic Era in Italy -- an Era which now belonged to history. His "Lettera Apologetica" is to be considered in many ways as his last will and testament, particularly regarding his political thoughts. It was written in 1824 and although, technically, it falls outside the dates of this study, it must be included because no assessment of Foscolo's thought about the figure of Napoleon could be complete without taking this work into consideration. The "Lettera Apologetica" is a very heartening document -- very sane and objective -- which shows the integrity of the writer who remained without bitterness to the end, even after having experienced considerable personal hardship. Here he fearlessly repeats his condemnation of intellectuals -- particularly those writers who degraded their art for the sake of gaining personal favours from Napoleon and then were ready to turn against him after 1814/15. He again blames Napoleon severely for having looked on Italy as a secondary consideration to France and for having wished "far tutt'uno dei Francesi e degli Italiani", so that but for the Russian disaster "l'Italia si sarebbe fatta l'Ungheria della Francia".\* -- an accusation which was only partly true and Foscolo himself was very ready to admit that Italy did derive some/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Lettera Apologetica", (Ediz. Naz., XLII/2, pages 107 and 133).

some benefits from the Napoleonic period - "di certo vi aveva fondato un regno potente di ricchezze e d'abitatori: e le ricchezze erano amministrate con ordine, e il popolo era ridivenuto guerriero".\* Napoleon had also formed Electoral Colleges which, once established and given the opportunity to develop in peace time, would have been an excellent basis for a sound constitutional régime. Foscolo also credited Napoleon with having improved the religious atmosphere of the country: "distrusse una selva popolata di mostri"\*\*\* and liberated education from strict clerical control with the result that the present young generation knew how to write the words "patria", "libertà", and "Regno Italico"; and they were also convinced that they wanted to be warriors.

In the last analysis, Foscolo's words of praise are outnumbered by words of blame about Napoleon, but he took pains to explain this with great honesty. He realised that from the outset he was not the man to judge Napoleon because he could never be a dispassionate observer. This is something we can well understand and it is a feeling with which we sympathise, but the fact that Foscolo was a big enough person to/

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\* FOSCOLO: "Lettera Apologetica", page 104.

\*\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., page 110.

to state this himself, ensures our greatest respect. These qualities of honesty and integrity, so vital to a writer and so much admired by Foscolo, were not lacking when he spoke of Napoleon after his death, just as they had been so obviously present during the lifetime of the Emperor: "So quanto voi molti in Italia - e qui e forse altrove taluni - mi accuserete di poca riverenza alle ossa del grandissimo fra' mortali. Grandissimo era; e però di lui porteranno giudizio attoniti anche gli storici che scriveranno quando niuno saprà additare la mia sepoltura e la vostra. Bensì intorno alle ragioni fra voi e me, bastimi che prevedendo a che termini ridurrebbe l'Italia e la sua propria fortuna, io per meraviglia non mi sono ingannato sino da quando io aveva diecinove anni d'età, ed ei ventisette. A Mombello io lo vidi attizzare rancori vecchi e nuove calunnie a dividere peggiormente le vostre città; e in Campoformio lo vidi postillare di sua mano un nuovo statuto costituzionale per la repubblica veneziana, vendendole quel beneficio per tre milioni e pigliandosi in dono gli avanzi delle nostre navi: e già da più mesi aveva venduto Venezia, con tutte le sue città e cittadini, alla casa d'Austria. Poi giustificò l'infamia del suo tradimento codardo, allegando 'che gl'Italiani sono codardi, infami, e spregevoli tutti'. Forse sel meritavano; ma io d'allora in qua lo ammiro forse meno ch'esso non merita; e questo mio di certo non è giudizio di animo spassionato nè filosofico. Ritornatomi in Venezia, vidi moltiplicati i battaglioni/

battaglioni de' Francesi, e loro artiglierie a capo di tutte le vie. I padri di famiglia tutti, con tutti i loro figliuoli adulti camminavano muti per adunarsi nelle chiese delle loro parocchie; e protestarono a Dio che volevano vivere discendenti di progenitori liberi da quattordici secoli, e non morrebbero servi che per violenza del forte: voti vani di inermi; e anche io giurai. Tuttavia d'allora in qua non ho mai pronunziato uno de' cento giuramenti giurati e da giurarsi e spergiurarsi da' vostri principi e da' loro servi".\*

Foscolo could not write objectively about Napoleon; he had suffered greatly during his life to retain his dignity as a poet and when in exile, had been spiritually sustained by his affection for his "patria perduta". It is easy for us to understand why Campoformio prevented him from having an unbiased attitude towards the French Emperor, and even if at times we cannot agree with his opinions, it is always evident that they sprang from noble idealism and never from thoughtless or ignorant resentment. His was the criticism of an artist who considered that his first duty was sincerity and society's first duty towards its artists must be to respect that sincerity.

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\* FOSCOLO: Op.cit., pages 95-96.

CHAPTER SIX:    CONCLUSION:

IMPORTANCE OF NAPOLEONIC LITERATURE  
FOR ITALY AND VERDICT OF MANZONI.

## CHAPTER SIX.

### CONCLUSION: IMPORTANCE OF NAPOLEONIC LITERATURE FOR ITALY AND VERDICT OF MANZONI.

The main purpose of this study has been to examine the literature written in Italy between the years 1796 and 1821 and thereby discover the extent to which it was influenced either directly or indirectly by Napoleon. To state that his influence was considerable sounds like an understatement in view of what has been said in previous chapters. The influence of the figure of Napoleon was so extensive that it provides the student of this period with a repertoire which is as overwhelming in its variety and quality as it is in the range of writers and poets with whom one comes in contact. This wealth of literary material provided by both major and minor writers is symptomatic of the strength of the impact made throughout the country by Napoleon.

Inevitably, this literature concerned itself with life, as in the best tradition of Romanticism, and the authors clearly found it impossible to separate their work from the social and political developments of the country as one interacted on the other. It would be naive to imagine that in such a collection of work there were not quite a few pieces which could be classified as "porcheria napoleonica", and many others which were only of interest to the collector of topical information/

information; but any mediocrity was more than compensated by the exceptional grandeur of poets like Monti, Foscolo and Manzoni.

