Banfi, Antonio (1886-1957) Encyclopedia Article

Banfi, Antonio (1886-1957)

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Banfi, Antonio (1886-1957) Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Banfi, Antonio (1886–1957).....3

Banfi, Antonio (1886–1957)

Antonio Banfi, the Italian philosopher, was born in Milan and studied at the Academy of Science and Letters there and at the University of Berlin. Banfi enjoyed a long acquaintance with Edmund Husserl, who influenced Banfi's thought along with the Marburg Neo-Kantians. Banfi taught at the universities of Florence, Genoa, and Milan. In 1940 he founded the review *Studi filosofici*, which played an important part in the Italian revolt against idealism. Banfi participated actively in political life. In 1925 he adhered to the manifesto of the antifascist intellectuals prepared by Benedetto Croce. After World War II he sat in the Italian Senate as a Communist.

German rather than Italian influences are apparent in Banfi's major work, *Principi di una teoria della ragione* (Principles of a theory of reason; Milan, 1926). According to Banfi philosophical inquiry does not spring from an immediate spontaneity of thought but arises as critical reflection on the cultural heritage of the speculative tradition. By studying the structures of knowledge, reflection grasps the function of reason. Reason is to be understood neither in a psychological sense nor in the metaphysical sense of Hegelianism. Reason, according to Banfi, is the indefinite law of the process of organization or of coordination of experience.

The task of science, Banfi held, is to study experience and resolve it into functional relations or laws. Philosophy continues the work of science in its own manner. It clarifies experience in terms of dialectical antitheses (reality and appearance, matter and form, necessity and liberty, and so on); it resolves the opposition of the antitheses in the unity of an idea; and in the phenomenological conclusion it discloses the rational structure progressively attained in the ordering of experience.

In subsequent works Banfi sought to emphasize the problematic nature of reason as an open system and as the self-ordering of experience. He saw in dialectical materialism the elimination of the mythical moment of knowledge, the affirmation of the unending development of reason, and the liberative function of reason.

See Also

Croce, Benedetto; Dialectical Materialism; Experience; Hegelianism; Husserl, Edmund; Idealism; Neo-Kantianism; Reason.

Bibliography

Banfi's *L'uomo copernicano* was published in Milan in 1950. His two-volume *La ricerca della realtà* was published in Florence in 1959.

For literature on Banfi, see Giovanni Maria Bertin, *L'idea pedagogica e il principio di ragione in Antonio Banfi* (Rome: A. Armando, 1961); and Fulvio Papi, *Il pensiero di Antonio Banfi* (Florence, 1961).