



## Italian Books/ Who Really Zapped Rocco Buttiglione?

Stanton Burnett (July 18, 2008)



Even those who shared Senator Joseph McCarthy's politics acknowledged his fatal flaw: when thinking about the opposition, he generalized when he should have distinguished. He failed to see the difference between an ordinary American of the Left and a Soviet spy. Dina Nerozzi is no Joe McCarthy. She is a distinguished physician who teaches psychoneuroendocrinology and has



published such works, read by us all, as Hypothalamic Dysfunctions in Neuropsychiatric Disorders. She is also the author, three years ago, of the brilliant and moving novelized account of her husband's long imprisonment during the darkest days of Mani pulite, a shattering experience that led her to become one of Italy's most prominent crusaders against judicial injustice.

It is therefore a disappointment to find that this wide-ranging essay has some of the same failures to distinguish that destroyed McCarthy's influence. Her scientific logic occasionally (but at key moments) melts in the heat of her political passion and her outrage at the decline of public and personal morality, especially with regard to sex, the family, and the teachings of the Church.

No one is better prepared than Dr. Nerozzi to describe the physiological, psychological, cultural and political wellsprings of this decline. She can accommodate Darwinism, Christianity, and classical ideas about natural right because she knows them all. She is especially good on the distinction between science that observes and science that engineers. But when she focuses on the enemy the vision blurs. A profound anti-communist and anti-socialist (even the current tame "reformist" version), she sees Marxist plotting everywhere and thus the Anabaptists become socialists, as does Sir Thomas More.

Dr. Nerozzi is, as are many, offended by today's licentiousness, by the idea of sex as recreation, with no holds barred (literally and figuratively) including, especially, homosexuality. And I fear that she has some grounds for turning the spotlight on the U.S. as the most important arena of the sexual revolution. But she then displays fatal ignorance about the flow of power and influence in this country, and leaps to conclusions unworthy of a woman of science. So, starting (properly) with the Kinsey Report (accused of false findings because the interviewing was done while American men were overseas fighting a war while their women were left alone and sex-starved), to which she may attribute more causal responsibility for a change in behavior than is warranted, she moves on to make John Money of Johns Hopkins much more of a piper of public morals than he ever was, to arrive at an entire chapter devoted to the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

It is easy to find outrageous expressions of opinion anywhere in the U.S. Give me a crazy idea, and I'll soon find for you the advocacy of that idea by a group with a heavyweight-sounding name. It's a product of our rich chaos. Dr. Nerozzi finds an abundance of detestable statements in the pages of SIECUS publications, and reproduces them at length. But she fails to weigh carefully the impact of those pamphlets and that organization, which is as close to zero as one can get. She then places the main points of the later stages of the sexual revolution side by side with those broadsides and finds a close correspondence. And the timing is right: Dr. Money and SIECUS did their turn and then public mores changed, and the rates of teen pregnancy, adolescent suicides, child abuse, and narcotics use all soared. The author asserts that "...dopo vent'anni di lavoro del SIECUS... [vediamo]... violenza sessuale, aggressione e suicide." But a lady of science must know that because B follows A it does not mean that A causes B. And, to take this (important, for her argument) example, any serious list of the fifty most important causes of the sexual revolution in America would include neither Dr. Money nor SIECUS, by whom most Americans have never been touched, even indirectly. Much of the American hinterland that she combs is the shadowy swamp of forlorn preachers. Many of the publications cited are from fly-by-night presses, some carrying the labels of universities that are little better than mail-order diploma mills. That a source of decent repute is occasionally dropped in does not make up for the indiscriminate targeting of these central chapters.

So who is the "new man" of her title? He is the "...unico padrone di se stesso perché finalmente liberato non solo dal giogo imposto dalla religione, ma anche da quello derivante dalla natura." Dr. Nerozzi uses her knowledge of the brain to lift the burden of guilt for the production of the new man from Darwinism (where some Americans continue to point), but has difficulty finding a place to put that burden that does not involve the leaps of logic that discredit much of her argument. What she presents, replacing serious social analysis, are signs of a homosexual conspiracy to grab the reins of power in the West. The plotters will do this, to the presumed benefit of gay socialists, through "l'erotizzazione globale." They will "conquistare il potere... [con gli]...obiettivi principali... la distruzione della famiglia, intollerabile luogo di oppressione e prima fonte di disuguaglianze per la società, e la distruzione della Chiesa cattolica..." She sees signs of this plot in the "Gay Community News," another publication of no significant influence, the Regent University Law Review, and publications of Convent Books of Augusta, Georgia, the Christian Free Press of



Jordan, Ontario, and several vanity presses. You get the idea.

This crankiness about Dr. Nerozzi's uncertain targeting should not obscure the importance of what this book represents. If there is to be a serious rebuilding of a political space for the Catholic tradition in Italy, it will not come from village priests, discredited old corrente chieftans, nor DC heirs struggling to dilute doctrine enough to fit easily within the main coalitions. It will come from citizens who move in the modern world, who know science and business and society, who can reason seriously about the defense of the family and the values they cherish. It will require contributions to the debate exactly like this, and so it makes Dr. Nerozzi's essay significant and valuable.

[\(Nerozzi, Dina: L'uomo nuovo: Dallo scimpanzé al bonobo. Catanzaro: Rubettino, 2008\)](#) [2]

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