The literature which outlived contemporary popularity was that which highlighted the human situation and then placed it within a wider social framework, thus adding flesh to an invariable bone structure and portraying that human drama which is ancient and new at the same time: the drama of man striving to attain his natural rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness but having to struggle all the time against an outside world over which he has little or no control. It matters little whether that man is an unknown soldier dying in the Russian snow or whether he is the Emperor of France, for the expression of this kind of thought speaks to men of all ages because in it they can always find something with which they can identify themselves. It is enough for the poet to have fixed his gaze on one particular human situation until he was able to reach its essence whence he could derive inspiration. At that point, his poetry is expressing from nature thoughts of endless interest because of their unquestionable truth. But for the individual reader to be deeply moved, it would not be sufficient for the author to have spoken only about essential questions of social and political justice and economic well-being even although these are desirable factors in every human situation. Even unconsciously, man needs to be motivated by an appeal to the spirit: he tends to look for some/

some form of religious concept which suggests a basic adherence to an absolute, eternal law as the only firm foundation on which to build the social virtues as preached, for example, by the "secolo illuminista". It is in this light that we must see the apparently useless but idealistic sacrifice of Hector as described by Foscolo in "Dei Sepolcri": his was the mysterious, age-old cry of the indomitable spirit of man testifying to a natural desire for absolute values -- values which transcend history and even the realms of any definite religious creed.

If, in some way, Napoleon was able to inspire such a high degree of poetic art, then he would have made an invaluable contribution to Italy as well as to Italian literature because this kind of contribution does not end with the printed page: it is the extent of the influence of that literature on the minds and actions of the people which is the really crucial question and it is also the most difficult to evaluate accurately.

In the space of twenty-five years, Italy had been changed irrevocably: the pre-revolutionary world seemed very far away to the younger generations in 1821, but twenty-five years is a very short time in the history of a nation, and regardless of how far the country had been pushed legally into a new and improved way of working and thinking, there could never be any substitute for time -- the most important factor for allowing ideas/



ideas to mature and new influences to be remoulded until they suited the individual requirements of each country. This is true of the individual and it is also true when speaking collectively of a nation. The old cliché that "Rome was not built in a day" still rings true.

When looking at the Napoleonic Age, it is necessary to examine the details but then one must try to stand back, put the period in its historical perspective, and also try to capture the essence of the changing spirit which characterized the new era. In 1821, Manzoni was the only writer in Italy able to accept this enormous challenge and be sufficiently inspired by it to produce a poem which puts the Age of Napoleon in perspective in a very personal way and at the same time manages to inspire and overawe the reader with the power of its message. To capture such a subject spontaneously and adequately required much more than outstanding poetic ability. Manzoni was able to rise to the occasion because the death of Napoleon coincided with the point in his own life where one could say he had found himself: he had reached maturity as a fully integrated personality, and from the literary point of view, he had become a master of his craft.

It was only after a long period of struggle that Manzoni had become satisfied in his own mind that the Christian ethos could provide him with an answer to the meaning and purpose of life. This/

This gave him a certain confidence and air of detachment from "the weariness, the fever, and the fret" of everyday life and it enabled him to look at the world and say with Dantesque faith: "E'n la sua volontade è nostra pace". This religious foundation on which he now based his life was not something which could be confined to his inner self: it determined his whole attitude to literature as a means of revealing truth and reality. Consequently, when Manzoni asked in 1821, "Fu vera gloria"? he was thinking of much more than a mere factual assessment of Napoleon's deeds and omissions although of course, he did not underestimate the historical significance of the career of the Emperor. To answer this question which he asks in his Ode "Il Cinque Maggio", Manzoni took a very broad look at his subject. He rightly stressed the most important long-term effect of Napoleon on European history: that he had put a stop to the forces of violence which had been unleashed by the Revolution and had helped to guide them on to a clearer course; that he replaced chaos with order and prevented any sudden swing of the pendulum from Revolution to reaction:

"Ei si nomò: due secoli,  
l'un contro l'altro armato,  
sommessi a lui si volsero,  
come aspettando il fato;  
ei/

ei fe' silenzio, ed arbitro  
s'assise in mezzo a lor".\*

But the grandeur of the imagery in these few lines suggests that Manzoni was inspired by something much more personal than the stimulus of an historical event, however striking. One must remember that he had grown up in the shadow of "l'uom fatale" whom people had both praised and feared, and therefore, whether or not he fully realised it, his life had been affected by the influence of this one man. The mental turmoil which the news of the death of Napoleon produced on Manzoni betrayed some of the attachment which he felt for the Emperor ever since the day when he had caught sight of him at a gala performance at La Scala in 1801. It was extremely difficult to believe that this man whom he had at times even hated but for whom he had always retained a kind of mythical admiration, no longer existed. However, the interesting point is that Napoleon's death, besides being the end of an era in history, also marked the end of a chapter in Manzoni's own life. The death of the hero of his youth coincided with the complete evolution of his philosophy of life and conversion to religion. Now, Manzoni was able to participate in Napoleon's human struggle for he himself had so recently gone through a process of

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\* MANZONI: "Il Cinque Maggio", lines 49-54.

of self-destruction in order to find his purpose in life, and he felt convinced that the same was true of Napoleon who in "quell'ora estrema" at St. Helena gradually drew nearer to that fate which awaits all men and unites them with their God.

Since his early days in Milan in 1802 and 1803, Manzoni had spent a lot of time trying to analyse the problem of man and society. He had been greatly influenced by the writings of Lomonaco and Cuoco but he had learned even more from his long discussions with them. From Cuoco, he derived his great love of history, with the stress on the history of peoples and the idea that the life of a nation is one with its philosophy, literature and general culture. From this he derived his conviction that a nation which seeks liberty from foreigners must have unity of tradition, language, customs and ideals:

"una d'arme, di lingua, d'altare,  
di memorie, di sangue e di cor".\*

Cuoco also told him that liberty had to be won, not received as a gift - hence Manzoni was anxious to educate in every citizen a sense of responsibility so that their latent abilities would/

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\* MANZONI: "Marzo 1821", lines 31-32. Note his emphasis on "il cor" - signifying unity of will and intention, that essential spirituality which is the basis of every relationship.

would not be wasted or dissipated as had happened in Naples. There must also be unity of purpose and endeavour. But Manzoni did not feel completely satisfied with this academic discussion even although it was quite realistic and full of common-sense. When he looked around him and saw the contradiction between "man's inhumanity to man" and the magnitude of the problems and suffering of all mankind, he felt that life on earth was quite beyond human comprehension and could only be justified if one looked at it in terms of a preparation for something else.

