

4. RECREATION AND TOURISM

4.1 Nature Knowledge and Recreation: the Club Alpino Italiano Activity (1920-1970)

Since 1863 (its foundation year), Club Alpino Italiano (C.A.I.) activity was not simply aimed at promoting recreation and sport, but at meeting educational and cultural needs as well, specifically to address Alpine natural knowledge. Quintino Sella, Financial Minister of the *Regno d'Italia*, was one of the most important promoters of this association. In this operation, he was strongly influenced by the activity of the British Alpine Club, which was involved in environmental research through many alpinists and students (botany, geology, zoology, ethnography, geography). In the words of Quintino Sella, “the development of alpinist passion will allow the love of natural sciences to increase”. Alpinism was therefore considered as a profitable mix of sport and science, with the latter playing the main role. The establishment of the Scientific Board in 1931, ruled by Ardito Desio, contributed to a spread amongst alpinists of scientific culture, through publications, lectures, and cultural trips. In particular, these activities were designed and promoted to meet the educational needs of the young.

CAI activity goals overlapped with other alpine association programmes founded during the same period in the northern Italian regions bordered by the Alps. For example, the *Società Alpinistica Tridentina*, established in Campiglio (Trento) in 1872 (when the Trentino region still belonged to the Austro-Hungarian empire), encouraged mountain exploration. The publication of many memoirs and documents concerning naturalist topics represented the result of new education goals pursued by this alpinistic association. In such a way, the increase in alpinist activities was considered to be a profitable element to both the health of the *Trentina* youth and to local cultural awareness. These aims (education, health and local knowledge), however, were not separated from the aim of encouraging tourism (Freshfield, 1971).

The sporting and recreative aspects of alpinism were appreciated by an increasing number of people. As a consequence, new needs arose in the fields of alpinist practise and knowledge of alpine environments, which were in their turn, satisfied by the publication of several guide-books and hand books concerning both alpinist technical and physical environments. Of course, the linguistic structure of these publications – issued during the first years of this century – already showed a strong rhetorical approach: in the foreword of Berti's Dolomiti guide-book, for example, the age of alpinism was regarded as an age

characterised by struggle and temerity (alpinists beat the mountain through strong willingness and healthy ardour); the conquest of the mountain peaks engenders “(...) *la lietezza d’una forte impresa ben coronata dalla vittoria, con l’anima piena d’azzurro e di cielo, con gli occhi raggianti di meraviglia per le divine visioni che le Dolomiti consentono*” (the happiness for considerable exploits crowned with victory, with the soul full of blue sky, with sparkling eyes enjoying the sacred beauty of Dolomiti landscapes) (Berti, 1908).

During the Fascist period, alpinism was mainly considered as a peculiar physical activity, very useful in the effort to create a “new man”. As a consequence, alpinism became a widespread activity particularly amongst young people: alpinism represented “(...) a good and vivid reality, an unfailing symptom of race vitality” (Annuario CAI, 1931, IV). Despite the institution of the Scientific Council in 1931, the militaristic approach to alpinism contributed to reduce the role of CAI in promoting naturalistic and cultural education. The alpinist was hence described not as a keen nature student, but as a man with “(...) healthy liver, darting muscles, iron will; his worry is: the dread at failing to reach his goal; his joy is: the struggle against the rebel mountain; his dream is: to conquer the top” (Annuario CAI, 1931, IV). Thus alpinism was described as a “(...) forge of a steel character and a formidable will, in which fight, torment, and constant danger are the sources of a joyful life” (Annuario CAI, 1931, V). In such a way, the curiosity and respectful attitude towards nature changed into a fighting one, increasingly expressed in a militaristic language: the mountain was supposed to be a rebel enemy, which had to be defeated and subdued (the conquest of the top). In this context, CAI was more and more charged with para-militaristic tasks (e.g. CAI provided a training for young people who were called up for the army in the alpine regions).

This does not mean that naturalistic studies were absent. Rather, naturalistic research was considered to be a “(...) powerful means for race, cultural and spiritual raising” (quoted in Saglio, 1964, 253). In that period, the main goals of CAI activity were considered to be the promotion of mountain knowledge (alpinism, and alpinistic practise, guide-books, etc.), and the spreading of mountain passion (because of its role in creating a “new man”). At the same time, mountains were not only considered as a peculiar feature of the Fatherland, but also an essential water and forest resource of the highest importance for the national economy and welfare.

After 1945, following the successful Italian expedition to the K2 peak, sporting activities increased considerably, particularly in overseas countries; in spite of this development, formative activity remained prevalent, especially devoted to young people through alpinist schools and camping.

As far as the development of alpinism is concerned, many new mountain huts

were built during the 1960s in order to satisfy the spread of mountain practises amongst Italians (linked with the tourist boom of the 1960s' Italy). In this context, the role played by the CAI in promoting mountain tourism has been widely recognised by many Italian politicians and intellectuals. It is clear that the Government's attitude to the mountains was more concerned with recreative/tourist purposes than with cultural/ecological ones, in line with the prevailing interests of touristic urbanisation in both wide valleys and valuable spots.

4.2 Middle-Class and Touring Club Italiano Activity

After the middle classes got rid of narrow social and economic ties, revealing peculiar attitudes to modernist and progressive issues, cultural journey and leisure climatic stay became more usual habits among Italians. Railway and road improvements and the spread of biking and motoring made travelling easier for an increasing number of Italians; indeed, it represented one of the most significant aspects of rising Italian modernism. The Touring Club Italiano's (TCI) foundation in 1894 can be interpreted as the result of the above mentioned trend. Touring's task was both practical (tourist routes description, hotel catalogues, road maps, monuments inventories, etc.) and ideological, by trying to promote ethical values based on progress (fig. 9), patriotism, and paternalistic pedagogy. Through its activity, the bond between territorial knowledge and the love of one's country was encouraged by nationalist rhetoric and education.

These values, which were manifest at the beginning of the TCI activity, were increasingly emphasised during the fascist period; this ideological adaptation was necessary to the survival of the TCI (it should be noted that TCI represented one of the most important private associations, and for this reason, its activities were strongly controlled by the fascist regime). According to the political context, TCI publications of the period 1920-1940 utilised a strong patriotic linguistic code: lexical choices had to show up *un paesaggio nazionale unico al mondo* (an unique national landscape), *una pregiata mescolanza di insuperabili bellezze naturali e fervido lavoro umano* (a fascinating blend of unexcelled natural beauties melted with the result of the fervid human work).

TCI hymn represents a meaningful example of its national and cultural aims:

*Salute, o vive fonti
che al nostro mar correte;
salute, piani e monti
che al nostro sol ridete;
salute, o patria mia...*

*Avanti, Avanti, via!
O sacra terra nostra,
madre benigna e cara,
la tua beltà ci mostra,
la vita tua ci impara...*

(Hail vivid springs/ flowing to our seas,/hail plains and mountains/smiling to our sun,/hail my fatherland..../Let's go let's go, away/Holy fatherland,/dear and benign mother,/show us your beauty,/teach us your story) (quoted in TCI, 1984, 35).

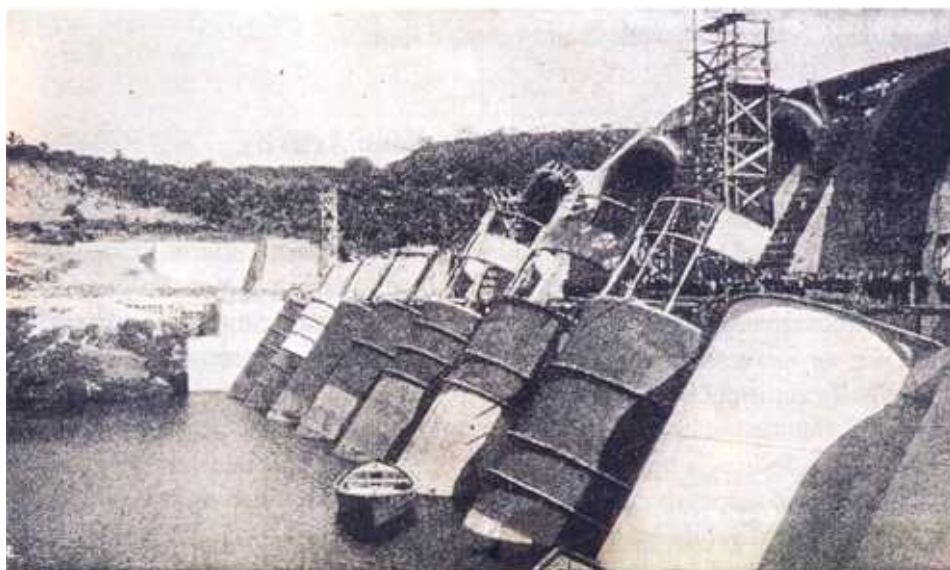


Fig. 9 - Tourism and progress celebration: T.C.I.'s trip to Tirso river dam (Sardinia) ("*Le vie d'Italia*", 1926).

