

Sebastiano Maffettone was born in Naples, Italy, on April 1st, 1948 to Pietro Maffettone and Caterina Sanseverino. His most characteristic personality traits are the love for philosophy and culture, and his curiosity for people and the world. Maffettone's professional life covers many professional areas: he is author of fourteen philosophical books, and editor of several anthological volumes; widely known for his active participation in the academic and educational life, he has the merit of having introduced important scientific novelties in the Italian cultural debate. He founded and was editor of academic journals and research centers, published scholarly articles on different subjects, and contributed to the public debate on different cultural issues thanks to a wide network of international relationships, participation in seminars, workshops and conferences in Italy and abroad. Maffettone was reared in a family that is strongly root in his hometown, and, as his family, he also spent all his young life in Naples, where he attended school and university. During his high-school years at Liceo Umberto I, he had Vera Lombardi as professor of philosophy (from 1963- 1966), who made him aware of his philosophical vocation. He then graduated with honors with a degree in Law. His thesis was on John Maynard Keynes, under the supervision of Professor De Luca. Since then, he developed an interest for theoretical economics that he constantly cultivated since then. Maffettone obtained his post-degree specialization in the United Kingdom, first in Oxford, then at the London School of Economics (LSE), where he had the opportunity to attend the courses taught by professors Karl Popper, Ernst Gellner (who supervised his Masters thesis on "Habermas and Rawls"), and Amartya Sen, of whom he later became a friend and a collaborator. Amartya Sen represented since then a source of inspiration for his studies in ethics and economics.

Prof. Maffettone's professional and intellectual career had troubled beginnings for several reasons: (i) the death of his academic mentor while he was a Law student, just at the beginning of his research activity; (ii) the fact of being the only child of an entrepreneur, and, as a consequence, his duty and responsibilities to the family business; (iii) the dissatisfaction for the academic philosophy taught in Naples at the beginning of the 1970s, characterized by a narrow-minded historicism, indeed quite hostile to any form of conceptual innovation. This latter element in particular led Prof. Maffettone to look elsewhere for a different source for his philosophical interests, which he eventually found in the Institute of Theoretical Physics at the University of Naples which was particularly active not only within the specific domain of physics, but also – in a more general way – open to the contributions of analytic philosophy. Maffettone was first intrigued by and then attracted to analytic philosophy, and then began to systematically study logic, philosophy of science and philosophy of language already at the beginning of the 1970s. In spite of this, his first article that was on Descartes and published in “*Il Giornale Critico della Filosofia*” and was influenced by lessons of Claudio Cesa (a Germanist, great historian of philosophy). For years Cesa became a sort of involuntary teacher of this rather self-taught young researcher, quite uncertain about his future. At Oxford, in the second half of the 1980s, following an invitation by Michael Dummett, Maffettone met and eventually became friend of Marco Mondadori (whose premature death came in 2000). Mondadori, a logician, philosopher of science, and pupil of Ludovico Geymonat, influenced both his professional dedication to moral, political, and social philosophy, and his decision to join a Milanese group, which included, among others, people like Giulio Giorello, Marco Santambrogio, and Salvatore Veca. The group played an important role in clarifying some aspects of Maffettone's

intellectual project. However, above and beyond this, probably the greatest influence came from the work of an American philosopher from Harvard, John Rawls, whose main work, *A Theory of Justice* - a book that more than other changed political philosophy of the 20th century -, Maffettone translated from English to Italian. He also personally knew Rawls and they became close friends. From this moment on, Maffettone worked under his influence and that some of his most prominent American colleagues such as Dworkin, Nagel, Nozick (who died in 2002, the same year as Rawls), and Scanlon. It was during this period that Maffettone started to focus on the philosophical problems that were to become the permanent themes of his life-long research. Since then, he never put aside Rawls' work and theoretical model, which by no doubt was the most deepest source of philosophical education, and taught Rawls to generations of Italian and foreign students.