It was in this frame of mind that Manzoni began to write about Napoleon. By 1821, he had completed his "Inni Sacri", he had written "Marzo 1821", the best parts of "Adelchi", and the first part of "I Promessi Sposi", but the death of Napoleon was the decisive factor in establishing the mature Manzoni. When he first heard the news, Manzoni said: "La sua morte mi scosse come se al mondo fosse venuto a mancare qualche elemento essenziale .....".\* This is exactly the effect he has achieved with the opening lines of his Ode:

"Ei fu. Siccome immobile,  
dato il mortale sospiro,  
stette/

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\* See pages 229-230.

stette la spoglia immemore  
orba di tanto spiro,  
così percossa, attonita  
la terra al nunzio sta,  
muta pensando all'ultima  
ora dell'uom fatale";\*

Manzoni was rightly proud of the fact that he had refrained from criticising Napoleon during his lifetime and so could now be listened to as a completely fresh voice on the subject. From the evidence of history, Manzoni considered the aims and achievements of the Emperor:

"La procellosa e trepida  
gioia d'un gran disegno,  
l'ansia d'un cor che indocile  
serve, pensando al regno;  
e il giunge, e tiene un premio  
ch'era follia sperar;

Tutto ei provò: la gloria  
maggior dopo il periglio,  
la fuga e la vittoria,  
la reggia e il tristo esiglio;  
due volte nella polvere,  
due volte sull'altar".\*\*

In/

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\* MANZONI: "Il Cinque Maggio", lines 1-8.

\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit., lines 37-48.

In his grandiose plans, Napoleon tried to reach further than was humanly possible, but in the last analysis, he had to accept the limitations of all mortals: as such he aroused a wide variety of emotions:

"segno d'immensa invidia  
e di pietà profonda,  
d'inestinguibil odio  
e d'indomato amor".\*

But these human reactions now seem so inconsequential when compared with the indifference or rather, equality, with which he is looked on by eternity. Manzoni conveys this very effectively immediately after his outline of the Emperor's career, with the words: "E sparve" (line 55). At this point in the Ode, there is a slight pause as Manzoni passes from an essentially narrative discourse to a mood of reflection and meditation. From now on his attention is concentrated on an extremely personal view of a man who was enduring great suffering. He introduces the famous simile of the shipwreck:

"Come sul capo al naufrago  
l'onda s'avvolse e pesa  
.....  
tal su quell'alma il cumulo  
delle memorie scese".\*\*

At/

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\* MANZONI: Op.cit., lines 57-60.

\*\* MANZONI: Op.cit., lines 61-62; 67-68.

At St. Helena, Napoleon must have recognised the total wreckage of all his worldly hopes, but as well as this, he must have experienced the more devastating effects of moral shipwreck. Consequently, as he looked back at the past, he would see it in a new light: one thinks of "l'Innominato" in his night of terror when "tutto gli appariva cambiato: ciò che altre volte stimolava più fortemente i suoi desideri, ora non aveva più nulla di desiderabile: la passione, come un cavallo divenuto tutt' a un tratto restio per un'ombra, non voleva più andare avanti".\* So Napoleon, who had promised to write his memoirs, must have found it extremely difficult to do so, and his weariness must have increased every time he tried to recall the many battles in which he had fought and the many armies he had commanded; as a result, "sull'eterne pagine cadde la stanca man"! (lines 71-72) In these circumstances, man, even if he is Napoleon, is forced to/

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\* MANZONI: "I Promessi Sposi", Chapter XXI.

There is another very obvious parallel between "I Promessi Sposi" and this Ode at the point when Manzoni suggests a complete renunciation of human judgment of Napoleon in favour of Divine ("noi chiniam la fronte...." - lines 32-33). Here he is foreshadowing the heroic faith of Fra Cristoforo ("Guarda chi è Colui che castiga! Colui che giudica, e non è giudicato! Colui che flagella e che perdona!" - Chapter XXXV) whose message of "la provvida sventura" is the theme of the whole novel.



to develop a new outlook on life which is not just confined to earthly concerns and when he accepts his helplessness, Manzoni shows the hand of God intervening to save man from the final torment of despair.

Undoubtedly, Napoleon's political and military career affected Manzoni profoundly but he could only find an explanation for this and for the Emperor's final destiny in the light of the unseen, guiding hand of Providence. Thus, although "Il Cinque Maggio" is of immense historical importance, it is of even greater importance as a religious Ode: "L' uom fatale che vi si erge arbitro fra due secoli, lungamente oggetto, tra i popoli, d'inestinguibil odio e d'indomato amor, conosce poi una fine che si compendia in poche sillabe: cadde, risorse e giacque. In lui, dice il poeta, l'Onnipotente non volle altro che del creator suo spirito più vasta orma stampar nel corso della storia. Ma quando scocca l'ora estrema è quello stesso Onnipotente che gli si rivela per il Dio che atterra e suscita, che affanna e che consola, il medesimo che i promessi sposi pur perseguitati e fuggiaschi conosceranno tuttavia esser per tutto, e che non turba mai la gioia dei suoi figli se non per prepararne loro una più certa e più grande.\*

Poetry/

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\* G. ALBERTI: Alessandro Manzoni, pages 151-152.

Poetry has become "storiografia ideale" thanks to the figure of Napoleon which was the necessary stimulus to a writer like Manzoni and the long-reaching effect on the Italian people of such a piece of work is of the same intangible quality as was the widespread influence of the ideas and plans of Napoleon for the country as a whole. From the literature of the period one cannot conclude with a convenient picture that is either black or white: nor can one be satisfied with a list of what he did and what he failed to do. Napoleon knew that Italy was both a geographical and a political freak and as early as 1803 he had told the Council of Lyons: "Il me faut vingt ans pour rétablir la nation italienne ....." Events combined to ensure that Unification was not achieved in haste. The years 1796-1815 were years of instruction and experience: we can now look back and see them as a dress rehearsal for the Unification of the country in the later part of the century: the Republicans of the Cisalpine Republic were the forerunners of Mazzini's idealism, and 1800-1815 showed that a complete change could not be produced quickly but needed long and careful planning - a theory which was later put into practice by Cavour (even if he was essentially an opportunist). Italy had had a practical/

practical experience of unity and many of the people now understood the meaning of being a nation: they had a definite picture in their minds of what they were aiming at instead of a vague ideal. Thus, it was in spite of himself that Napoleon became the model on which the Unification of Italy was planned.

This is the feeling which emerges gradually from the literature of this period, particularly from those writers who between 1815 and 1821 attempted the difficult task of assessing the period from 1796 in Italian affairs. They were aware of the fact that they could not write the last word on this era because it had inspired a completely new outlook among the people: the pre-revolutionary world had disappeared, men had been drawn to a new brotherhood often through suffering, and equality of opportunity had been experienced at a practical level. Writers were aware of a national consciousness in the country which was accompanied by a new confidence in the value of personal dignity. These factors are difficult to define realistically, but all sensitive writers who were determined to be objective recognised that in time Italy must benefit, even indirectly, from the experience of the Napoleonic Age. Besides, no amount of <sup>reach</sup> conservative regulations could ever succeed in obliterating/

obliterating the memory of such an innovatory period and consequently, the forces which had been unleashed by Napoleon could not be fully appreciated for a few decades.