Italian Touring activity was above all divulgative, fostering touristic wandering on all national territory: in opposition to the Grand Tour approach to tourism, devoted mainly to the most important and well known monuments and sites (e.g. Colosseo in Rome, Naples and the Vesuvio, Piazza San Marco in Venice, etc.), every small village, every hidden valley, remote stretches of the Italian coastline were, for the first time, considered to be worthy of visiting by T.C.I. propaganda. Therefore, as a result of association plans and programmes, the visit of *luoghi trascurati* (neglected places) became increasingly relevant in tourism. At the same time, through its activities, TCI also tried to encourage the development of popular tourism, in order to secure for "a big mass of people the lofty enjoyment derived from travelling" (*incoraggiare nella grande massa di popolo il sublime godimento che danno i viaggi*) (T.C.I., 1930, 8).

In such a way, a revaluation and a new appreciation of both the cultural values of localism and peculiar territorial features began, particularly through

regional monographs that the TCI issued during the period 1914-1926. These monographs attempted to describe human settlements regarded as the result of the combined working of local cultural values and physical characters. According to the TCI rhetoric, these local landscapes represented territories characterised by *insuperabile bellezza e varietà* (an unexcelled beauty and variety). The rediscovery of local values (folk, ethnicity, etc.), however, was controlled by nationalistic purposes: localism and *campanilismo* (exaggerated local pride) were celebrated to the extent they were capable of expressing nationalistic aspirations. As a point of fact, beyond simply describing local peculiarities (both in aesthetic and historic perspectives), the TCI guidebooks and publications tried to promote amongst Italians a fatherland consciousness.

In this regard, the great attention paid by TCI and other tourist and nationalistic associations into the promotion of images concerning the Trentino Alto Adige and Venezia Giulia landscapes is significant. Previously controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, these North-eastern Italian regions were obtained after the first world war. During the period 1918-1930 TCI promoted a great advertising campaign (*Visitate il Trentino! Visit the Trentino region!*) in order to celebrate local natural beauties (seen as wonderful opportunities to practise open air activities, e.g. youth education, body culture) and the national pride of being a citizen of a "winner" country (Treves 1989). In this regard, TCI activity helped strengthen Trentino Alto Adige Italianity, producing new tourist maps with the Italian translation of Latin and German local toponomy, according to patriotic aims (Leidlmaier, 1988).

On the basis of the deep-rooted belief that the moral and political improvement of the nation should start from youth education, T.C.I. encouraged some interesting formative activities for young people and students (La Sorgente 1917/1928). Since the beginning of the first post-war period school touristic activities were encouraged. In such a way, many national trips and camping (*Gite e Campeggi Nazionali*) provided the conditions to enable thousands of young people to visit and discover the so-called "un-known Italy", so achieving both cultural and nationalistic goals (fig. 10). Southern regions were the most common destinations, in order to appreciate territories which were un-known not only to northern people but also to central and southern people. In order to meet the demand of residential tourism, new camp sites for young people were set up. The organisation of this touristic activity was committed to an internal TCI board, the *Federazione Nazionale di Sezioni del Turismo Scolastico* (National Association of School Tourism). Its main goal was to spread, amongst Italian students, a cultural and practical education in tourism, also including information concerning landscapes and panoramic features, as well as history, art, folklore and daily life (T.C.I., 1924).

With the coming of the Fascist period the state control over youth education became greater and greater; moreover, the foundation of a specific fascist association aimed at controlling every aspect of the life of young people (*Balilla*) led to the suppression of other associations. The manipulation of young people was considered a strategic goal in order to get overall social control: Open air activities in natural/national environments were thought to act as the best “class room” to teach order and develop soldierly spirit.



Fig. 10 - Camping, nature knowledge and national consciousness (da “Le Vie d’Italia”, 1923).

TCI cultural activity maintained the essential formative/pedagogical aims during the second post-war period also. Publications of the 1950s and 1960s mostly displayed the disappearance of rhetoric and nationalistic statements, proposing on the contrary, a deeper knowledge of the Italian *ambiente*, embracing both naturalistic and monumental aspects. In this period, however, it is still remarkable that the civil task of divulging amongst Italians the knowledge of national territory, paying attention to local peculiarities their promotion among-

st people of different regions, continued. As a point of fact, “(...) more than any other people, Italians needed the integration between North and South, among regions, among towns” (TCI, 1957, 8).

These aims were pursued by publishing a new collection of hand books, called *Conosci l'Italia* (Deliver Italy), from 1957. Each annual volume, free for every TCI member, dealt, in depth, with specific topics concerning regions and environments. Despite the success of this collection in promoting cultural tourism, an idealist approach still persisted. As a point of fact, as evidenced in the foreword of the 1963 volume on landscape (Sestini, 1963a), the statement *ambiente naturale* appeared to be linked to the beauties of the Italian landscapes (*bellezze e singolarità dei paesaggi italiani*: beauties and uniqueness of Italian landscapes), rather than to geomorphological meanings. At the same time, no remarks were made with respect to the vivid dynamics (in both socio-economic and in territorial terms) which characterised Italian situation in the 1960s’.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that a better understanding of the relationships between human and physical elements through tourism was considered to be a fundamental factor to promote the spiritual enjoyment of the landscape. This idealistic approach to tourism, however, did not prevent a more environmentalist attitude developing and spreading amongst Italians: by promoting the protection of regions, countryside, towns, environments (and, at the same time, the understanding of the human-environment relationships), TCI played a basic role in spreading among Italians a more environmentally-based attitude towards nature. In the age of mass tourism (since the beginning of the 1960s), TCI educational tasks became more and more important. In particular, given the environmental impacts involved in the unplanned development of tourist activities, TCI has shared with other associations many preservationist tasks since the early 1970s.

4.3 Open Air Activities and Education: the Italian Scouting Movement

Baden Powell’s youth movement had a considerable and swift spreading all over Europe. It was introduced by some long-time English residents in Italy. Sir Francis Vane founded the first group of Italian boy-scouts in 1910, in Tuscany. In comparison to Powell’s aims, those of Vane’s group would appear to be characterised by a more peaceful attitude. As a point of fact, Vane argued that patriotism can not be separated from a loving attitude towards every creature. For that reason, Vane’s group was named *Piccoli Esploratori della Pace* (The Peace Boy Scouts).

The wide diffusion of sport activities, aimed at promoting spiritual/moral

and physical/healthy formation, can be considered as one of the most relevant English influences on Italian daily habits. In this regard, Dr. J.R. Spensley – a physician who lived in Genoa, founder of the Genoa football club in 1896 (the first football club in Italy) – contributed to set up the *Ragazzi Esploratori d'Italia* Association (R.E.I.: Italian boy scout).

In 1911 a local section of REI was founded in Naples by the English engineer H. Boyon; the activity of this group was characterised by the great importance placed upon trip activities (camps, trekking, nautical scouting, etc.).

In this context, the most important scouting group in Italy was the *Corpo Nazionale Giovani Esploratori Italiani* (CNGEI: Italian boy scouts national group), founded in 1912; Carlo Colombo was one of the promoters. He taught Physical Therapy at the University of Rome, and he was founder and director of the Physical Therapy Central Institute, thus playing a leading role in the development of a national “body culture”. After the first world war, the CNGEI was seen with increasing interest by the Italian Government and by army authorities. The activity of the movement was consistent with the most important goals of youth education in that period, namely: i) principles: order, nationalism, patriotism, militarism; ii) qualities: boldness, physical strength; iii) technics: topography, camping, trekking, radio-telegraphy, first aid.

The attitude towards a greater involvement of boy scout associations in subsidiary tasks strictly linked with military actions, represented a common tendency in all fighting countries during the same period (Sica, 1973, 32). Moreover, the Minister of Education promoted the spreading of scout activities in different schools, in order to make the “youth physical and moral education, training for obedience, strength and courage” stronger.

The peculiar war context had a strong influence on the formative activities of scouting, changing the original spirit of the movement. Militarist aspects then prevailed, supported by the considerable financial aid granted every year to these associations by the War Minister. Formative activities were increasingly devoted to “future fighters’ heart and soul training”, with battle-games, simple military strategy preparation, parades, etc.. The effectiveness of nature education was, in this ideological context, undoubtedly neglected and open air activities were increasingly dependent upon subsidiary tasks connected with militarism.