Maffettone left Naples when he was twenty-eight years old. He never returned to live there, but he kept strong ties with his hometown, where he had long-lasting collaborations with the Suor Orsola Benincasa Institute (that became an excellent research institute under the direction of Antonio Villani (and after, of Francesco De Sanctis), and with the newspaper "Il Mattino". The biographical facts and the philosophical interests are not, looking back, two completely separate events in Maffettone' life. Maffettone's maternal grandfather, Roberto Sanseverino, was the notary and friend of Benedetto Croce, and contributed to the creation of that which would become the institutional structure of the Crocean "Institute of Historical Studies". This forged Maffettone's tendency, since adolescence, to identify the study of philosophy with the work of Croce. It was the very dissatisfaction that grew out of the relationship between the work of Croce and the necessity to find a justification for political normative

thought, that pushed Maffettone to foster a theoretical research, in which normative political theory was an instrument both for the intellectual revenge of Southern Italy (“*Mezzogiorno d'Italia*”), and as an attempt to make Italy less hostile to the liberal tradition. The fact that both these goals are not closer to be achieved today compared to 35 years ago, does not undermined the reasons in favour of these commitments.

From this perspective, the years in Milan at the beginning of the eighties were extremely fruitful and productive. Together with the friends and colleagues mentioned above, Maffettone undertook a political-cultural project of great importance. The underlying idea of this collective project was foundationally similar to that of a well-known man of letters, referring to the Italian situation in its complexity, called a “*gita a Chiasso*”. For Maffettone and his *compagni di strada* this meant trying to give and international depth to a philosophy, and in a certain sense also a culture, that appeared feeble and provincial, closed between the limits of an old and aged historical method of a traditional philosophical Catholicism, and of a Marxism ever more scholastic. The group that Salvatore Veca, with great merit, gathered periodically around the Feltrinelli Foundation in Milan contributed to this renewal. The introduction by Giorello and Mondadori to the essay “On Liberty” by John Stuart Mill (published by “Il Saggiatore”) and the Italian translation of *A Theory of Justice* (Feltrinelli) were, probably, moments among the most representative of this sort of inner rite of passage. Together with other works, both by Maffettone and others, such as Antonella Besussi and Elisabetta Galeotti, Italian culture was introduced for the first time to normative political philosophy. This induced a positive process of innovation within the academia, the publishing houses, and in the scholarly research. During the same period in Milan, Maffettone founded together with two social science scholars, Elena

Granaglia and Paolo Martelli, “Politeia” (currently edited by Emilio d’ Orazio), and the related journal “Notizie di Politeia”. This initiative had the ambition to change the style of Italian tradition in social sciences, introducing systematic group work and reuniting the paths of empirical and theoretical research, both positive and normative. For what regards the specific contribution of Maffettone inside the group, one could say that it consisted in the creation of a theoretical approach at the crossroad between applied ethics and political theory, which became quite popular among Italian scholars. One could say that bioethics and business ethics as we know them today in Italy in the works of scholars like Maurizio Mori and Lorenzo Sacconi, was shaped in that period.

Of course, this political-cultural activity was accompanied by an intense philosophical study and by many written publications, among which are numerous articles published in scientific journals. Worth to be highlighted of this initial period of work are a book on Habermas- another scholar that Maffettone knew well and with whom he collaborated- titled *Critica and Analisi* (Liguori 1980) and a book on Rawls, *Utilitarismo e teoria della giustizia* (Bibliopolis 1982). With these books, Maffettone not only spread the work of two authors that are probably the most important within the sphere of social contemporary philosophy, but he also crafted a new research paradigm in the sphere of normative political theory. The effect, still evident until now, can be found in the works of many authors such Luigi Caranti, Alessandro Ferrara, Michele Mangini, Virginio Marzocchi, Stefano Petrucciani, Ingrid Salvatore, and Fabrizio Sciacca (just to site a few examples).

