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Book of Abstracts

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&

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(Società Italiana di Storia della Scienza)

Bari, July 12 – 14, 2017

Mariagrazia Proietto & Benedetta Campanile (Eds.)

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“Honorable Mr. Professor...” the history around an unpublished letter calling for the foundation of scientific psychology in Rome

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The presentation will discuss how scientific psychology took root in Rome with the support of Luigi Credaro (1860-1939). Credaro was a philosopher and student of Wundt. Through the course of his life, he became professor of education, dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Rome La Sapienza, a member of the Radical Party, deputy and senator in the Italian Parliament, vice minister and minister of education. His political activity, which never aligned with the ideology of fascism, began in 1895 and ended with his death. One of the greatest protagonists in Italian politics until 1914, he was relegated to the margins of the country’s political life; firstly, because of the advent of nationalism during the years of the First World War, and, secondly, by the rise of fascism.

In 1903, a philosophy student of La Sapienza wrote him a private letter bemoaning the fact that the study of psychology in Rome was in poor condition and that professors Giuseppe Sergi (1841-1936) and Sante De Sanctis (1862-1935) lived with very few means for their lessons and research. The student then asked Credaro to promote the development of a “Roman school” of psychology.

After this letter, so far unpublished, space was found for psychology at the University of Rome. In fact, in 1904-1905, Credaro designed the training of Italian teachers and school inspectors (Pedagogical School of Rome) as an higher education degree and underlined the importance of not just the philosophical, but also the scientific, economic and psychological competences, that in his view teachers should possess.

The presentation therefore will address the subject of the link between pedagogy and applied “scientific” psychology during the early years of the 20th century.

In particular, I will review the conception, promoted by Credaro, of pedagogy as an application of psychology. Elements of this central focus on positive psychology in relation to pedagogy were already present in the writings of Sergi, who in the literature on the history of psychology is acknowledged mainly as an anthropologist, a natural scientist and one of the first Italian “experimental” psychologists, and is only marginally known for his educational writings.

The vision of Credaro, however, was in particularly close agreement with the work of De Sanctis and Maria Montessori (1870-1952), who both were professors of the “pedagogical school” of Rome, founded by Credaro, and who constituted the main representatives of the “Roman school” of psychology.

In the conclusion, the meaning of the word “school” will be addressed. It will be argued that this small group of scholars certainly shared a basic conception of psychology in terms of the objectives that applied and experimental psychology pursued, but they did not have the real characteristics of a psychological school with its own “manifesto,” specific journals and a *corpus* of psychological knowledge and methods that stand out in comparison to other European schools of psychology.

Moreover, this limited conception of psychological school was widespread in Italian historiography – it should be noted that, even in the letter sent in 1903, the student asks Credaro to promote the creation of a “Roman school of experimental psychology” – which described

psychology in Italy in terms of specific scholars (De Sanctis, Gemelli, Benussi, De Sarlo) working in the universities of specific Italian cities who were considered part of a “school” of psychology of that particular city (Rome, Milan, Padua, Florence, respectively).

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PSYCHOLOGICAL METHODS: EDUCATION, INTROSPECTION AND RESEARCH

Relations between psychology and education in the pre-professional period of Chilean scientific psychology (1860-1946)*

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This study was carried out as part of the 11150436 FONDECYT project called “*Background, scenarios, and itineraries of educational psychology in Chile in the pre-professional period (1860-1946)*”. It proposes a characterisation that tries to recognize the relations between psychology and education in Chile during the already stated period through a variety of sources (e.g. books, articles, journals, scientific events, etc.). The study covers the period from the creation of the Primary Instruction law in 1860 to the executive order that professionalised psychologist training in 1946. The previous relations between psychology and education can be traced at least since the arrival of the Dominican Order to Chile in 1552 and the later arrival of the Jesuits in 1593, who permeated the subjects with Moral Philosophy by means of the *Ratio Studiorum* study program, including readings of Aristóteles, Kant, and Wolff (Hanisch, 1963).

In 1881, Andres Bello's posthumous work *Philosophy of Understanding* was published. This work deals with topics regarding mental and logic psychology, following the guidelines of the Scottish