The Italian Catholic Scouting Association (*Associazione Scoutistica Cattolica Italiana*, A.S.C.I.) was founded in 1923 to face the prevailing secular control over young peoples’ activities. The main goal of the ASCI was to teach catholic principles. In this regard, it proves useful to refer to item 3 of the ASCI regulation: “Religious examinations must have the greatest importance (...) The candidate must know completely the Catechism of the Christian Doctrine to get

a first class scouting degree. A deep knowledge of religion represents his main duty, in order to train and get himself ready for the faith battles (...) moreover, he has to know the Christian morality, the Holy Scriptures, the liturgy (...)" (quoted in Sica, 1973, 69).

The increasing importance placed upon religion and militarism in the Italian scouting movement caused the role played by nature education to decrease. So, for example, Kipling's stories were not considered to be tailored to the educational needs of Italian boys, because "jungle representations and terminology are too far from our Latin mentality" (AA. VV., 1927, 117). The progressive lessening of the catholic severity was encouraged by the public opinion movement upon nature preservation, which dealt with the setting up of the first national parks.

During the Fascist period, every youth association was forced to join the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (Balilla National League) from 1926. Militarist attitudes displayed in the scouting movement during 1910-1920 were well suited to fascist formative goals. Consequently, the contact with nature was mainly considered as a physical recreational opportunity in healthy environments, often far from stressful urban life, in order to get a good training for the young soldiers of an expanding nation.

After 1945, ASCI recognised Kipling's jungle's formative task. In this renewed atmosphere, the figure of San Francesco was considered fundamental, and his sensitiveness to creatures caused catholic scouting to adopt new approaches to nature education (AA. VV., 1946). Open air life pedagogy appears to be linked to spiritual needs consistent with Christian doctrine: so, nature was not only a "source of relaxation capable of taking men back to natural ways of life, sustained by stimulating observations and discoveries", but also an expression of the divine, "(...) the garden of the Holy Father" (Bassan, 1963, 5).

These increasingly relevant attitudes towards the natural environment expressed a vivid opposition to "the conformism of modern life" that characterised the Italian situation during the period of the economic boom (1960s). The extremely rapid economic growth produced sprawl and unplanned development, the spoiling of many traditional landscapes, and the prevalence of individualism in social life. In this context, the formative task of the scouting movement was emphasised as an opportunity to promote, through open air activities, new relationships between modern men and nature. The latter was increasingly considered more as the symbolic issue of a moral order – derived directly from the divine order –, than the concrete features of ecosystems dynamics. Open air activities therefore accomplished a good social function, namely that of an antidote to selfishness, while contact with nature allowed the "re-humanisation of man, in order to discover again both himself and God. This is the expression of

the extremely relevant educative action of nature” (Bassan, 1963, 7). Italian catholic scouting riveted the idea of nature as a “route for knowledge” of God, promoting solidarity amongst all the creatures.

We can conclude by stating that a greater awareness of environmental problems represented an asset in the scouting movement since the 1960s, when the environmental impacts (and social impacts) of unplanned economic growth became evident. At the same time, a strong spiritual attitude remained the basic feature of the scouting movement, as the following argumentation clearly shows: “We have not to turn our naturalistic experiences into scientific lessons. We must know how to look at nature, that is God’s work, considering it not through handbook classification, but through our eyes and our souls” (Bassan, 1963, 9).

5. FROM “PAESAGGIO” TO NATURE PRESERVATION

5.1 Semiotic Framework: Preservation and National Parks

At the beginning of this century a vivid and careful attention to environment preservation also developed in Italy. The debate on environment preservation clearly reflected the semiotic ambiguity and complexity that characterised the discussion about nature and landscape. As it is well known, environment was identified with the terms *bellezze naturali* (natural beauties) and *bel paesaggio* (beautiful landscape), *monumenti naturali* (natural monuments), *paesaggi naturali* (natural landscape), *spazio naturale* (natural space). As Parpagliolo stated, this new attitude to nature preservation developed to counter the bad effects produced by industrial development on the national landscape (“*nuovo periodo di barbarie quando gli inconvenienti della civiltà alterano l’aspetto del suolo patrio, lo imbruttiscono, lo immiseriscono*”, Parpagliolo, 1923, 13). So the preservation task was initially devoted to every visible feature, particularly those visual elements which gave high value to national territory from an aesthetic point of view.

Urban development, land exploitation and industrial activities seriously threatened the distinguishing features of the *bel paesaggio nazionale* (national beautiful landscape) at the beginning of the century. The demand for preservation has represented a very important political issue in Italy since the 18th century (Negri, Arnoldi 1986). Nevertheless, a new interest in nature preservation has developed since 1905, when men of letters, scientists and opinion groups for the first time paid attention to the aim of safeguarding the ancient Ravenna pine-forest, which was threatened by a project of massive wood exploitation. The lack of consideration of ecological concerns about the *pineta* environment is documented by a report presented in the Italian Parliament (Ministero dell’Agricoltura) in 1905. Only “memorial” and “civil” values were recognised as being relevant for preservation. As we have already underlined, in this cultural context, the meaning of nature resulted from the combination of literary traditions, civil (national) history, and art.

This semantic ambiguity, which prevented an ecological approach to nature and preservation developing, was still present in 1943 TCI Committee, whose task was to preserve *siti e monumenti pittoreschi* (picturesque monuments and places), although a precise meaning of the word *pittoresco* was not clarified.

During the same period another preservation association, the National League for natural monument preservation, tried to shed light upon the objects to be preserved, by defining its aim as the preservation of particular geomorphologic aspects. Later on, other associations – Pro montibus et Silvis and Società Bota-

nica Italiana – were established; by supporting the activity of other societies (e.g. Club Alpino Italiano and Società Alpinistica Tridentina), Pro montibus et Silvis and Società Botanica Italiana played a basic role in promoting the spread of a more conscious approach to nature. In point of fact, rather than the consideration of natural beauty, these associations paid more and more of their attention to ecological topics.

After the International Conference on nature preservation held in Berna in 1913, where the need for facing the effects on traditional landscape and natural features involved by the uncontrolled industrial and urban growth was clearly defined, a movement aimed at setting up parks was also established in our country. By transforming a former Royal Hunting Reserve, the Decree 1584-2/12/1922 established the first National Park in an alpine district (*Parco Nazionale del Gran Paradiso*, Valle d'Aosta).

A new semiotic value for the term *natura* can be identified in the debate about national parks. Environmental (relating to buildings, roads, economic exploitation/effects on physical conditions) and ecological (conditions of fauna and flora, rarity) concerns were for the first time regarded as fundamental elements in the preservationist debate, thus affecting social attitudes and values towards the consideration of nature. In that period a peculiar terminology, in both scientific/legislative and journalist discourses, arose and developed terms and expressions such as *riserva totale/integrale* (total reserve, where no human activities are allowed), *parco scientifico* (park established to meet scientific needs), *zona di rispetto* and *cornice di difesa* (areas where only some human activities are allowed, and located close to the total reserve), which are still in use today in the debate about preservation, and represents a heritage of that period (Giacomini, Romani 1984).

In 1923 another national park was established (*Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo*, Central Italy). The setting up of the park in this case also resulted from the transformation of a former Royal Reserve. In this case the ecological concern is even more clear: the national park was aimed at preserving the area's peculiar wildlife (Apennines bear and chamois). R. Pirrotta, probably the most active promoter of the setting up of the Abruzzo national park, published a well known exhaustive report on the local wildlife. Using a divulgative lexicon he described the geological and the faunal/floristic characteristics of the natural landscape to be preserved (Pirrotta 1917).

Despite the greater store set by many opinion and culture makers upon ecological concerns, however, both approaches and lexicon to the preservationist debate strongly reflected the aesthetic cultural context that characterised Italy in that period. When discussing these concerns (e.g. rarity, preservation of some animal species threatened by human activities, etc.), guidebooks and learned

publications still used an economistic terminology that reflected the consolidated cultural climate, and more seldom tourist expectations. With regard to the *Parco Nazionale del Gran Paradiso* Parpagliolo used the expressions *eccelso belvedere* (unique scenic point) or *panorama grandioso e magnifico* (magnificent view); with regard to the *Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo* Pirrotta frequently used the expressions *splendore superbo* (superb magnificence) or *magnificenza insuperabile* (insuperable magnificence). Despite the presence of these elements that reflect both the aesthetic approach to nature and the nationalistic rhetoric, however, it is possible to argue that the preservationist debate about the setting up of national parks represented a turning point in the way nature was considered in Italy.