In his address at the Second International Congress of Napoleonic Studies held at Elba in 1965, Professor Carlo Zaghi was able to articulate much of what the writers in 1821 had to leave as a rather vague insight: "Per capire il significato della presenza di Napoleone in Italia non dobbiamo guardare soltanto a quello che ha fatto e a quello che non ha fatto, o avrebbe potuto fare, ma ai riflessi che la sua presenza e la sua azione ebbero sul mondo circostante, ai problemi che pose davanti alla coscienza italiana, alle energie che mobilitò, alle speranze che suscitò, e furono moltissime, alle reazioni che la sua politica generò tra i vari ceti italiani, positive o negative che siano, agli odie e ai risentimenti che provocò, e non furono pochi, alle attese che generò, e furono infinite, e all'Italia che aveva ereditato nel 1800 e a quella che lasciò al crollo dell'Impero: quindici anni d'un travaglio immenso, di trasformazioni politiche, sociali e culturali d'enorme portata, di esperienze nuove e diverse, di esperimenti costituzionali vari, di contatti e rapporti intensi e continui tra l'Italia e l'Europa, che valgono secoli nella vita d'un popolo, e metteranno in moto una/

una carica d'energia di portato rivoluzionaria e d'una violenza e di un impeto tali da non esaurirsi nel giro di pochi anni e da non riuscire facilmente né a fermare, né a regolare ..... Non credè l'Italia, ma gettò i presupposti fondamentali della sua esistenza futura.

Negò l'indipendenza e la libertà al paese, ma fece capire agli italiani che tali conquiste non erano più un miraggio lontano e irraggiungibile, ma una speranza e una certezza futura .....

Quando Napoleone, erede e conservatore delle più alte conquiste della Rivoluzione francese, spezza la vecchia e antiquata struttura economica e sociale in cui vive la società italiana e crea uno stato nazionale di nome, se non di fatto, da un coacervo di staterelli e di provincie ostili e invise tra loro per atavici contrasti locali e gli dà norme e istituti e pesi e misure e monete identiche e uniformità di legislazione civile, commerciale, amministrativa e giudiziaria e sostituisce leggi generali a leggi particolari, abitudini nazionali e consuetudini municipali, e mescola negli uffici e nelle cariche pubbliche uomini di differenti provincie, cresciuti ed educati sotto leggi e tradizioni diverse, e trasforma un'accozzaglia di uomini/

uomini male armati e stranieri in parte in un esercito nazionale con quadri e bandiere proprie, e plasma una nuova classe dirigente, dinamica ed aperta ai tempi, traendola in gran parte dal serbatoio della Rivoluzione italiana e immette energie nuove nel flusso in movimento della vita nazionale e legalizza la liquidazione del patrimonio ecclesiastico e tranquillizza gli acquirenti del bene nazionale e stimola e allarga gli orizzonti e i mercati dell'economia italiana, superando i limiti angusti e i motivi del riformismo settecentesco in cui il Melzi voleva rinserarla, ed opera di fatto una netta e sostanziale separazione fra Stato e Chiesa, anche se non dichiarata, ed attua la laicizzazione della vita pubblica, è chiaro, quali siano gli errori, le involuzioni e le contraddizioni della sua politica, ch'egli getta un ponte sul quale camminerà tutta la storia del Risorgimento italiano nel suo processo ideologico, politico, sociale, civile e culturale, col suo carico di delusioni e di speranze".\*

It was this combination of delusion and hope which so particularly characterized the Napoleonic period in Italy's history and was then reflected quite naturally in her literature. Inevitably, conclusions were always somewhat contradictory because/

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\* In "Studi Napoleonici" (1969), pages 276-278.

because on the one hand there was joy at the downfall of a dictator but on the other hand, there was the recognition of the superiority of Napoleonic government, in a progressive sense, over all the forms which were re-introduced at the Restoration.\* Slowly, Italy grew to understand that "chi non ha patria, non ha nulla sopra la terra....." and in the long struggle towards this goal she never lost her individuality because she was forced, unwillingly and as a result of disappointments, to take the initiative herself when the time was ripe. Even Foscolo realised that Napoleon gave Italy hope for the future in spite of the obvious suffering caused by the loss of so many men in battle and the pain felt throughout the country because of the sequestration of many works of art.

Basically/

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\* Balbo and D'Azeglio felt this same kind of perplexity because they recognised the awakening of a positive ferment of renewed life in the Napoleonic period. Mazzini was of the same opinion and in his famous letter to Carlo Alberto of Savoy urged him to act like a "Napoleone" among the sovereigns of Italy: not just with regard to military matters, but more specifically in the field of advancing the modern concept of the State. (1848)

E. ROTA: "Milano Napoleonico" in "Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri", "Storia di Milano", Xlll, page 349.

Basically, Italy was happy in the age of Napoleon. The people enjoyed the feeling of security and grandeur which he brought them, they felt a certain pride in fighting for "Il Nostro Imperatore", and they enjoyed the glory while it lasted without letting it impinge too much on their way of life.\* Every aspect of life was considered and attempts were made to improve where possible. This contentment, grandeur and often gaiety is reflected in the art, architecture, town-planning, interior decoration, dress and carnivals of the period. Most of the people were still able to be gay and think of little more than "panem et circenses". Napoleon understood Italy and its needs and even if his original intention had been to try to mould the country to suit French needs, he did succeed in making Italy see herself in a realistic way in which hope played a considerable part. This is the gap which has been bridged between 1796 and 1821. But such a development which brought literature back to life was not without a renewal of simple spirituality as a source of energy and ideals, and it was with this sentiment <sup>that</sup> which Italy was able to salute Napoleon in 1821: the conqueror and Emperor who had brought about the conciliation/

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\* In a city like Rome, the atmosphere could be likened to the "Indifferenza" which characterised the early Fascist period.



conciliation of two centuries, but who also bore the  
imprint of his Creator:

"Fu vera gloria? Ai posteri  
l'ardua sentenza: nui  
chiniam la fronte al Massimo  
Fattor, che volle in lui  
del creator suo spirito  
più vasta orma stampar".\*

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\* MANZONI: "Il Cinque Maggio", lines 31-36.

