

Logic and Energy: a Visionary Inspirator.

A tribute to **Giorgio Levi** for forty years of research

**Giorgio from another point of view**

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I have known Giorgio for 31 years. It only took a few weeks of attending a course at "Non-numeric Information Processing" to be convinced that he was the person who I wanted to supervise my thesis and who I could see myself working with once I had got my degree. And that's exactly what happened. I graduated in 1979 and although I immediately got a job in industry, for nearly three years I managed to spend much of my time working with Giorgio. This was possible because at the time the Italian National Research Council was organizing a project specifically in the field of computer science. Although the project was rather costly in relation to what it actually produced in terms of scientific and technological results, it did nevertheless have the advantage of bringing together the top echelons of academia with a significant slice of the Italian computer and software industry, which at the time was unfortunately monopolized by Olivetti and Finsiel.

The project was essentially a wasted opportunity and there were only very few who managed to use it in order to gain experience and to exploit it to educate a new generation of computer scientists.

We - Andrea Simonelli, me and other friends under the aegis of Mario Bolognani were amongst this new generation. And it was Giorgio who was our guide. The Visionary Inspirator, as the title of today's proceedings so aptly defines him.

Not only was he a professor and a head of research in a traditional sense, but he was an extraordinary person who had the ability to draw out of a group of young people what talent we had - whatever it was and in whatever direction it was pointed.

Then in 1982 came the effects of university reform. Giorgio was awarded the professorship that he had so clearly deserved for some time, and I decided to finally give up an academic career that had opened up for me. Work experience had led me to completely different interests and goals.

And so our professional paths quickly parted, and time spent working alongside Giorgio decreased dramatically and then stopped completely.

Giorgio in the meanwhile had become a true friend, we became very close and had a deep and meaningful relationship. One of those friends that you can go without seeing for weeks, even months, but when you meet them again you can immediately pick up where you left off. We had fun together in the happy moments of our lives, and we were always there for each other in those difficult times that have weighed so heavily on our lives.

On a professional level, Giorgio continued to be a reference point for me, for us, and for the company which in the meantime we had set up. Although we no longer had opportunities to actually work together, a very special relationship emerged, a kind of affinity from a distance, so that although we might not see each other we were still very much aware of each other's existence.

For a quarter of a century, Giorgio has been someone with whom I could share ideas, have discussions and formulate clear and carefully thought out opinions even on matters far removed from his scientific activities. And maybe we only saw each other once or twice a year. It was a very special relationship, with its own true value, even if it was not necessarily focused on anything in particular.

On the other hand I think that Giorgio has always felt that "it is good that we exist", that it is good that LIST (the company which I founded) does what it does, although it is long way away from what Giorgio does.

In reality, Giorgio has never worked on an operational level with LIST. He has never taken part in taken any decision in our Group.

On the (few) occasions when he was asked, he agreed on a purely amicable basis to be a member of our Board of Directors, always as a non-executive independent director and, again without any financial reward or if not just something purely symbolic. This unfortunately goes against what many, particularly in the university, believed.

But in the end even this ambiguity is in itself emblematic: evidently people sensed a trace of Giorgio in our activity. I think that is true, and it gives me pleasure.

If "culture is what remains when everything else has been forgotten", then let me paraphrase by saying that "the cultural imprint of Giorgio is present in LIST even though he has never actually worked there" and perhaps for exactly that reason.

I think that part of Giorgio's way of thinking is in List, and that in our diverse experiences there is a deep cultural affinity, a common moral identity.

One thing is sure, I know I owe him a lot.

And I hope I still owe him a lot for many many years.