

Challenging Intellectual Hierarchies. Hegel in Risorgimento Political Thought: An
Introduction

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In memory of Gerardo Marotta

1. Risorgimento Political Thought and International Scholarship

Understanding Risorgimento political thought requires listening to its many different voices in order to break out of the teleological straightjacket of idealised standard accounts of national history. Rather than reading political statements as facts, as was customary in most of the idealist narratives of Italy's national resurgence, more recent, critical approaches tend to read them as speech acts within a complex framework of contextual references, where the representation of social and political realities aims to achieve specific political outcomes (Skinner 2002, 85 f, 107). Many of these contextual references are embedded in international and sometimes in global debates, which themselves require careful analysis. Despite a long and erudite tradition in Italy of studying these ideas as 'storia delle dottrine politiche', a more analytical and theoretically informed approach based on the methodological engagement with, for instance, Anglo-American studies of political theory, the so-called Cambridge school (Pocock 2009, 3-19), or a Koselleckian history of concepts (Müller 2014, 77) has emerged only relatively recently. Since then, the history of Italian political thought has quickly developed into a vibrant field of research (Bellamy 1987 and 2014; Isabella 2012; Ragazzoni 2018; Recchia and Urbinati, eds 2009; Romani 2012; Sabetti 2010;

Thom 1999; Urbinati 1990). The different contributions to this special issue all stand for an approach to Risorgimento political thought that actively engages with recent international debates in intellectual history, while also adopting an explicitly transnational perspective.

Emphasising the Risorgimento's many different political voices means to highlight Italy's intellectual diversity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but also its close connection with wider European thought and with global political experiences. Our focus on Italian Hegelianism therefore exemplifies an approach to the history of political thought that accentuates processes of transnational exchanges, including different modes of reception and the amalgamation of ideas into new intellectual contexts. Due to its transnational perspective, our interest in Italian Hegelianism shares important ground with other fields of modern Italian history that over the last few decades have examined, for instance, the impact of European romanticism on Italy's cultural and intellectual development (Banti and Ginsborg, eds 2007; Patriarca and Riall, eds 2012; Riall 2008; Thom 1995) or the role of international experiences in shaping ideas in the Italian peninsula (Dal Lago 2015; Isabella 2009; Janz and Riall, eds 2014; Kirchner Reill 2012; Körner 2017b).

In the history of Italian Hegelianism Naples and the South played a particularly prominent role. Therefore, this introduction will start from a critique of conventional hierarchies in the study of Risorgimento political thought, interrogating intellectual relationships within Italy as well as between Italy and the wider world. This approach will help to place the study of Italian Hegelianism within a wider context of recent historiographical approaches to Risorgimento political thought. Among the many different fields of Hegel's thought, his philosophy of history combines spatial with temporal analysis: a truly global outlook with a reflection on the experience of historical

time. Here Italian engagement with Hegel was a direct response to Italians' own experience of a dramatic change in the semantics of historical time since the end of the Seven Years' War, followed shortly after by the American and French Revolutions. Closely linked to this temporal experience was a new awareness of the world's interconnectedness (Körner 2017b, 13; Tortarolo 1986). Therefore, following these preliminary remarks, the second section of this introduction will briefly discuss Italian responses to the emerging political institutions across the Atlantic, with the specific aim of challenging the idea that Italy related to world-political events from a position of inferiority, and as a passive receiver of ideas from supposedly more advanced nations. This argument sets the tone for our subsequent analysis of the mode in which Italians related Hegelian thought to their own intellectual tradition and political experiences at home. A critical analysis of these transnational references raises critical questions over traditional hierarchies of centre and periphery in intellectual history (Hauswedell, Körner, Tiedau, eds 2018). Section three of this introduction will review recent developments in international Hegel scholarship in order to underline the very distinctive contribution the Italian reception of Hegel has made to questions regarding the philosopher's relevance for political developments in modern Europe. An account of the principal traits of Italian and Neapolitan responses to Hegel during the period of the Risorgimento will demonstrate how Hegel's philosophy served Italian intellectuals to relate their own political experiences to global events and, as a consequence, to impregnate their political struggles with philosophical meaning. The final section of this introduction will briefly outline the different contributions to this special issue and introduce readers to the institutional framework from which this discussion emerged.