A P P E N D I X

- (1) GIOVANNI LUIGI REDAELLI (1785-1815)  
"La Ritirata di Mosca". (1813)
- (2) PASQUIN  
"L'Orazione Domenicale che recitano  
i Francesi nel partire dalla  
bella Italia". (1814)
- (3) Reference to eight relevant works of art.

(1) G.L. REDAELLI:

"LA RITIRATA DI MOSCA" - 1813.

Di Mosca su le ancor calde ruine  
Il Franco Sire i suoi guerrieri aduna,  
E maggior lauro lor promette al crine:  
Ma di tanto guerrier l'astro s'imbruna,  
Ed al muggir di nordica tempesta  
Sovra lui stende il suo poter fortuna.  
  
Il fuggitivo barbaro si arresta,  
E, unendo i gridi al sibilo dei venti,  
Torna ardito a sbucar dalla foresta;  
Fuggon del mondo i vincitor frementi,  
Chè il ferro no, ma in fuga sol li caccia  
Con la fame il furor degli elementi.  
  
Al ciel piangendo innalzano le braccia  
Que' prodi che mai sempre imperturbati  
L'orrida morte rimiraro in faccia;  
  
E a la vittoria in più bei dì guidati  
Videro i regi, supplici, tremanti,  
A piè del magno condottier prostrati.  
  
Oimè! funebre su quei lauri santi  
Crebbe il cipresso, e gli inni trionfali  
Di Borea al soffio si cangiaro in pianti!  
  
Della fame e del verno ai doppi strali  
Nullo resiste e dal comun periglio  
Sono i duci e i gregari or fatti eguali.  
  
Qui con gelate lacrime sul ciglio  
Un padre cade e tenta moribondo  
L'agghiacciato abbracciar corpo del figlio:  
E/

E con flebile accento gemebondo  
Il chiama a nome e con il ciel si lagna  
Non di perir, ma di perir secondo.

Là piagne un altro la fedel compagna,  
Che, oppressa dal digiuno, esangue giacque  
Su la nevosa, orribile campagna:

Cadde la bella e a lei cader non spiace.  
E: "soave è il morir con chi si adora";  
Disse esalando il puro spirto, e tacque.

Ma quel labbro che morte discolora,  
Benchè muto, ti parla, e par che dica  
In sua dolce favella: "Io t'amo ancora".

Pende sul corpo ~~de~~ la morta amica  
Il misero, e in lui duolo a duolo aggiunge  
La rimembranza della gioia antica;

E mentre geme, ostil saetta il punge:  
Pietoso colpo! che al dolor lo toglie  
E a lei, che sola amò, lo ricongiunge.

Altrove, carico di nemiche spoglie,  
Spira un guerrier, che combattuto avea  
Pei cari figli e l'adorata moglie.

Di sue prede far ricchi ei li volea:  
E or nol cruccia il morir, gioia del forte,  
Ma di lor povertà la cruda idea.

Le membra fra le nevi mezzo assortite  
Movendo a stento, un Italo si duole  
Per sè non già, ma per la patria sorte.

"Morrei/

"Morrei felice, grida, se quel sole,  
A cui richieggo indarno un raggio amico,  
Mirasse in libertà l'itala prole.

Ma chi sciôr dovea ne fu nemico,  
E a morir trasse in questo infausto lito  
I più bei germi di quel suolo aprico.

Tardi ei sarà di tanto error pentito,  
Ma qual pro per l'Italia"? E in così dire  
Il fiato estremo è con la voce uscito.

Crescono intanto le minacce e l'ire  
Del fero inseguitore, e ad ogni istante  
Manca in chi fugge il consueto ardire.

Ed ecco, il tetro fiume hanno dinante  
Sprigionato dal gel sol per ruina  
A tante squadre sciagurate e tante.

Appariva la stella vespertina  
Cinta di nemi, allor chè giunser dove  
Volge l'onda fatal la Beresina.

Colà la morte in mille guise piove,  
E colà di mortali il fulmin cade  
Più tremendo del fulmine di Giove.

L'ultima tema i fuggitivi invade:  
La calca che sul ponte angusto piomba  
Chiude a sè stessa del fuggir le strade.

L'aere d'un grido universal rimbomba:  
Ne' gorghi affonda la misera gente,  
E prima di perir trova la tomba.

Allora/

Allora fra le tenebre si sente  
Un alitare, un gemer soffocato,  
E nell'acque un dibattersi frequente:  
Così, finchè di nubi atre formato  
Stese il velo la notte: e quando a stento  
Sorse il sol di caligine ammantato,  
Di pietà nuova scena e di spavento!  
I gelati cadaveri fur visti  
Galleggiare sul flutto ancor cruento:  
E sulle sponde cogli estinti misti  
Pochi viventi ancor, ma senza speme,  
E del tardo morir dolenti e tristi.  
Tutto il resto è deserto ed a chi geme  
Solo il fiume risponde che del ponte  
Urta gli avanzi e ne ribolle e freme.  
In questa guisa fra le ingiurie e l'onte  
Cadono i forti: e tu, lor duce, intanto  
Salvo ritorni con tranquilla fronte;  
E dal tuo carro di vittoria infranto  
Mandi un urlo terribile di guerra,  
Cruda risposta delle madri al pianto!  
Ma irata sorge contro a te la terra  
E chi la strada a te del regno aprì,  
Quel trono che innalzò, pentito atterra.  
Mertata sorte! ..... Ma non vil son io,  
Nè insulto tu da questo labbro udrai,  
Sacro de' carmi all'incorrotto Dio.  
Te, quand'eri tiranno, io disprezzai,  
Chè i tiranni alma libera non cura;  
Ed or più grande ch'uom nol fosse mai  
Ti rende agli occhi miei la tua sventura.\*

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\* See Chapter 3(e), pages 192-193.

(2) PASQUIN: "L'ORAZIONE DOMENICALE CHE RECITANO I FRANCESI  
NEL PARTIRE DALLA BELLA ITALIA". (1814).

Che infamia è mai nostra, massima quella del nostro  
capo, che col suo molto operare si meritò il bel nome  
di PATER;

Essendo ridotti ad una miseria tale, che quel poco che  
possediamo lo possiamo nemmeno dir NOSTER!

La ragione giusta e vera delle nostre disgrazie si è il  
non aver voluto riconoscere QUI ES IN COELIS;

Il non aver voluto osservare i suoi precetti, e sue  
feste SANCTIFICETUR.

Ahi, Francia infelice! Ciò di che devi più crucciarti  
si è questo che in te non debba rimanere che il solo  
infame NOMEN TUUM.

L'Italia or gioirà, e godrà dei nostri mali, e tutta  
allegra e contenta, rivolta verso l'Austria, griderà:  
ADVENIAT REGNUM TUUM.