5.2 Ambiguity in Legislation and National Parks Deterioration

The increase of touristic habits among Italians, during the period of autarky, encouraged a social demand for outdoor recreation in “national nature”. In this context of general interest for local landscapes the Circeo National Park was established on January 25, 1934 (law n. 285). It embraces an isolated rocky and forested promontory along the southern Lazio coast. The Stelvio National Park, a wide alpine territory between Lombardy and Alto Adige, was established on April 24, 1935 (decree n. 240). Both of them shared the same goals: “To preserve fauna and flora, to maintain peculiar geological features and landscape beauties, to promote tourism development” (Tortorelli, 1984, 56).

The aim of promoting tourism development was also present in the integration to the text that established the National Park of Abruzzo (January 4, 1925): here, amongst others, an important goal was “(...) to promote tourism and hotel trade development”. This remark involves a sound ambiguity as far as the setting up of national parks is concerned. In fact, it made possible the concrete touristic exploitation of wild territories (with hotels, housing, roads, ski lifts, etc.), in opposition to a more conscious approach to ecological values.

The generality of a statement such as “(...) to promote tourism development” represented a potential threat in the way of assuring nature preservation. This threat became real from the end of the 1950s, because of the fast growth in mass tourism. The necessity to satisfy these new recreational needs was not subdued to wise tourist planning, it avoided any public control or environmental impact evaluation. Hence, since the end of the 1960s it is possible to notice that not only national parks territories, but also most of Italian coastal and mountain landscapes have been showing the effects of a deregulated urbanistic “attack”, carried out just to promote tourism development.

It is useful to remember how strong the idealist influence still was during the second post-war period: nature continued to be considered as a simple source of aesthetic/recreative enjoyment, strictly connected to tourist activity. The lack of a common national parks policy is partly the result of this cultural tradition engendered by idealism, producing a casual and inaccurate legislation (Ferri, 1981). As a matter of fact, the lack of unified legislation favoured a deteriorating exploitation of the territory.

National parks legislation does not only include ambiguous items, allowing deregulated expansion of human occupancy inside protected areas, but also many restrictive principles that could in fact be used in getting a good management of natural environments. For example, item 3, in both Circeo and Stelvio National Parks *Leggi Istitutive* (setting up laws), states that the park administrations “(...) are allowed, if necessary, to buy, and in case of lack of agreement, to expropriate territories inside the park area”. Item 4 provides for opportunities to expand park territory in order to get a more efficient environmental preservation. Many other prohibitions are stated to avoid natural beauties and geological features deteriorating; it is furthermore clearly stated (item 8) that a transgressor has not only to pay a fine, but also “(...) to put natural beauties back to their original condition, taking upon himself all costs”. Unfortunately, every Italian national park history shows an amazing course of several law violations, which caused natural environments to deteriorate seriously.

Abruzzo National Park can be considered the most dramatic example of such degradation: because of touristic speculation, hundreds of villas, hotels and residences were built, without any planning (Cederna, 1975, 33). Despite the lack of public control on the application of national laws concerning economic development in park areas, many local communities expressed a negative orientation towards the setting up of new preserved areas. In fact, they were afraid about economic constraints stated by park legislation. Conflicts between local communities in those areas where the setting up of a park was planned on one side, and the social demand on nature preservation on the other side, have represented one of the most distinguishing features of the Italian situation during the period 1960s-1970s.

5.3 “Paesaggio” and Italian Geography

As we have previously mentioned, during the first period of the Italian official activity in geography, the word *paesaggio* was strictly bound to aesthetic/literary meanings, revealing subjective perceptions of territory, which were always able to stir up emotional sensations. Porena's writings are a good

witness of the main role played by personal sensitiveness in the geographical approach to landscape: “you can not separate *paesaggio* from the impression it stirs up on our aesthetic taste; it has to be considered as an essential and inborn part of the *paesaggio* concept.” (Porena, 1892, 77). O. Marinelli, outstanding figure in the Italian geography of the early 1900s, considers on the contrary that *paesaggio* is an imprecise term, too affected by the subjective character of aesthetic sensations; in the linguistic elaboration of his scientific discourse therefore he preferred to use other verbal choices in place of *paesaggio*, such as *forme e fenomeni geografici* (geographic shapes and phenomena), *condizioni della superficie terrestre* (earth surface conditions), and *tipi geografici* (geographic patterns) (Scaramellini 1989). He furthermore states that it is easy to get over the abstractness of the term *paesaggio* by supporting it with specific attributes such as *botanico*, *morfologico*, *antropico*, etc. (Marinelli 1917).

This semantic ambiguity/complexity of the word *paesaggio*, still today involving the “allusive” relationships between emotive/subjective and scientific/objective issues (Farinelli 1992, 201-210), has been gradually overcome by Italian geographers since the first post-war period. This cultural evolution was due not only to contemporary German geographical influence, but also to the real need to get a profitable knowledge of social/economic territorial interconnections in post-war Italy. Marinelli, who was the author of the first complete analysis of the Italian territory (Marinelli 1922), still shows in his work a reluctance in using the term *paesaggio*.

Other Italian geographers, Gortani and Toniolo, had already elaborated in 1914 the idea of working out an *Atlante del paesaggio geografico italiano*, giving to the expression *paesaggio geografico* the following explanation: “Sensible displays of relationships amongst various scattered facts” (Gortani, Toniolo 1914). In that period Italian culture was strongly affected by positivist thought; the *paesaggio geografico* concept represented a fundamental basis from which to face the practical needs involved in territorial management concerns. At the same time the above mentioned concept helped a national identity to develop and spread.

Different from other landscape iconographies, it is in this cultural sphere that landscape photography raised to a higher rank in scientific reports, with the possibility being employed in both physical and human geographical contexts.

Outside the Italian borders, the debate on the landscape idea had wide consideration, for example at the International Congress held in Amsterdam in 1938, where in a section exclusively devoted to this topic, the Italian geographer E. Migliorini stated that: “*Paesaggio* is not only a formal or aesthetic entity; it embraces all genetic dynamics and functional relationships, by which elements of every part of the earth surface are connected to one another” (Migliorini

1939, 57). Later on Toniolo draws out a similar statement: “*Paesaggio* has not to be seen as a view but with a strict scientific meaning, as a joint display of shapes, organised on earth in a well-balanced way” (Toniolo 1947, 59). From these two definitions, we can easily understand the wish to strengthen the semantic value of the word, putting aside its common meaning in the popular language, namely *entità fisionomica o estetica, panorama*.

It is with Biasutti’s important work that *paesaggio*, followed by the attribute *terrestre* (terrestrial, earthy), gets an “ecological” sense, where the detailed analysis of global landscape taxonomies are considered as “categories of natural phenomena, which contribute in different ways to the various features of the earth surface” (Biasutti 1947). He moreover makes a distinction between *paesaggio visibile* (“constituted by what can be embraced with the sight until the horizon or, if you like, by what can be perceived by sense”) and *paesaggio sensibile* (“constituted by a wide range of elements”). The most profitable support to geographic research is, however, the idea of *paesaggio geografico*, that has to be “constituted by a small number of characteristics (...) which make possible its identification and, consequently, the classification of main features of the earth surface”.

Afterwards, Sestini still reverts to the idea that *paesaggio* has a scientific utility: it is seen as a *sintesi di vedute* (concise classification of views). By this formal homogeneous concept you get a more precise meaning of *paesaggio*, seen as a “formal association where objects and phenomena are bound to one another by an untangled framework of functional relationships” (Sestini, 1963b). Even though Sestini is aware of the semantic ambiguity existing within geography with the term *paesaggio*, he considers the latter an essential and meaningful tool in geography. In this context, Lucio Gambi pointed out the challenge of considering history and cultural values in the traditional concept of landscape as it has evolved in the Italian geography (Gambi, 1973; Zerbi, 1993).

5.4 The Beginnings of Natural/Historical Heritage Preservation: Activities of the “Italia Nostra” Association (1955-1970)

The second post-war period has always been regarded as an historical period dominated by the goal of reconstructing Italy (a goal which was clearly supported by allied countries, both in financial and political terms). A strong idealistic context has affected the formation of the new Italian Republic, involving only a very limited debate on environment management.

The traditional semantic ambiguity involved by terms such as *natura*, *paesaggio* and *ambiente* was evident in the considered period. This semantic ambiguity proved very useful in allowing many relevant economic (and speculative)

interests to avoid the obstacles stated by a legislation, which was perceived to be more and more inadequate with regard to the need for promoting economic development in our country.