2. Southern and Transnational Perspectives

Within the history of Italian Hegelianism, Naples and the Italian South assumed a preeminent role that was never quite matched by North-Italian interest in the German philosopher. This discrepancy constitutes the basis for a key argument in this collection of essays and addresses a central issue of historiographical debates on modern Italy: the relationship between North and South, and the South's role in Italy's relationship to the world. In this context it is important to note that the stereotyping of the Italian South as backward and different from the North emerged early in the history of Risorgimento political thought, long before Piedmont's violent attempts to integrate the South into the new nation state of 1861 (Dal Lago 2018: 68 f). Since the late eighteenth-century various thinkers associated with the Neapolitan Enlightenment, including among others Gaetano Filangieri and Antonio Genovesi, pointed to a number of social and cultural problems that allegedly were specific to the Italian South and made it difficult to reform the Kingdom of Naples. Many of their arguments were then picked up by the protagonist of the Neapolitan revolution of 1799, the men and women around Vincenzo Cuoco (Venturi 1962; Petruszewicz 1998: 17-20), and subsequently by the Napoleonic administration in Naples (Davis 2006). After 1815, political thinkers of the North used this debate on the South to define what made their own realms allegedly more progressive. Writing in the 1840s, Carlo Cattaneo argued that the South lacked most of the features his native Lombardy shared with Central- and Northern Europe, due to its "arbitrary and prohibitive system" of government. He describes an entirely foreign country, which contrasts dramatically with the cosmopolitan spirit that characterises the middle classes of Northern Europe. (Moe 2002: 104 f, 107; see also Sabetti 2010). While based on this analysis, and as a matter of principle, Cattaneo questioned for a long time the rationale of politically unifying the Italian peninsula into a single nation

state, other political thinkers concluded that the North had to lead the South into political modernity.

The study of Neapolitan Hegelianism in this collection of essays presents us with a very different image of the South, one which did not need foreign assistance from Piedmont to be brought on the right path towards a single model of political modernity, and whose semantic content was defined by the North. Taking account of its vibrant tradition of philosophical debate, it becomes obvious that the Italian South in no way represented an intellectual periphery of Europe – an argument that can easily be extended to the South’s role in the history of European art and music, or in the history of science.¹ The transnational orientation of its cultural and intellectual life bears witness to the centrality of its position within the Italian peninsula and within Europe. As a consequence, the South also assumes a particularly prominent role when the history of Italy’s political emancipation is placed in the context of larger transnational debates (Isabella 2009, 2012) and of Italy’s multiple imperial connections (Isabella and Zanou, eds 2015; Laven 2002; Körner 2018). Moreover, within this transnational context of ideas Italy was not the representative of an amorphous global South that had to learn from a more advanced other in the North or in the West, or that simply absorbed conventions that Imperial lords practiced in front of their eyes. Instead, Italians were conscious of their own contribution to the ideas and the political institutions of the world’s most progressive nations.

A particularly powerful example to illustrate this reversal of intellectual hierarchies emerges from an analysis of Italy’s relationship to the early American Republic, which due to the global perspective of Hegel’s philosophy of history, and the

¹ In addition to many Italian works quoted in the single contributions to this special issue, there is a long tradition of Anglophone historiography from Chorley 1965 to Robertson 2005 and Davis 2006 that has attempted to raise the profile of the Southern contribution to Italian intellectual history of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century.

role it accords to America as “the land of the future”, is directly relevant to the theme of this special issue (Hegel 1988, 90). Italian political thinkers, including intellectuals in the South, frequently related their experience of political change to events across the Atlantic; but they were confident enough to meet the United States’ emerging political institutions at eye level (Körner 2017b; Körner, Miller, Smith, eds 2012), raising important questions as to the validity of a long historiographical tradition that tended to reduce Italy’s (and sometimes Europe’s) position in trans-Atlantic intellectual exchanges to that of a passive receiver of more advanced American ideas (Pace 1958; Palmer 1959). Only recently, and based on a new transnational approach to Risorgimento political thought, scholars of Italo-American relations have started to identify such conventional views as an American projection onto the political events of the Risorgimento (Gemme 2005).