Pochi nostri partitanti ci restano ancora, ma essendo  
anche questi resi vili e intimoriti dalla nostra sorte  
fatale, con voce tremante diranno: FIAT VOLUNTAS TUA.

Iddio/

Iddio pur troppo sa mostrarsi sempre in ogni evento lo stesso SICUT ET IN COELO ET IN TERRA.

Che ci resta or dunque? null'altro che andar cercando il PANEM NOSTRUM.

Ma terminerà questa nostra cattiva condizione o sarà il nostro disdoro QUOTIDIANUM?

Ove sono quei dì felici, che con tanta prepotenza, con alterigia inaudita, ci presentavamo agli Italiani, quai creditori di scadute cambiali, dicendo: DA NOBIS HODIE?

Ma ora ci tocca dire: DIMITTE NOBIS.

Ora è giunto il momento in cui riconoscere, ma troppo tardi, DEBITA NOSTRA.

Con qual animo verranno gli Italiani far fronte a chi si impadronisce dei loro stati e difender noi, se sorgono dal male che gli abbiano cagionato SICUT ET NOS DIMITTINUS?

Se anzi da moltissimi Italiani si ritiene che l'Austria abbia da soddisfare DEBITORIBUS NOSTRIS?

Che valsero tutti i tentativi da noi usati per fare che il popolo Italiano ci aiutasse? Che giovarono le nostre finzioni nelle gazzette, nei fogli e nei bollettini per tener/



tener celata la nostra rovina? Esso pur troppo saprà le  
disfatte continue per la nostra parte; per cui franco  
risponderà: ET NE NOS INDUCAS IN TENTATIONEM.

Se Napoleone fosse ancora grande come era, gli potessimo  
almen dire: LIBERA NOS A MALO.

Ma ah! che siam forzati a replicare: AMEN\*

- 
- \* NOTE: Published by F. Novati in his "Studi critici e  
letterari", (1889), pages 257-259. It is probable that  
this anonymous parody was written in or near Venice because  
it so closely resembles others written by the Venetians.  
Unfortunately, Novati does not indicate the place of  
publication and his is the only known record of this parody  
since 1814.
- All other "Pasquinades" in this thesis were written in Rome.  
It was the custom to attach anonymous witty and sometimes  
libellous comments to the statue known for centuries as  
Pasquino which stood behind the Palazzo Braschi. These were  
often "answered" by the statue of Marforio on the Capitol.
- "Pasquino è l'eco del malcontento popolare, il flagella-  
:tore dei vizi della Corte. È l'espressione dell'ira  
profonda ma impotente di un popolo asservito, abbruttito,  
sonnecchioso, povero, infingardo, il quale sfoga la propria  
indignazione contro i suoi tiranni col sogghigno beffardo  
del suo supremo disprezzo". (R. Giovagnoli: "Passeggiate  
Romane", Milano, 1878, page 258).
-

(3) Reproductions of the following works of art  
would be a suitable addition to this study.

- 1) Antoine-Jean Gros: Bonaparte à Arcole. (1799).

Musée du Louvre.

An idealistic picture of Bonaparte, the youthful hero, which corresponds to the image which he evoked in the minds of Italians at that time.

- 2) F.X. Fabre: Ritratto di Vittorio Alfieri.

Galleria degli Uffizi, Firenze.

- 3) A. Canova: Bronze statue of Napoleon. (1809).

This statue which stands at the entrance to the Brera Gallery in Milan, was made in open emulation of Roman imperial statuary. It gratified Napoleon's desire for a heroic public image and it also suited Canova's artistic aims.

- 4) G. Chabod: Napoleone a cavallo. (1810).

Museo Napoleonico, Roma.

- 5) Andrea Appiani: Vincenzo Monti.

Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Roma.

A very good "society" portrait.

- 6) F.X. Fabre: Ugo Foscolo.

Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze. Referred to on page 344,

Note 1.

- 7) Giuseppe Molteni & Massimo D'Azeglio: Ritratto di Alessandro Manzoni

a 46 anni. (1831).

A portrait which shows serenity through suffering - against a background of romantic landscape.

- 8) A. Canova: Bust of Napoleon. Palazzo Pitti, Firenze.

Impression of Classical strength.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MAIN WORKS

WRITTEN ABOUT NAPOLEON IN ITALY, 1796-1821.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF MAIN WORKS

WRITTEN ABOUT NAPOLEON IN ITALY, 1796-1821.

1796

- ALFIERI, V. : Epigramma LXI - 6 agosto.  
FOSCOLO, E. : Tieste.  
PINDEMONTE, G. : A Bonaparte - 21 marzo.  
: A Buonaparte - 1 giugno.  
: All'Italia.  
PINDEMONTE, I. : Lettera Politica.  
SALFI, F. : Sonetto a Bonaparte - 28 giugno.

1797

- ALFIERI, V. : Epigramma - 5 maggio.  
BETTINELLI, S. : L'Europa Punita ("Il Secolo XVIII", 1791-97).  
: Bonaparte in Italia.  
BOSSI, C.C. : A. Bonaparte.  
CESAROTTI, M. : Istruzione di un cittadino ai suoi  
fratelli meno istruiti.  
DAL PIAN, G. : L'Italia addormentata e scossa alla  
venuta dei francesi.  
FANTONI, G. : All'Italia.  
FOSCOLO, U. : Oda a Bonaparte Liberatore.  
GIANNI, F. : Bonaparte in Italia.  
GIOIA, M. : Sul problema - quale dei governi liberi  
meglio convenga alla felicità dell'Italia.  
MASCHERONI, L. : Dedica della sua "Geometria del Compasso"  
a "Bonaparte l'Italico".  
MONTI, V./

MONTI, V. : Sonetto a Napoleone Bonaparte.  
: Prometeo.  
: Per il Congresso di Udine.

PINDEMONTI, G. : A Bonaparte.  
: La Repubblica Francese.  
: La Repubblica Cisalpina.

1798

ALFIERI, V. : Epigramma - 13 settembre.  
CESAROTTI, M. : Il Patriottismo Illuminato.  
FOSCOLO, U. : Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis.