After its foundation (Roma, October 29 1955), the activity of *Italia Nostra* acted against the spread of urbanistic anarchy, whose surprising development was supported by the re-construction excuse. In that period an unplanned territorial development started, with no attention being paid either to landscape features, defined a few years before as natural beauties by laws 778/1922 and 1497/1939, or to the goal of implementing natural resource management.

As a reaction to this spontaneous and unplanned development, we can read in the association's constitutive act that members, "as everybody who lays his country's natural and artistic beauties to heart, are extremely worried about the increasingly serious and vehement destruction of national heritage during last few years" (*Italia Nostra*, 1966). By using terms such *paesaggio* (landscape) and *monumenti* (monuments), a specific target for action was indicated, while the whole interaction between human activities and the physical environment in the territory was, for the first time, pointed out with the word *ambiente* (environment) and the attribute *ambientale* (for example, *Italia Nostra* often spoke about "environmental aspects of cities").

Besides this official duty of checking and informing on the infringements and violations of 1939 law, *Italia Nostra* was involved in stimulating public opinion and Government to become more aware of environmental problems. It is possible to say that the Italian culture owes the overcoming of the traditional concept of *bellezza naturale* (natural beauty) to this association, by adopting the more meaningful and "contextualized" terms *patrimonio naturale* (the original conditions of a territory) and *patrimonio ambientale* (the condition of a territory, as it results from the interaction between human society/nature).

In the first national meeting of *Italia Nostra* (Roma, November 1956), the scanty attitude of Italians towards every matters concerned with the words environment and nature was underlined (Pizzetti, 1970). It was expressed the necessity to promote public concerns on national heritage preservation, displaying furthermore the narrow links between regional planning and environment preservation (*difesa dell'ambiente*).

Besides the publication of many scientific and cultural studies about many relevant environmental topics, *Italia Nostra* also published a monthly Bulletin in order to provide fresh information on environmental (mostly preservation) issues. A good control of all national territory derives from the association's structure, which is distributed about the country in regional sections and in provincial and local sub-sections.

In short, the important role of *Italia Nostra* became well known among Ita-

lians, and the most authoritative names of Italian culture were members of the association. The use of the term “incivility” (*inciviltà*), to denote both the lack of planning culture in our country and, at the same time, the lack of civility in many strata of the Italian population when approaching natural and historic heritage, became more and more widespread with *Italia Nostra* activity.

The preservation of historic towns (including small towns and villages) was one of the main goals of *Italia Nostra*. In addition, idealistic values were concerned (historicism, aesthetic value of a single monument, etc.). In *Italia Nostra*'s approach, preservation could only be evaluated in its proper context, if the “whole urban environment and connected territory” was also taken into account. In the same way, as far as natural features were concerned, *Italia Nostra* paid a lot of attention not only to small and ill-used areas of National Parks but also to many other untouched (wild) territories (Italia Nostra, 1963).

Italia Nostra has been involved since the late 1950s with the condition of the urban environment as well. In this context, the concept of the urban park was regarded for the first time more in terms of a public service rather than in terms of an aesthetic problem (Italia Nostra, 1960). In that way, it was recognised that the gap between the economic development of the nation (in terms of private expenditure and investments), and the provision of social and public goods capable of improving the living conditions, represented a real problem (a problem still existing today).

The increasing role of the association in the debate about nature preservation in Italy encouraged the establishment of many relationships with governing boards, promoting new cultural attitudes among the most sensitive politicians, and indicating new ways for national and regional planning too. Unfortunately, in spite of the greater and greater care in working out detailed preservation plans, in studying new legislative tools, in inventorying historical and environmental features, concrete results were not satisfying. As far as coastal environments were concerned, for example, destruction of original landscapes continued (and is still continuing now) despite the increasing interest in their preservation demonstrated by *Italia Nostra* (and other associations) (Zunica, 1992).

5.5 New Attitudes towards Environment and Nature

At the end of the 1960s, a widespread critical attitude developed towards the environmental impacts involved in the very rapid economic transformation of Italy (from an agricultural country to an industrial one). In particular, late urbanisation caused many problems to arise during 1950-1960, such as territorial sprawl and the redundancy of many traditional settlements in mountain, country and hilly areas. The moving of many people from country areas to cities is

widely testified to by the unplanned building up of worker districts on the outskirts of the most economically dynamic municipalities.

The development of the above mentioned renewed attitude towards environmental values, however, was strictly dependent upon some very specific events: in particular, November 1966 can be seen as a turning point in the way the relationship between territorial development and the environment was considered. In that month, one of the most serious inundations in this century destroyed large parts of the Italian territory: almost all the most important rivers in northern and central Italy overflowed their banks. Many people died, and large parts of the countryside were submerged. The historic centres of Venice and Florence were also flooded. These elements combined to promote new approaches to the way human intervention in very delicate natural situations (lagoons, mountain basins, river-beds, etc.) were evaluated.

In particular, it was clear that these events, which were regarded at the moment they happened as natural catastrophes, in fact represented the result of a lack of territorial planning. The *dissesto idrologico* (hydrological disorder), as it was defined in Italy's case, was widely analysed by the scientific community for the first time, when it became evident (during the 1970s) that every storm could become a catastrophe. The "escape from the countryside" had caused many parts of the Italian territory to become abandoned, many stabilisation structures between land and water had become degraded, and at the same time, the unplanned deforestation in mountain areas caused erosion in the mountain basins to rapidly increase. Moreover, urbanisation and industrialisation developed very quickly, and new settlements were sometimes built very close to dangerous river-beds. Important river-beds (such as those in the Padania Plan), in their turn, were rapidly transformed during the Italian economic boom (1957-1965), by the building new artefacts which caused many rivers to become hydraulic canals. According to an engineering culture applied to territory and ecosystems, Italy was increasingly less capable of answering flexibly to natural phenomena. As a result of new studies about the relationship between territory/environment during the 1960s, these elements (and others, such as the role of tourism development in destroying natural environments, particularly on the shoreline) were recognised to be the most important factors causing natural events to become "human catastrophes".

As we have already argued, it is possible to say that only during the 1960s and 1970s new attitudes towards environmental concerns widely developed in our country, as a consequence of the serious territorial impacts involved by the very rapid economic growth that Italy experienced during the same period. Of course, cultural aspects were also involved (for example, idealism and beauty of nature, and the feeble role of primary and high schools in promoting the evolu-

tion of attitudes). It is important to point out that the negative heritage of these cultural contexts has been only partially overcome, particularly as regards the organisational behaviour of many public institutions that should be implementing new environmental politics.

Despite this fact, it is possible to say that the Italian people have become much more sensitive to the goal of safeguarding the natural environment; in particular, since the 1970s new attitudes towards nature perceived as a public good have steadily increased; if we consider that one of the most distinguishing features of the Italian post-war development has been the absolute supremacy in social choices of private expenditure and, at the same time, lack of attention paid to the public dimension of economic development, the above mentioned renewed attitude would appear to be a positive element. While in the 1950s and 1960s Italians were indifferent to the environmental costs of economic growth – which involved, as it has been recognised “(...) tremendous destruction of exceptional environment values, a wasting of territorial resources, considered as valuable, rare, and unrenovable goods” (Vittorini, 1970) –, during the 1970s the emphasis on the importance of nature in promoting social development strongly developed.

In this perspective, mass tourism played a fundamental role: as a consequence of improved economic standards and the greater and greater leisure time available, many people were stimulated for the first time to travel and experience new situations in natural environments. So, “(...) tourism, week-end leisure time, the wide diffusion of open-air sports, and the increasing role of mass communications in affecting social values, can be regarded as the most relevant dimensions in evaluating the changing of public attitudes towards nature” (Muscarà, 1976, 154).

New attitudes towards nature, however, remained strongly dependent upon the “touristic approach” to environmental issues: people were interested in water pollution in coastal areas, for instance, because of the economic role that pollution data could play in affecting touristic uses. The environment became to a greater and greater extent a technical question; in comparison with this tendency, it is important to note that both the planning culture and the cultural debate about the relationship between territory/nature did not develop at the same level.

Relevant to the development of new attitudes, were many conferences devoted to nature preservation which were organised in the late 1960s and early 1970s: a very important conference was held in 1970 (*La difesa della natura in Italia*, Nature preservation in Italy). Here, for the first time, the Italian attitudes towards nature were widely discussed between scientists, men of letters, jurists. They recognised how relevant elements such as the peculiar Italian cultural con-

text, the rapid economic growth and the delay in promoting adequate planning policies have been in destroying natural environments (AA.VV., 1970). Moreover, in this conference, the absolute lack in Italy of an adequate culture capable of considering, in the right way, the role played by public and social dimensions in economic development, was pointed out : "Every person in Italy being happy for the re-conquest of political rights and for improved economic conditions is only interested in pursuing private goals" (AA.VV., 1970, 1).