The Sicilian discussion over “federazione o unità” during the Revolution of 1848 serves to illustrate this point, being representative of a much larger scale of contemporary Italian responses to political developments in the United States. Its starting point was the debate over the possible convocation of an Italian Diet, during which references to the United States were frequently made. Within this debate federalism served to underline the distinctiveness of the Sicilian people within the Italian ‘family of nations’ (in the plural). Sicily proudly rejected “la dispotica centralizzazione” of the French tradition, as a member of the Sicilian Commons argued, and saw itself as the vanguard that lobbied for a future Italian federation formed by representatives from the legislative assemblies of the various States.² The United States served to deliver empirical evidence that there was an alternative path to the French

² Sicily, Camera dei Comuni, 05/05/1848, Francesco Paolo Perez (Le Assemblee del Risorgimento 1911, Vol. XII, 411 f)

model: “Senza l’America mancherebbe all’umanità una pratica conferma alle altre teoriche di libertà,” baron Canalotti maintained in the Upper House.³ Within these debates, references to the United States made the Southern island close ranks with what was supposedly the most advanced country on earth, proudly relating American experiences to Sicily’s own constitutional tradition, in particular its constitution of 1812 (Späth 2012). Even when the defeat of the Revolution was in sight, the fact that the European springtime of peoples had started on the streets of Palermo--and not in Paris, Vienna, Naples or Milan--remained a source of immense pride. Michele Bertolani, a friend of the composer Vincenzo Bellini and of Giacomo Leopardi, and a member of the moderate majority in the Sicilian Commons, reminded his colleagues that “la rivoluzione siciliana innalzò la bandiera del popolo dove stava la bandiera dell’assolutismo, e fece sentire prima ai popoli italiani e poscia ai popoli tutti di Europa, come la forza è nel diritto e come le mille volte la forza del diritto è superiore al diritto della forza.”⁴ Sicily served as a model for the rest of Italy and for Europe as a whole; and references to the United States helped to underline this claim.

The example of the Sicilian Commons shows that listening to the Risorgimento’s many different voices bears the potential of changing the course of existing national narratives, but also of challenging hierarchies of centre and periphery. Reading events such as the Revolutions of 1848 as the political context to the philosophical debates taking place at the time shows that ideas and concepts are insufficiently understood when pushed into national frameworks of analysis. Likewise, the story of Italian Hegelianism presents itself as a transnational narrative that connects Italian and German ideas with debates and experiences in France, the Habsburg Empire,

³ Sicily, Camera dei Pari, Seduta 30/05/1848, Vincenzo Calafato Barone di Canalotti (Le Assemblee del Risorgimento 1911, Vol. XIV, 565)

⁴ Sicily, Camera dei Comuni, 17/02/1849, Michele Bertolami (Le Assemblee del Risorgimento 1911, Vol. XIV, 79 f)

Switzerland, North- and Latin America. This is why the essays in this special issue are held together by a shared belief in a transnational approach to the history of ideas. A more conventional approach might investigate the circulation of a particular book, not dissimilar to the approach of an economic historian who quantifies the volume of trade between two ports. Contrary to that, a transnational history of ideas looks at particular modes of reception, at the adaptation and assimilation of ideas within a changing social and political context (Körner 2017a). When ideas travel within culturally and historically diverse contexts they rarely retain their original meaning. Instead, they are amalgamated into pre-existing ways of thinking. Umberto Eco described a similar phenomenon when he spoke of ‘aberrant decoding’, where interpretations at times share very little with the original author’s intentions (Eco 1972, 103). With reference to Bruno Latour, and seeking to identify a ‘sociology of associations’ that guides the study of these responses, Italians become ‘mediators’ within this transnational intellectual process: they ‘transform, translate, distort and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry’ (Latour 2007, 39). In such a perspective, the transnational does not just happen, but is made and shaped by local agents. For the transnational historian of ideas the object of study becomes this on-going process of semantic transformation, as well as the agents involved in it. It is on this basis that the authors of this collection read Italian Hegelianism.