His work on applied ethics and political philosophy of this period culminated with the publication, at the end of the eighties, of two books: *Verso un’etica pubblica* (E.S.I. 1998) and

Valori comuni (1989, that awarded the *Premio Tevere*). These two books contributed to the diffusion of Maffettone's ideas, making his vision of political theory known to a large audience in Italy, contributing to a substantial update of the conceptual vocabulary of the discipline. A renewed version of Post-Rawlsian political liberalism, the attention to applied ethics, and finally an individualistic view of society, but still sensitive to the values of the community, are the most noteworthy characteristics of this approach. During these years, Maffettone became what is usually referred to as a "public intellectual", a figure less well-known in Anglo-Saxon culture, but quite popular in Latin countries. Daily newspapers (both national and international), magazines, and radio and TV programs have frequently interviewed him on some of most urgent political and ethical problems of our time; he was also consulted by first-level national political representatives on issues of public prominence. This notoriety outside of the academic context was facilitated by an intense collaboration with newspapers and political magazines during all these years. This began with "Il Mattino", then continued with "Panorama", "Il Corriere della Sera" (where he was a columnist for about ten years), "Il Messaggero", "Il Riformista", "Il Sole 24 ore", and some important magazines of cultural and political discussion, such as RESET (edited by Giancarlo Borsetti). Maffettone was also in charge of two TV programs for a wide audience broadcasted by RAI EDUCATIONAL, to which he invited many important Italian and foreign philosophers and intellectuals: the first series, entitled "The Thinkability of the World" - in eight episodes - was inspired by last Maffettone's books; the second focused on "sustainability". Both as a public intellectual and as a journalist, Maffettone always tries to maintain a rigorously professional approach.

Between the 1980s and the 1990s, Maffettone had an intense academic life, accompanied by his role as research director in projects sponsored by MIUR, CNR, and the EU. After his initial period in Naples, he taught Political Philosophy in Turin for three years (1982-84) in the same Faculty of Political Science where until the year before Norberto Bobbio, considered by many the founder of the discipline in Italy, had his chair. From 1985 to 1998, Maffettone was professor in Palermo and became full professor of Political Philosophy, collaborating with professors as Giuseppe Barbaccia, Francesco Viola, and Piero Violante in the “Department of Politics, Law, and Society”, and he was one of the founders of the new Faculty of Political Science in Palermo. At the same time, he was in charge of a postgraduate course at *Suor Orsola Benincasa* in Naples, in which many prestigious foreign scholars were visiting professors. Students of these courses were younger scholars such as Carla Bagnoli, Luca Ferrero, and Michele Mangini. From 1998 on Maffettone has taught at LUISS- Guido Carli University in Rome, where he also had the chance to work with renowned colleagues in similar fields including Dario Antiseri, Massimo Baldini and Luciano Pellicani. In this period he also worked with the group directed by Eugenio Lecaldano in the neighboring Villa Mirafiori where the Faculty of Philosophy of “La Sapienza” is located. Since Maffettone transferred to LUISS, he has directed the Center of Research and Studies on Human Rights (CERSDU), previously founded by Paolo Ungari, and currently coordinated by Gaia di Martino. The Center aims at contributing a political-theoretical imprint in the study of human rights, which is quite understated and unknown in Italy. In all these years, Maffettone committed himself in the formation of his students and many pupils, which all (from his first graduate in Naples, Gianpaolo Ferranti, to the first in Palermo, Antonino Palumbo, to those in Rome in recent years) distinguish themselves,

wherever they work, for their methodological and critical rigor. Together with his colleagues, Maffettone founded (on the occasion of a LUISS conference), the Italian Society of Political Philosophy (SIFP), upon the conviction that the discipline needed academic and theoretical autonomy. He became the first President of the Society. With the help of his pupils and colleagues he is also in charge of numerous anthological volumes, some of which had significant cultural and public importance, such as *Marxism and Justice*, (Il Saggiatore), in which for the first time in Italy analytical Marxism was presented and discussed, and *The Idea of Justice from Plato and Rawls* (coedited with Salvatore Veca, and published by Laterza), that has had many editions and has been taught in various Italian universities. During this time Maffettone also founded the academic journal *Filosofia e Questioni Pubbliche* (Philosophy and Public Issues, first edited by Armando, then by LUISS University Press, and nowadays by *Il Saggiatore*) that he directed since its foundation. For many years this journal has published scientific articles of outstanding importance by Italian and foreign authors, and is generally considered one of the most authoritative journals in political, moral, and social philosophy in Italy. FQP, as the journal has come to be called also presents, in every number, a “third section” that is less philosophical and more artistic, in which the section of visual arts is picked out and handled by Cornelia Lauf. FQP publishes a section on “Mind and world” in which one can note the influence that philosophy of the mind and psychoanalysis has had on Maffettone, which he was drawn to as the result of his friendships and collaborations with Mario DeCaro and Lorena Preta.