During late 1960s - 1970s, moreover, the role played by environmentalist associations became greater and greater: *Italia Nostra*, *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* (National Planning Institute), the Italian section of WWF, and the *Lega Italiana per la Protezione degli Uccelli* (National League for Birdlife Protection) strongly contributed to the development of a more environment-based attitude. These associations also promoted the publication of scientific contributions expressly devoted to investigating the environmental impacts of Italian post-war development (Italia Nostra, 1980). The importance of these contributions, however, was often underestimated by politicians, who continued to consider nature preservation as a luxury in our country (only the great political weight acquired by the "green movement" in the early 1980s in Italian parliament caused the sensitiveness of politicians to environmental issues to increase).

The same fate overtook some government committees devoted both to environmental issues and landscape preservation: the scientific and cultural debate was not followed by political and administrative measures. This was the case, for instance, in the Franceschini Committee, which published in 1967 a wide survey on the degradation of the Italian historic, artistic, and archaeological heritage and on the relationship between territorial development (urbanisation, industrialisation, etc.) and landscape preservation (Commissione Franceschini, 1967). In order to study the so-called "hydrological disorder" the De Marchi Committee was established in 1967 (Commissione de Marchi, 1970). Similarly, in order to study the problems involved in the need to safeguard nature and non-renewable resources, the National Committee for Research (CNR) established a group of experts, which published their results in 1971 (CNR, 1971). Both the De Marchi committee and CNR results were not followed by any political or administrative measures.

It is possible to argue that only during the 1980s was the gap, between the partially changed social attitudes and the political attention to environmental issues, begun to be filled. The Galasso Decree (law 431/1985) can be considered a clear demonstration of this.

6. CONCLUSIONS: SEMIOTIC AND COMPARATIVE THEMES

6.1 Nature as Aesthetic Category

6. *The Beauty of Nature and Preservationist Legislation*

As it has been pointed out in the National Report, the term *natura* expresses a wide range of meanings throughout the period considered here. In Italy the strong influence of neo-idealistic philosophy, connected with historicism, aestheticism and nationalism, combined to define a very ambiguous semiotic framework. As a consequence, nature was seen from a poetic/aesthetic point of view, thus preventing new ideas about ecosystemic relationships to penetrate Italian culture.

In this regard it is useful to consider, again, the peculiar semantic values related to the term *natura*, as quoted in the neo-idealistic context:

- The beauty of nature originates from the relations nature/spirit/art and nature/tradition. Nature was regarded as places and physical phenomena suggesting human soul and relevant to national heritage; they show the important relation between natural beauty and national beauty.

- The same aesthetic attitude towards nature affected the Italian preservation legislation until 1985 (Legge 431). Also the term *paesaggio* (landscape) was identified with the meaning *bellezze naturali* (natural beauties).

- Another important aspect to point out is that in fascist rhetoric productive nature could be beautiful too. In this perspective, human work caused nature to become beautiful, because of its productivity, working out a new formal order with strong aesthetic values.

6. 2 *The Role of Education*

The peculiar situation in Italy during the first post-war period is well expressed by another important aspect of the Italian culture, namely the education. Very strong was the rejection against positivism, in order to protect the humanistic tradition and at the same time preserving Italian youths from the spreading of socialist ideologies. These goals were definitively achieved by the Riforma Gentile (6 May 1924), which was aimed at promoting the idealistic philosophy and at assuring the pre-eminence of human spirit in approaching the so-called

objective reality.

It is worth pointing out the relevant differences between Italian and Great British schools during the period, mainly relate to the latter and to a more pragmatic attitude towards reality, in which nature study was seen as an important opportunity for developing self-identification (Englishness). Natural history was largely taught as a tool to get a wider knowledge of the world.

In our opinion, an element to deal with is the different role of localism in education: the official Italian culture has never paid much attention to the local perspective. In such a way that different dimensions involved by localism were not recognised as relevant:

1) the study of localism as tool to clarify the local relationships between social and environmental dimensions. The concept of "man-made environment" has been considered in the Italian culture according to the extent in which it is possible to speak about a "beautiful landscape". In such a way, other "man-made environments" have not been regarded as a relevant matter to study. It probably depends on the feeble role of local studies in the national (and so, official) culture, which paid much more attention to the goal of promoting a national identity.

2) Localism was not regarded as a basic element on which to make up the national identity, but as an element to control.

A rediscovery of the importance of localism (also with regard to the intercourse man/nature) started in our country only in the late 1960s' ("the fear of the cultural homogenisation").

The Italian school was mainly based on the study of national cultural traditions (Roman age and Renaissance), even though, during the 1930s', the influence of the Gentile Reform decreased, as a consequence of the more and more important practical need of meeting of skilled workers in the expanding nation. In this patriotic context something related to natural environment was taught. It was, however, subordinated to the concrete issues of a self-sufficient regime (for example agriculture teaching in the primary school).

Even if also in the British geographical context "landscape" can be identified with "nature", the school curriculum at this time covered ecology. This topic was narrowly related to geography, in order to get a whole and deep knowledge of local rural environments, perceiving at the same time the main relationships between man and his land.

At the same time the comparison with the Swedish situation allows other

interesting remarks. The peculiar geography of Sweden offers the way of understanding the pronounced sense of nature the Swedish people have. But, in Italy and in Great Britain, nature is also identified with the countryside; here, it is possible to be in contact with traditional ways of life, expressing the national peculiarity. The role of nature in education has a long tradition and it was mainly related to practical goals as agriculture and forestry.

Like in Fascist Italy, the term nature in Sweden was also connected to an economic meaning since the second half of the 19th century, when heavy industrialisation began. So, in the relationship national/natural, nature is seen as a stock of resources to be exploited for the development of the nation. Italian primary and secondary school of the period clearly showed a feeble idea of nature, witnessing the lack of any ecological awareness. If on the one hand Italian culture had a really scarce educational concern on nature (in a bio/ecological sense), on the other, the Fascist regime proved very responsive to transform the physical environment, through engineering projects which emphasised the functional approach to nature. This attitude is testified by the spreading of technical universities aimed at meeting practical purposes.

So it is useful to define two different layers within the role of nature as educational topic: school and university. The first one shows interesting resemblances among northern countries, especially the identification of nature with landscape and countryside and specifically with traditional ways of living, expressing the deep core of nationalities and local cultures. As already mentioned, nature had no importance in the Italian school because of the absolute prevalence of humanities in educational programmes. As far as university training is concerned, all countries (Italy included) show a much more similar attitude towards nature and environment, trying to exploit their facilities in the most successful way with a strong concern for practical needs.

6. 3 *The Scouting Movement: from Militaristic to Religious Influences*

Scouting in Italy was strictly connected to school education until its temporary suppression during the Fascist regime. Most of Baden Powell's ideas were strictly followed by the Italian scouting groups which emphasised the militaristic ones especially during the first post-war period. At the beginning of the 20th century Italian sporting habits were remarkably influenced by English sportsmen.

The attitude towards a greater involvement of boy scout associations in subsidiary tasks strictly linked with military actions, represented a common tendency in all fighting countries during the same period.

With the foundation of the Italian Catholic Scouting Association (1923), the

role of nature in the movement showed a different position with respect to Baden Powell's original ideas. As a point of fact, the increasing importance placed upon religion and militarism in the Italian scouting movement caused the role played by nature to decrease.

After the second world war, nature had a new function in education goals of the Italian scouting movement, quite different from other countries. As a point of fact, nature was seen as an effective mean to get a strong faith in God and to improve a spiritual sensitiveness consistent with the Christian doctrine. So nature was not only regarded as a source of relax capable of taking men back to natural ways of life, sustained by stimulating observation and discoveries, but also an expression of the divine.

The important place of religious education in the Italian scouting movement probably had the same symbolic value and structuring role of the Empire-building explorers tradition in British movement. If on one hand Baden Powell relies on the legitimacy deriving from the historical examples of British and American frontiersmen/explorers, and consequently he elaborates a pragmatic relationship with nature, on the other hand the Italian attitude to idealism has promoted the boy scout approach to nature through Saint Francesco d'Assisi's sacred point of view.