While the revolutions of 1848 serve as a crucial political context to Italian readings of Hegel’s philosophy of history, the case of cross-Atlantic constitutional borrowing seems more relevant to Hegel’s views on civic and political institutions, as discussed in his *Elements of Philosophy of Right*. Here again, adopting a wider historiographical perspective shows that the global impact of the American constitution is often discussed without taking into consideration how republican or federal concepts

that originated in European political thought related to the emergence of the United States' political institutions (Billias, ed. 1990; Armitage 2007. For a more nuanced approach see Tortarolo 1986; Ferris 2016; Polasky 2015). As John Pocock (2003) has demonstrated, republicanism travelled to the New World from Europe, via the British Isles. Likewise, David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (2010) have underlined how cultural and political experiences of many different peoples have contributed to the American constitution's emancipatory potential in various parts of the world. The fact that constitutions all over the world quote American constitutional documents tells us little about the ways in which they were read. Any one-directional examination of constitutional flows tends to undermine the creative force associated with the reception of ideas. The amalgamation of Hegel's thought with Italy's own intellectual tradition is what characterises of Italian Hegelianism.

Summarising the principal message behind this collection of essays, its authors wish to reject the idea that engagement with foreign ideas describes a process of passive learning in the sense of adopting supposedly more advanced ideas from abroad; and the same applies to intellectual flows within the Italian peninsula. As Marta Petrusiewicz (1998) has explained, North and South exist in a relationship of *alterità*, where self-perceptions of the North depend on the image of an Other in the South, which in turn is then internalised by Italians from all over the peninsula (Patriarca 2010). Such processes of internalisation are foundational of hegemonic relationships and teleological distortions, where the South supposedly needs the North in order to leave its position of self-incurred inferiority. Rather than accepting such intellectual hierarchies, a truly transnational approach to intellectual flows tries to identify original acts of creative amalgamation, very much like what happened in Naples when Hegel's

ideas, via Cousin, Spaventa and others, fell onto the fruitful ground prepared by Giambattista Vico (1668-1744).

For Vico historical change was the key to human nature. Contrary to the sacred history of the divinely guided Hebrews, profane nations were human-made, constituted by the tension between barbarism and *mondo civile* (Mali 1992, 78 ff). In the modern world this contrast placed Italians on the side of civilisation, whichever their present state of crisis. For Italians, this fact in itself served as a self-confident basis to engage with transnational political thought. Vico propagated a form of idealism where the idea constitutes a guiding principle. With Hegel this principle became an attainable fact.

3. International Hegel Studies and Italian Hegelianism

Following the classical works of the 1970s (Hartmann 1972; Taylor 1975), recent years have witnessed a return in Hegel studies, and from a survey of recent publications it seems clear that the phenomenon is currently at its peak. This so-called ‘third wave’ of Anglophone scholarship on Hegel has largely ‘developed as a result of readings divided on the question whether Hegel’s idealism is metaphysical or non-metaphysical’ (Zambrana 2017, 292; see also Beiser 2011, 111), reopening a dialogue between different fields and tendencies in philosophy (Moyar 2017; Forster and Gjesdal 2015; De Laurentiis and Jeffrey 2012; Bauer and Houlgate, 2011; Beiser 2008). Notwithstanding the intellectual relevance of this revival, these works have overlooked important aspects of Hegel’s reception that in their own right are crucial for recent developments in the history of philosophy.

While paying attention to the study of Young Hegelians, to British Idealism, and the American, German and French reception of Hegel (Stedman Jones 2016; Herzog

2013; Mander 2011; Moggach 2006, 2011; Rockmore 2005), the Italian reception is almost completely missing from this recent debate. This is despite the relevance of Hegel both for Italian political developments and for the broader transnational landscape of Italian idealism, associated mainly with Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and Giovanni Gentile (1875-1944), who greatly enriched the European understanding of Hegel's philosophy and played a central role in the dissemination of Hegelian thought. There are a few exceptions to this general trend. Bruce Haddock and James Wakefield edited the volume *Thought Thinking: The Philosophy of Giovanni Gentile* (2015), in an attempt to rethink Gentile beyond classical readings of his work as 'Fascist philosophy'. With focus on differences between Croce and Gentile, David Roberts's *Historicism and Fascism in Modern Italy* (2007) addresses wider problems surrounding Italian politics and liberalism. He also denounces the marginalization of modern Italian political thought, relegated from the wider European canon to the field of Italian Studies, where Italy assumes the position of a periphery that passively received the advancements and novelties of German, French, and British political thought. Relatively few works have resisted this general trend towards marginalization (Bellamy 2014; Rubini 2014; Copenhaver and Copenhaver 2012), emphasising instead the originality and the relevance of Hegel's Italian reception within a broader range of European political thought. Thus, while twentieth-century Italian idealism has lately received increased attention, Hegel's legacy during the Risorgimento still remains a story to be told. This special issue aims to respond to this gap.