1799

ALFIERI, V. : Il Misogallo.  
BETTINELLI, S. : La fine del secolo XVIII.  
CERONI, G.G. : Ode - A Bonaparte, l'Eroe Liberatore.  
FOSCOLO, U. : A Bonaparte - Dedicatorio dell'Oda.  
: Discorso su l'Italia al Generale Championnet.  
(9 ottobre)  
PARINI, G. : L'Ultimo Sonetto del Parini. (15 agosto)  
PASQUIN. : Satire.  
PINDEMONTI, G. : A Bonaparte, Primo Console della  
Repubblica Francese. (novembre)

1800

ANONIMO. : Napoleone - Acrostico.  
GIANNI, F. : La Battaglia di Marengo.  
GIOIA, M./

- GIOIA, M. : Problema politica e civile, se sia dovuta  
ai Democratici perseguitati sotto l'interregno  
tedesco, un'indennizzazione.
- LOMONACO, F. : Rapporto al cittadin Carnot.
- MASCHERONI, L. : All'Italia.
- MONTI, V. : Per la liberazione d'Italia dopo la  
battaglia di Marengo.  
Caio Gracco. (1788-1800)
- PASQUIN. : Sonetti.
- PINDEMONTI, G. : A Buonaparte Ritornato dall'Egitto.

1801

- BANDETTINI, T. : La Pace del 1801.
- CUOCO, V. : Saggio Storico sulla Rivoluzione  
Napoletana del 1799.
- FOSCOLO, U. : A Bonaparte (prima del Congresso di Lione).
- LOMONACO, F. : L'Analisi della sensibilità.
- MANZONI, A. : Del Trionfo della Libertà.
- MONTI, V. : Il Congresso Cisalpino in Lione.  
: La Mascheroniana.  
: Sonetto - All'Inghilterra (modelled on  
Petrarch's "Fiamma del ciel.....")
- REDAELLI, G.L. : Ode - Alla Patria

1802

- FOSCOLO, U. : Orazione a Bonaparte pel Congresso di Lione.  
: Seconda edizione delle "Ultime Lettere di  
Jacopo Ortis".
- GIOIA, M./

- GIOIA, M. : Galateo.  
: Quadro Politico di Milano.  
: Apologia al Quadro Politico di Milano.  
LANCETTI, V. : Ode - in occasione della partenza dei  
nostri legionari per Boulogne.  
LATTANZI, G. : Satire.  
LOMONACO, F. : Vite degli eccellenti italiani.

1803

- CERONI, G.G. : Canto Politico.  
FANTONI, G. : Lettera e Epistola a Bonaparte.  
LATTANZI, G. : Satire - I Costumi della Rivoluzione.  
: Inno - La discesa in Inghilterra.  
MONTI, V. : Su la necessità di onorare i primi  
scopritori del vero.  
PASQUIN. : Satire contro il Concordato.

1804

- CUOCO, V. : Giornale Italiano.  
: Platone in Italia.  
LATTANZI, G. : Canto (Pubblicato in occasione dell'ultima  
congiura contro la vita del Primo Console  
e Presidente, Bonaparte).  
PASQUIN. : Satire.

1805

- CERONI, G.G. : Sonetto - per l'Incoronazione di Napoleone.  
CUOCO, V. : Giornale Italiano.  
: Platone in Italia.  
GIOIA, M./

- GIOIA, M. : I francesi, i tedeschi, i russi in Lombardia.  
LOMONACO, F. : Vite dei famosi capitani d'Italia.  
MONTI, V. : Il Beneficio.  
VARIE PROSE : In occasione di celebrare con straordinaria  
E RIME. pompa i giorni di nascita e di nome di  
S.M.I.R. Napoleone I. (Lucca).

1806

- BENINCASA, B. : Q. Orazio Flacco redivivo - A Napoleone  
il grande, imperatore dei francesi e  
re d'Italia.  
CAMILLI, L. : Le guerre di Napoleone il Grande.  
CUOCO, V. : Seconda edizione del "Saggio Storico".  
: Giornale Storico.  
: Platone in Italia.  
FANTONI, G. : Sullo stato dell'Italia nel 1806.  
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nel 1806.  
GARMAGNANO, A. : Ode - per le vittorie riportate in  
Germania da Napoleone I, Imperatore dei  
francesi e re d'Italia.  
GIANNI, F. : La Battaglia di Jena.  
GRASSI, G. : Sopra il ritorno della pace.  
MONTI, V. : Il Bardo della Selva Nera.  
: La Spada di Federigo II.  
NAVASA, G. : L'Italia rigenerata da Napoleone il Grande.  
NICCOLINI, G.B. : Dedica dell'Orazione all'Imperiale  
Accademia delle Belle Arti di Firenze.  
PACCHIAROTTI, G.B./



PACCHIAROTTI, G.B. : Napoleone, Raggio della Divinità.

1807

CESAROTTI, M. : Pronea.

D'ALGAROTTI, L.C. : Il Giudizio di Giove.

FOSCOLO, U. : Dei Sepolcri.

: Te Deum; Gamelie Dee!

GIANNI, F. : La Battaglia di Friedland.

: L'Ultima Guerra dell'Austria.

: La Battaglia di Austerlitz.

GIORDANI, P. : Panegirico alla Sacra Maestà di  
Napoleone.

MAZZA, A. : Sonetto a Napoleone il Grande pel suo  
arrivo in Italia nel novembre del 1807.

MONTI, V. : In Occasione del parto della Vice-Regina  
d'Italia.

SARCHIANI, G. : Elegia.

1808

DALMISTRO, A. : Primo Discorso sulla Coscrizione.

: A Napoleone debellator delle Spagne  
nel 1808.

1809

BANDETTINI, T. : A Napoleone nella battaglia di Vagria.

CAMPANELLI, G.N. : Discorso per l'anniversario dell'in-  
: coronazione di S.M. Napoleone il Grande,  
e della vittoria di Austerlitz.

CERONI, G.G./

- CERONI, G.G. : Ode - Il Giorno Onomastico di Napoleone  
il Grande.
- DALMISTRO, A. : All'Italia.  
: La Pace dei 14 ottobre, 1809.
- FOSCOLO, U. : Dell'origine e dell'ufficio della  
letteratura.  
: Sull'origine e limiti della giustizia.
- GASPARINETTI, A. : Apoteosi di Napoleone, primo imperatore  
e re.
- GRAPPUTO, T. : La Selva Napoleonica.
- LANZI, L. : Storia Pittorica.
- LOMONACO, F. : Discorsi letterari e filosofici.
- MONTI, V. : La Palingenesi Politica.
- NICCOLINI, G.B. : Dedicà all'Elisa Bonaparte dell'Orazione  
all'Imperiale Accademia delle Belle Arti  
a Firenze.
- PASQUIN. : Satire.
- PETRONI, S.E. : Napoleonide.