6.1.4 *Idealistic Influences on Legislation*

This topic can be considered as another useful opportunity to understand the peculiar attitude toward nature, landscape and environment; here the semantic discourse is worthy of being deepened. A specific terminology was in fact defined, notwithstanding many semiotic ambiguities still affected the discourse. We believe that the lack of any ecological approaches in legislation can be considered as the most important consequence of the idealistic context in which the debate about nature preservation developed. Nature was identified with a set of natural beauties which were defined by means of aesthetic and historical/literary appreciation. As a consequence, only outstanding features were considered to be relevant for preservation.

In comparison with other countries' reports, many differences come out: firstly, it is possible to say that in Italy the debate about nature preservation was not sustained by a wide popular awareness: actually, it represented the consequence of an elite attitude. Moreover, while in England for example conservation/preservation movement developed from the campaign against animal cruelty and plant destruction, revealing a progress in the disciplines of ecology, in our country we had no conception of an organic view of nature. Furthermore, in Britain the development of the first form of nature preservation can be

properly interpreted as an evolving process started in the mid 19th century and in a well-founded naturalistic attitude. On the contrary, the Italian national park legislation arose from an idealistic cultural context which emphasised the connections natural beauty/tradition/nation. As already mentioned, the Italian education system did not contribute to develop a wide attitude towards the biological aspects of nature preservation (in this regard the comparison with the Swedish situation – e.g. herbaria – seems to be useful). As a consequence of the elite character of the developing nature preservation thought in Italy during the first decades of the century, neither public nor private voluntary associations were involved in the topic.

At the same time, the debate about nature preservation did not consider at all the social value of nature (e.g., recreation, public access, educational aims, etc.). In this regard, the comparison with both the English and Sweden situations proves instructive. Beyond the above mentioned cultural influences, other elements are worth noting when considering the lack of attention to the social value of nature in the Italian situation. In particular, Italy's late industrialisation (together with problems arising from the late administrative and political unification) combined to make less urgent the demands about the social enjoyment of nature.

Within the legislative discourse, the “wilderness” problem deserves attention. As results from the other countries' reports, the concept of wild places (wilderness) played an important role in the debate on national parks. Of course, the term wilderness has proved ambiguous; e.g. the crisis of preservationist ideology in Sweden during the 1930s', the problem of moor lands in England. In Italy, on the contrary, no specific term exists which expresses something equivalent to the meaning of wilderness. This probably denotes a particular Italian attitude towards a peculiar aspect of nature/the natural: wild places have the connotation of something to be fought against, representing something which has to be domesticated (something of which to be afraid, and to avoid). Paradoxically, it must be noted that those areas included in the first Italian national parks denoted a real wild condition (for example in comparison with the wild areas to be preserved in England, e.g. moorlands).

6.2. Nature as a Natural Base to Be Transformed

6.2. Italian Late Development

As already mentioned in the national report, in comparison with other European countries the Italian situation was characterised by a strong delay in

promoting industrialisation and in ameliorating productivity in agriculture. At the turn of the century, many efforts were promoted in order to reduce the gap in the country modernisation. In this context, nature was regarded as something to be transformed according to new economic and social needs. This attitude caused the emphasis upon one of the different meaning of the term nature (nature as a stock of resources to be exploited) to increase: the functional approach to nature thus became increasingly important. Instructive examples of this approach are to be found in the debate about hydro-electric energy, forestry management, and land reclamation. In this regard, despite of the different socio-economic context, many resemblances can be identified with the Swedish situation.

In this functional context, the case of forestry management offers a good opportunity to clarify another aspect of the complex relationships between man and nature in the Italian situation: forests were considered not only as a resource to be exploited directly (wood industry, paper, etc.) but also as a key variable to manage in order to assure a harmonic and ordered territory (see par. 2.2 about the relation between forest recovery in mountain basins and plain reclamation). Of course, this is not to be regarded as an ecological approach to the environment, but the clear manifestation of the increasing role of the engineering culture promoted by the Italian government.

6.2.2 Italy and Urban Culture

This consideration of nature as something to be transformed reflects not only the particular economic situation that Italy experienced during the first decades of the century, but also a well rooted cultural attitude: together with the rejection of nature as wilderness, Italian attitudes have always preferred the concept of "built environment" as a source of civilisation. This point of view originated from the Italian urban tradition. To give an example, one of the most influential intellectual of the mid 19th century's Italy, Carlo Cattaneo, considering the relationships between the countryside and cities, referred to cities as the ideal source of Italian history and culture.

6.3. Views of Nature without Planning

Referring to what we have argued in point 1, it is necessary to say that a coherent framework does not emerge, because of the presence of many different tendencies. Even if our cultural context has been strongly characterised by idealism, aestheticism and historicism during the period 1920-1940, new envi-

ronmentally based attitudes came out. Two instructive examples are to be found in the CAI and TCI activity.

6.3. *Club Alpino Italiano and the Idea of "Wilderness"*

If, on one hand, official Italian culture has not dealt with the concept of wilderness, on the other, this concept has been partly approached by a very important private association, the Club Alpino Italiano. As a point of fact, the CAI's activity was not only aimed at promoting recreation and sport, but at the same time at meeting educational and cultural needs as well, namely to address Alp naturalistic knowledge. From this point of view, one can speak about a cultural movement quite close to what happened abroad in the first half of the century. We can in fact remark that the Club Alpino Italiano was inspired by the English Alpine Club. Scientific surveys came out of this movement. Italian botany and zoologists were involved in these approaches to nature, particularly because they believed the mountains would hold good examples of plants and animals. Furthermore, in this context, it is worth noting that the Club Alpino Italiano was involved in the creation of national parks, offering useful opportunities to go deeper into nature studies.

However, the attention, of the Club Alpino Italiano progressively shifted to the more typical ways of approaching nature, strictly influenced by idealism and historicism connected with aestheticism (panoramic views, outstanding natural beauties, etc.).

6.3.2 *Touring Club Italiano and Landscape Approaches*

In the general Italian context characterised by idealism, historicism and the feeble role of school in promoting nature studies, it is possible to understand more clearly the important role played by Touring Club Activity in the developing of partially new social attitudes towards nature. As a point of fact, the gap in nature studies produced by the national education system was partly filled by the TCI's activity. This association contributed, particularly in the first years of its activity, to promote not only the cultural values of traditional human settlements, but also a greater knowledge of physical environments in a perspective aimed at pointing out the distinguishing features of local peculiarities. The regional monographs issued by TCI during the period 1914-1926 represent instructive examples of this goal.

Moreover, TCI activity played an important role in promoting the consideration of nature as a social resource; for the first time, the enjoyment of nature was not only devoted to the most affluent part of the society, but regarded as a

tool of general social progress (e.g. camping activities for young students of low and middle classes).

6.3.3 *Lack of Planning Culture*

Probably the most distinguishing feature of the Italian experience is the lack of communication between the consideration of nature as natural beauties (beautiful landscape, memorial values, nature as source of inspiration, etc.) and the consideration of nature as a natural base to be transformed according to economic criteria. The gap in planning culture and the absence of any appreciation of the social value of nature represented the most important element of the above mentioned situation. These aspects, as we have tried to demonstrate, have affected (and are still affecting) the evolution of both social attitudes towards nature and territorial organisation. In this regard, the differences between the Italian situation and that of the other countries are many, and relevant. In our opinion, the example of the debate about public access to provide the conditions to enable the social enjoyment of nature is one of the most instructive.

6.4 Nationalistic Influences on Semiotics

A specific cultural context was gradually defined since the end of the first world war. Encyclopaedic dictionaries and inventories were drawn up during the period 1915/1955, dealing with all topics and subjects of general culture. They can be considered as the first sources clarifying the semiotic peculiarities affecting the terms *ambiente*, *natura* and *paesaggio*. The most common meanings expressed by these words, in Italian language, were narrowly related to fascist national rhetoric. An idealistic vision of nature has not allowed a departure from the aesthetic/poetic point of view, thus retarding the penetration into Italian cultural life of concepts such as environment and ecosystem.

A strong rhetoric of natural beauties arose, so identifying nature as panoramic views or memorial values. Furthermore, by safeguarding natural beauties the heritage of the nation is safeguarded as well. As a consequence, in Italy, natural beauty represents evidence of the civil tradition of the people, a useful tool to impart a consciousness of the power of the nation.

Since the development of the fascist regime the debate about the ways of approaching nature reflected more and more nationalistic rhetoric. The increasing importance of the nationalistic discourse affected both public and private associations' activity. In this context, also CAI and TCI showed a strong dependence upon nationalistic ideology. In such a way, nature studies were increa-

singly related to the spreading of a national identity. As a consequence, the word *natura* referred more and more to an environmental context strengthening and promoting militaristic habits.