The works of nineteenth-century Neapolitan Hegelians offer clear views on many of the questions posed by recent scholarship, in particular regarding the debate over the metaphysical dimension of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel's Italian legacy during the Risorgimento presents itself as a continuous attempt to elaborate the non-

metaphysical and historicist reading of Hegel, highlighting the union between philosophy and history, and the synthesis of idea and fact. This particular tendency in Hegel's reception and the relevance of Hegel's philosophy for Italian political thought are evident from the first time that one of Hegel's works was translated into a foreign language. In 1840, during his exile in Switzerland, Giambattista Passerini (1793-1864) published his translation of the *Filosofia della storia* (Hegel 1840). To Italian readers he presented Hegel almost as a historian, whose philosophy of history, due to the certainty of future political freedom, seemed directly relevant to the revolutionary tremors leading to 1848, at the height of which Antonio Turchiarulo translated Hegel's *Filosofia del diritto* (Hegel 1848). In his introduction, Turchiarulo highlighted the relevance of Hegel's political thought for Italy's national emancipation, describing it as a path to political freedom and civilization. What the first Italian Hegelians found so attractive about Hegel's philosophy of history was the notion of freedom as the liberation of humanity through the struggle of the spirit in its historical existence, combined with an idea of progress addressed to all nations. Recognising the revolutionary potential of Hegel's thought, Italian intellectuals during the Risorgimento found in his philosophy of history the certainty of Italy's future liberation. Against Hegel's own warning, a dialectical philosophy of history helped Italians to look into the future to confirm the promise of a new age. Responding to Hegel's call for liberation also meant that Italy was one with modern Europe.

While the political implications of Hegel's thought seemed obvious, there were important differences in its reception between the North and the South of the peninsula. As Eugenio Garin posited, before 1848 Hegel's *Philosophy of History* was more widely read among intellectuals in northern Italy, while in the South, thanks to Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883) and Bertrando (1817-1883) and Silvio Spaventa (1822-1893),

Hegel's lectures on aesthetics and the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* were better known (Garin 1972). Interest in Hegel in northern Italy began in 1832, when Giandomenico Romagnosi (1761-1835) published in *Antologia* a critique of the Philosophy of History and its notion of *Weltgeist* (Romagnosi 1832), which was so polemic in tone as to provoke a defence by Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) (Mazzini 1837). Over the following two years also Giuseppe Ferrari (1811-1876) and Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869) responded to Hegel's philosophy of history. While Ferrari connected Hegel's idea of *Geist* to Vico's *mente* – highlighting the common elements between Vico and Hegel's idea of history (Ferrari 1837) – Cattaneo criticized Hegel's providential view of history and its 'rhythm' as resembling a 'military march' (Cattaneo, 1839). Nonetheless, Cattaneo recognized in Vico and Hegel the only two theorists who had focused on the history of ideas in the context of an ideology of society. Here it seems important to note that the diffusion of Hegel's thought in northern Italy before 1848 was not based on direct knowledge of Hegel's works, but on the mediation through the French school of Eclecticism, that also had followers in the south of the peninsula, including Stanislao Gatti (1820-1870) and Stefano Cusani (1815-1846).

It was in the South that Hegelianism assumed the role of a proper philosophical movement, commonly referred to as Neapolitan Hegelianism, which over the years assumed an important role also on a national scale. The relevance of the phenomenon in Naples was clear also to foreign observers. Between 1864 and 1865, the German Hegelian Theodor Sträter (1833-1910), professor at the University of Bonn, was in Naples as a correspondent for the Berlin based periodical *Der Gedanke*. He was close to Spaventa and the other local Hegelians, including Antonio Tari (1809-1884) and Felice Tocco (1845-1911), whose lectures at the University of Naples he attended. Reporting the cultural and political debate in Naples to the director of the periodical,

Karl Ludwig Michelet (1801-1893), he wrote: 'If modern philosophy is to ever have a future [...], this will not take place in Germany, France, or England, but in Italy, and in particular on these marvellous shores of the Mezzogiorno' (Sträter 2004, 210).