1810

- ARICI, C. : Il Vaticinio.
- CAMPANELLI, G.N. : Orazione per il giorno anniversario  
della Coronazione di S.M.I.R. Napoleone  
il Grande e la vittoria di Austerlitz.
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- DALMISTRO, A. : Il Puro Omaggio a Napoleone il Grande -  
(Poesie varie scritte, 1805-1810).  
: Secondo Discorso sulla Coscrizione.  
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- GRAPPUTO, T./

- GRAPPUTO, T. : Gli auspici nuziali a Napoleone il  
Massimo.
- MINZONI, L. : Sonetto a Napoleone.
- MONTI, V. : La Jerogamia di Creta.
- PARADISI, G. : Inno alla Pace.
- PASQUIN. : Satire.(against Continental System).
- PERTUSI, D. : Le Nozze di S.M.I.R. Napoleone il Grande  
con l'arciduchessa d'Austria,  
Maria Luisa.
- PORTA, C. : Brindes de Meneghin all'ostaria.  
Ditiramb per el sposalizzi de  
S.M. L'Imperator Napoleon con Maria  
Luisa, Arziduchessa d'Austria.
- : Sonetto - Quand passi dalla piazza di  
Mercant .....
- ROSINI, G. : Le nozze di Giove e di Lantona per  
l'avvenimento del 1 aprile MDCCCX.

1811

- BARBIERI, N. : Le feste celebrate in Pavia per la  
nascita del re di Roma.
- BENEDETTI, F. : Canzone per la nascita di Sua Maestà  
Re di Roma.
- CERONI, G.G. : La Presa di Tarragona.
- DALMISTRO, A. : Guazzabuglio poetico.
- FOSCOLO, U. : Aiace.
- : Per la nascita del re di Roma.
- MONTI, V. : Le Api Paracridi in Alvisopoli.
- VITTORELLI, J./

VITTORELLI, J. : Per la nascita del re di Roma.

1812

BRACCINI, G.A. : Le Glorie del Generale Marchese de Wellington, o Siano I Voti d'Italia.

1813

REDAELLI, G.L. : La Ritirata di Mosca.

1814

ANONIMO. : Mea Culpa di Napoleone Bonaparte.  
: Lettera di un italiano al Signor de Chateaubriand, autore dell'opera intitolata Bonaparte e i Borboni.  
: Satire andate attorno in Venezia nel tempo dell'assedio fatto dalle armate alleate.  
: La Snapoleonazione.  
: Sonetto - A Napoleone.  
: Vita di Napoleone Bonaparte, compilata sulle opere pubblicate durante il suo impero, e sugli opuscoli e giornali stampati dopo la sua abdicazione al trono.

CHATEAUBRIAND, F.A. : Di Bonaparte, dei Borboni e della necessità di attaccarci ai nostri principi legittimi per la felicità della Francia e dell'Europa.

FOSCOLO, U. : Indirizzio al Generale Macfarlane

ILLEVIR, L. di/

- ILLEVIR, L. di : Brevissima narrazione della vita di  
Napoleone Bonaparte, Imperatore dei  
Francesi e re d'Italia, detronizzato il  
giorno secondo di aprile, 1814.
- LEONI, M. : Bonaparte e i francesi.
- MANZONI, A. : Canzone - il 22 aprile.
- MINZONI, L. : Sonetto.
- MONTI, V. : L'Anno 1813.  
: Il Congresso di Vienna.
- PASQUIN. : L'Orazione Domenicale che recitano i  
Francesi nel partire dalla bella Italia.
- REDAELLI, G.L. : Destati, Italia!  
: Misera Italia .....  
: La Pace del 1814.
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- VITTORELLI, J. : Per la depressione di Bonaparte.  
: Pel ritorno dalla Francia in Roma di  
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1815

- ANONIMO. : Compendio storico di Napoleone Bonaparte,  
sua origine, sue militari imprese, e sua  
vergognosa caduta. Ossia la commedia  
è finita.  
: Notizie secrete di Napoleone Buonaparte -  
scritte da persona che lo seguì pel  
corso di quindici anni continui.
- BENEDETTI, F. : A Giovacchino Murat.
- BIONDI, L. : Il Proclama di Rimini.
- FOSCOLO, U./

- FOSCOLO, U. : Frammenti di storia del Regno Italico.  
MANZONI, A. : Il Proclama di Rimini. (First published, 1848)  
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SALFI, F. : Della influenza della Storia.

1816

- FOSCOLO, U. : Della Servitù d'Italia.  
: Terza edizione delle "Ultime Lettere di  
Jacopo Ortis".  
MONTI, V. : Il Ritorno d'Astrea.

1817

- GIOIA, M. : Problema - quali sono i mezzi più  
spediti, più efficaci, più economici  
per alleviare l'attuale miseria del  
popolo in Europa.  
VERRI, A. : Vicende memorabili dal 1789 al 1801.

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1819/

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1820

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BOSSI, C.C. : Il Veterano dell'Alpi.

1821

CUSTODI, P. : Ode in morte di Napoleone.  
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BIAGI, Z. : Il Riscatto delle Ceneri di Napoleone -  
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(b) LITERARY CRITICISM AND HISTORY.



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- : 1789: Parigi sbastigliata.
- : 1799: Il Misogallo. (1793-1799)
- : 1804: Vita.

ANONIMO.

- : 1800: Acrostico.
- : 1814: Sonetto - A Napoleone.
- : 1814: Lettera di un Italiano al Signor  
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dell'opera intitolata Bonaparte  
e i Borboni.
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In 1965, the following record was produced in New York.  
It/

It is an unusually appropriate accompaniment to this study:  
MILITARY FANFARES, MARCHES and CHORUSES from the time of  
NAPOLEON, Recorded by the Brass and Percussion Ensembles of  
Gardiens de la Paix de Paris. Included are:

- 1) Champ d'Honneur (Anon).
  - 2) Marche consulaire à Marengo, 1800. (Anon).
  - 3) Marche des Eclopés, "La Boiteuse", 1812. (Anon).
  - 4) Chant du retour de la Grande Armée, 1808. (Méhul).
  - 5) Pas accéléré, (Anon).
  - 6) Veillons au Salut de l'Empire, 1792. (Dalayrac-Gossec).
  - 7) La Grenadière, (Anon).
  - 8) Salut des Aigles, (Anon).
  - 9) 3ième marche pour le mariage de Napoléon et  
Marie-Louise, 1810. (Paer).
  - 10) Chant du retour de Campo Formio, 1797. (Méhul).
  - 11) Marche du 1er Consul, 1802. (Paisiello).
  - 12) Aux Mânes de la Gironde, 1795. (Gossec).
  - 13) Pas cadencé des Sans-Culottes, (Anon).
-