6.5 The Second Post-War Period and the Semantic Vacuum

As we have mentioned in the national report, with the end of the second world war a period of extremely rapid large scale industrial development (particularly in the so-called industrial triangle, e.g.. Milan, Turin and Genoa) came out.

The weak points Italy showed when entering market competition, and, at the same time, the cultural and political heritage of the first decades of the century, undoubtedly played a fundamental role in causing a semantic vacuum in the ways of considering the relationship between the physical environment and society, thus affecting the evolution of the cultural debate about nature, landscape and environment. Given Italian post-war economic, political and social conditions, the goal of promoting national economic development within an increasingly internationally oriented market – whose underlying criteria were to a greater and greater extent run at a sovranational scale – has caused other relevant dimensions to be underestimated, e.g. environmental impacts of territorial organisation, local settlements as cultural resources, the social relevance of natural environments, the importance of planning for reducing conflicts between different uses and interests, etc.

Paradoxically, the extremely rapid economic growth of Italy and the radical change in its economic structure during the 1950s' and 1960s' would have required a clear proactive approach by public organisations (in the meaning discussed in the Swedish report), especially as regard environmental impacts. On the contrary, the negative consequences involved by unplanned development have been faced by very ambiguous reactive responses, when given.

It is possible to say that during the Italian economic boom (until the late sixties), two different functional perspectives were opposed. The first one was an economic functional perspective: nature was regarded as a stock of resources to be exploited and as a simple geometric space to be organised according to increasingly mobile flows of goods, people and information. The second one was a cultural functional perspective: nature continued to be regarded as source of inspiration to be preserved because of its most distinguishing particular features, thus proposing again the idealistic and aesthetic point of view.

The absence of any debate about the problem of providing the conditions to enable an increasing share of Italians to enjoy nature by open-air recreation

especially in metropolitan regions and the lack of a clear policy about the relation national parks/tourism, testifies how feeble the consideration of the social value of nature was in that period. In this context, as we have already mentioned, nature preservation was regarded more as the expression of noble moral values or as something relevant only for those areas developed enough to care for, than a fundamental aspect of social and economic development.

At the same time, also, the debate about the concept of nature as artefact – which could involve a deeper analysis of local inheritance and habits – was not at the fore.

During the 1970s' increasing public awareness of the environmental costs caused by Italian post-war development and the creation of new preservation associations which reflected a change in social attitudes and, at the same time, the increasing role of leisure and recreation combined to promote the reconsideration of physical environment/human society relationships. However, the response was mainly technical; technic environmentalist discourses strongly developed; the lack of cultural debate and the inability to adopt the required administrative reorganisation caused many new environment provisions to be largely not respected.

The main example was the Legge Merli (Merli law), promulgated in 1976, whose aim was that of controlling water pollution: this law, which reflected a strong technical orientation is applied only partially yet, because of many organisational problems.

Obviously, the above portrayed picture does not reflect properly the complexity of the evolution of social attitudes; as a point of fact, many inconsistent elements were at work. In this regard, the following aspects must be stressed as follows:

6.5.1 Legislation

As it has been shown in the national report, the 1922 and 1939 laws represented, together with the law which set up the first national parks, the basis for nature preservation in Italy; in particular, the 1939 law and those which set up the national parks can be considered important marking points; as a point of fact, given the aesthetic and idealist context which affected Italy during that period, they paid attention for the first time to ecological and territorial concerns. For example, the concept of the *piano territoriale paesistico* (a territorial plan aimed at avoiding human activities to damage panoramic beauty considered as a whole) introduced by the 1939 law, the aim of preserving territory in the Gran Paradiso national park by submitting the construction of roads, building, etc. to public permission, and the goal of preserving flora and fauna

would appear to promote a more organic approach to nature/landscape: in comparison to the 1922 law – which considered almost exclusively exceptional features as relevant for preservation – the novelty is evident. Nevertheless, aestheticism remained the distinguishing feature of approaching nature and landscape in our legislation (the case of item 9 of the Italian Constitution seems to be instructive in this regard). Moreover, legislation proved ineffective in promoting preservation.

With regard to legislation and how it reflects social attitudes and values, the following elements are worth noting:

1) legislation has not paid attention to the social value of nature. The “leisure challenge” has not been faced at all. This element proved fundamental not only in avoiding many Italians to enjoy nature, but also in causing many environment problems to arise: mass tourism has played a fundamental role in destroying natural beauties and traditional local settlements.

2) The lack of consideration of the intercourse nature/recreation (considered both as a social problem related to democracy and as a problem to be managed) caused many problems in the field of preservation. The ambiguity of legislation with regard to national parks – which should preserve beauty, flora and fauna, while promoting tourism – represents an evident example.

3) The drawing up of the *piani territoriali paesistici* (1939 law) was not compulsory, and few regions have adopted them up till the present time. Only during the 1980s’ – with the promulgation of the Decreto Galasso – it is possible to say that a real organic approach to nature preservation developed.

6.5.2 Education

Education probably represents the most important bottle-neck in the development of new attitudes towards nature, landscape and environment in our experience. The need for introducing democratic issues into educational practise in our school system (which reflected the Gentile Reform and an anti-democratic attitude) led to the setting up of the Educational Council (*Consulta Didattica*). A novelty was the introduction of environmental study, in which new, more organic approaches (both to physical environments and to local human settlement as resulted from the interactions culture/nature) and traditional aesthetics, rhetoric and memorial approaches merged. Of course, if one considers that the Gentile Reform still represents the basis for natural studies in many schools, one can properly evaluate how strong the delay of our country in pro-

moting new approaches and attitudes to nature is. In this regard, the situation of education during the first decades of the century represents a fundamental weak point which is still affecting our experience in the present time.

Today it is possible to say that a more detailed semantic awareness concerning the terms nature and environment is now emerging in our education system. Nevertheless, it represents more the result of the teachers' personal diligence than the consequence of a clear educational policy.

6.5.3 *Role of Private Associations in Promoting New Attitudes*

Given the nationalistic rhetoric of our official culture and the feeble role played by state education in promoting the spreading of new attitudes towards environmental topics before world war II, it is clear how important the role played by private associations such as TCI and CAI was in promoting the evolution of social attitudes.

As it has been mentioned in the national report, despite the weight of nationalism and aestheticism, TCI contributed to spread amongst Italians new values related to localism and peculiar territorial features, particularly through many regional monographs issued in the period 1914-1926. This formative and pedagogical task was strengthened after 1945. In particular, the use of the word *ambiente* (environment), embracing both naturalistic and monumental aspects became more and more frequent. Local peculiarities became the most important elements to be shown. In this regard, the hand book collection, *Conosci l'Italia* (Deliver Italy), published since 1957, has represented a basic instrument aimed at promoting the integration between the northern and southern regions. In this context, while proposing new elements for a better understanding of the relationship man/physical environment, an idealist approach still persisted. The beauty of the Italian landscape remained at the fore, while no careful analysis of the socio-economic and territorial impacts of tourism developed. Only later, TCI share with other associations (e.g. Italia Nostra) the task of spreading among Italians more environmental-based attitudes.

Italia Nostra (1955) played an important role in promoting new attitudes. This association contributed to overcome the traditional concept of *bellezza naturale* (natural beauty) by adopting more "contextualized" terms, such as *patrimonio naturale* (the original conditions of a territory) and *patrimonio ambientale* (the condition of a territory as it results from the intercourse society/physical environment). Much attention was paid both to local settlements preservation and to the urban environment issue (the concept of urban parks, etc.). Italia Nostra played a fundamental role in providing information on nature preservation.

In this regard and in comparison to other countries, a very important difference has to be pointed out: only during the 1980s' did it seem correct to speak about the emergence of the first forms of environmental management in our country. It represents the result of a world-wide debate about the environmental problems involved by many increasing and difficult to manage problems. Because of the lack of planning culture and because of many organisational weaknesses, this emergency has been problematically faced: only referring to the very technical approach to the environment, it is useful to remember that the Minister of Environment was established in 1986.

In this context, a new concept of wilderness is now emerging, probably according to a global discourse affecting Italian culture. The word *oasi incontaminata* (uncontaminated nature, nature without man) is increasingly used in common language to denote the need for safeguarding those areas which have remained peripheral with regard to the human occupancy of territory. To some extent these areas are increasingly perceived as the last "native nature" part of the Italian territory. The use of the English term "wilderness" in the popular language refers not only to aestheticism but also to ecological issues (e.g. biodiversity) and spiritualistic values as well (anti-industrialism and green ideology).

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