The majority of Neapolitan Hegelians studied at the private school of the anti-Bourbon intellectual Ottavio Colecchi (1773-1847) in Naples, who was an expert of Vico and Kant, and who towards the end of his life moved on to study Hegel's Aesthetics. He was one of the few local thinkers able to read Kant and Hegel in German. It was with Colecchi that Bertrando and Silvio Spaventa studied the German texts in the original, and learned to amalgamate Vico's ideas with German idealism. Colecchi's private school of philosophy forged the bulk of the Neapolitan Hegelian generation. In the first half of nineteenth century private schools in Naples and the Mezzogiorno were very common. Their activities were independent from the government and they enjoyed quite unrestricted freedom of teaching (methods, programmes etc.), promoting a substantial engagement with foreign ideas. Since 1831 Pasquale Galluppi used Victor Cousin's works to introduce German philosophy in his private school, thus popularising it among Neapolitan youth. Galluppi's experience in the public sector, however, did not allow for these experiments. While he held a chair at the university of Naples between 1831 and 1833, his lessons were subject to the control of the Giunta della Pubblica Istruzione, which accused him of disseminating atheism and eventually suspended him from the university. During the 1840's also Bertrando Spaventa and Francesco De Sanctis were teaching in private schools, enjoying the freedom of promoting the study of German thinkers. As a consequence, prior to 1848 private schools in Naples were of key importance to the process of merging local and foreign thought.

As a more systematic intellectual current, Neapolitan Hegelianism lasted for approximately forty years, from 1841, when the first students of Colecchi, Stanislao

Gatti and Stefano Cusani, founded the periodical *Il Museo*, up to the first governments of the Democratic Left in 1876. The exponents of this movement were for the most part young scholars who, while fighting for the national cause, tried to read, translate and interpret Hegel's philosophy in direct relation to their political causes. Before 1848, they largely worked as a clandestine group, hiding from the Bourbon police. Bertrando Spaventa later remembered this period in a letter to his brother Silvio:

[I]n Naples, starting in 1843 [when Silvio and Bertrando Spaventa began attending Colecchi's private school], the Hegelian idea penetrated the mind of the young cultivators of science, who, uniting fraternally, took to advocating it in speech and in writing as if moved by saintly love. Neither the early suspicions of the police, stirred by ignorance and religious hypocrisy, nor their threats and persecutions could dampen the faith of these daring defenders of intellectual independence. The numerous students who deserted the old universities gathered in the great capital city from all corners of the kingdom; they rushed in throngs to heed the new word. It was an irresistible and universal urge driving toward a new and wonderful future, toward an organic unity of the different branches of human knowledge. Students of medicine, natural scientists, law students, mathematicians, and students of literature participated in this general movement, and their main ambition was, as it was with the ancient Italians, to turn into philosophers . . . It was a cult, an ideal religion, in which those young people demonstrated themselves worthy descendants of the miserable Bruno [understood as a reference to the modern spirit of the Renaissance] [Spaventa 1923, 322].

After the revolution of 1848 and its subsequent repression, its advocates continued their studies in exile, mostly in Turin, or in prison. It was only after Italy's political unification in 1861 – when De Sanctis became Minister of Public Education, Silvio Spaventa was appointed vice secretary of Internal Affairs, and Bertrando

Spaventa became a professor at the University of Naples and deputy in the national Parliament – that Neapolitan Hegelianism became officially part of Italy's national canon of political thought.

Italy's leading Marxist theorist Antonio Labriola (1843-1904), who as a pupil of Bertrando Spaventa was closely connected to the Neapolitan Hegelians, later differentiated between two periods of the movement's development, which were directly related to the political process of Italian unification: from 1840 to 1861, and from 1861 to 1876. After 1860, according to Labriola, both positivism and spiritualism caused a serious threat to Hegelianism. Especially after 1876 and the beginning of the governments of the Historic Left (*Sinistra storica*), Hegelianism gradually disappeared from Italy's intellectual agenda. It was largely due to Labriola's vigorous resistance to positivism that towards the turn of the century a younger generation of thinkers developed a new interest in Hegel's philosophy. In the case of Benedetto Croce and Giovanni Gentile Labriola's anti-positivist Marxism came to form the basis for their engagement with Hegel's thought. In Croce's case it assumed the form of a new historicism, in Gentile's that of a neo-idealism.

From the perspective of a Hegel scholar, much of the Neapolitan reading of Hegel might seem a distortion of the German's thought. Most of the debates in which Italians placed their understanding of Hegel were fundamentally different from the German context of political thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Neapolitan Hegelians' quests and needs were closely related to the political context of the *Risorgimento*, with the result that Hegel's philosophy of history was drawn closer to the anti-metaphysical overtones of Vichian historicism. Within this context, Hegel's understanding of the Protestant Reformation as the key event in making the modern world is deprived of its theological element and turned into the earthly and

philosophical experience of the Renaissance. Hegel's ideas of civil society were reshaped beyond economic and corporative relations to become the embodiment of society's cultural dimension. Hegel's marginalization of the role of the nation in favour of that of the State is overturned by adopting a new concept of 'nationality', that includes a cultural (though not an ethnic) dimension as the basis of the rule of law. Hegel's 'Dialectic' and his Logic are reinterpreted from the perspective of the Phenomenology of the Spirit. Neapolitan Hegelians redefine Hegel's concept of parties in terms of electoral organizations affecting the relationship between the State and civil society. Therefore, understanding Italian Hegelianism implies a disposition to hear Hegel's philosophy in a different voice. This means to take into account the amalgamation of Hegelian thought with the Italian South's own fruitful intellectual ground, including the legacy of Vico's *Scienza Nuova*, and the rediscovery of Giordano Bruno's and Tommaso Campanella's philosophy.

Beyond the study of particular intellectual flows, the importance of the Italian South's political context is one of the main traits to be considered here. As Garin posited, a common feature of Hegel's Italian reception was that it has never been a matter of purely academic debate, or of 'scientific neutrality'. Instead, Hegelianism has always formed a central aspect of Italy's political culture, where Hegel's philosophy was constantly rethought and reshaped according to different moments of the nation's political development (Garin 1972, 123-4). As Norberto Bobbio posited, in Italian political history 'all roads lead to Hegel, or, rather, all roads begin from Hegel' (Bobbio 1965, 237). On a similar note, Sergio Landucci has argued that, in Italy, Hegelianism always represented an 'element of the nation's civil life', a 'civil force' in support of national unification (Landucci 1965, 615). Therefore, unlike certain strands of reading elsewhere in Europe, in Italy Hegel retained a revolutionary potential. Thus, by looking

at Risorgimento political thought through the lens of Hegel's 'presence' in Italy, this special issue not only fills a gap in philosophical scholarship, it also sheds new light on Italian nationalism in its cultural and political dimensions.

4. Italian Hegelianism and the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in Naples

Shedding new light on the political and intellectual history of the Risorgimento was the purpose of a workshop organized in Naples at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici in December 2017. This volume collects a selection of papers presented at the workshop. The event was one of a series of seminars that took place on the occasion of the bicentenary of the birth of Bertrando Spaventa and Francesco De Sanctis (who were both born in 1817 and died in 1883). Since 1975, the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, and its founder Gerardo Marotta, have played a decisive role in keeping the study of Neapolitan Hegelianism alive. They published the original writings of local Hegelians as well as numerous studies analysing their works, while also promoting conferences and workshops on the same topic. Their intellectual operations allowed a younger generation of scholars to recognise the role Neapolitan Hegelians had played in Italian and European intellectual life.

The following four articles, from scholars based in Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States, provide a rich overview of recent debate in Italian Hegelianism. In 'The Rise of the Ethical State in Italy' Fernanda Gallo examines Hegel's reception in Italy within the wider context of Risorgimento political thought. Alessandro De Arcangelis discusses the relationship between the European reception of Vico and the emergence of Neapolitan Hegelianism up to the revolutions of 1848. With particular attention to the ideas of Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, Giuseppe Grieco's

contribution relates the changing concepts of state and nation in Neapolitan Hegelianism to debates in European Liberalism, whereas the role of political parties in the thought of Silvio Spaventa and Marco Minghetti is the topic of David Ragazzoni's article. In his epilogue to this collection of essays Douglas Moggach places our studies within its wider European context of philosophical debate.

Due to his death in January 2017, Gerardo Marotta was not able to attend the workshop at which these papers were presented. But we hope that this volume will honour his memory and repay part of the huge debt that European and Italian culture owes to him.

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