In his two books that came out in 1992, titled *Ermeneutica e scelta collettiva* (Guida) and *Le ragioni degli altri* (Il Saggiatore) Maffettone reveals and amplifies the Rawlsian paradigm in two

different directions. The first, investigates the formal background of the theory of social justice, in terms of collective choice and game theory, while also presenting an original formal derivation from the principle of the maximin. The innovative idea of the book consists in that the formal aspects of the theory of rational decision are inseparable from the hermeneutic analysis of the contexts of choice. In *Le ragioni degli altri*, on the other hand, Maffettone expands the Rawlsian paradigm in the direction of subjects not originally foreseen by Rawls, such as non-human animals and nature. This step allowed him to face some of the first environmental ethical themes and concerns with animal rights. Maffettone, among others, was the first to publish Peter Singer in Italian. As he has always done in his career, he tries to explore his field of research in a twofold way: one hand publishing his books and articles, and on the other having works translated into Italian- by various publishing houses, in particular by “Il Saggiatore”- of important authors such as Barry, Dworkin, Honneth, Nagel, Scanlon, Rasmussen, Walzer and many others. This collaboration with these authors has lasted, and has resulted in continuous interuniversity cultural exchanges.

At LUISS, Maffettone organizes an annual seminar entitled, “Colloquium in Ethics, Politics and Society” (<http://www.luiss.it/ricerca/centri/ethics/Colloquium>), in which from the 2000 on until today many of the most important political, moral and social philosophers from every continent in the world have taken part. Together with one of the most well-known participants, Ronald Dworkin, Maffettone published *I fondamenti del liberalism* (Laterza 1996) in which the two coauthors presents their visions of liberalism, agreeing in some areas and diverging in others, to begin with the relationship between ethics and politics. This book opened an

important critical discussion on liberalism in Italy, in which- also for the reasons highlighted above- many felt a theoretical and practical need.

Two of Maffettone's books, one entitled *Il valore della vita* (Mondadori, 1998), and the other *Etica pubblica* (Il Saggiatore, 2001, the publishing house that is now reprinting the works of Maffettone) bridges the gap between applied ethics and political theory, which- as mentioned- represents the dominant theme of Maffettone's philosophical project. The first book presents a rationalist and liberal *Lebenphilosophie*. Its basic underpinnings come from bioethics, but goes beyond this and propose a non-religious, comprehensive theory of life. The second book, *Etica pubblica*, presents the discipline's foundations, which the author brought to the attention of the Italian public. The most read and criticized chapters were those on business ethics. It is worth noting how, in the case of both these books, theoretical and practical experience have found a felicitous convergence. Regarding bioethics, Maffettone was a member of what was probably the first Italian ethical commission in a hospital, which was under the direction of Umberto Veronesi (with whom Maffettone continues to work with also in these years) at the *Istituto Tumori di Milano*. Maffettone formulated the theoretical outline of business ethics, which is perhaps the most important Italian deontological code; moreover, he wrote many other codes and formulated other social budgets - among which the one proposed to Confindustria in 1992 in an extremely delicate political and social moment for Italy. The long-time collaboration with Confindustria on this subject was primarily accomplished with the active participation in two cycles of its scientific commission, with the participation to many of its national and international conferences, and - in 2008 - with the development of the LUISS-Confindustria laboratory on Corporate Social Responsibility. To stay within this field, Maffet-

tone is a member of the ethical commission of ACEA and was a member of the commission of Capitalia. These synthesis of theoretical reflections and practical applications are reflected in some way even in the participation to the scientific commissions of influential cultural foundations (like the Fondazione Adriano Olivetti and the Fondazione Einaudi in Rome), and as a consultant on applied-science issues for institutions such as ENEA, CISPEL and MIUR.

Maffettone is most certainly one of the Italian scholars who have some of the strongest connections with foreign academic and scientific institutions. He was a visiting professor several times in the United States (Harvard, NYU, Columbia, Tufts, Boston College), where he was also a Senior Fellow with the program in “Ethics and Professions” (Harvard), and furthermore he was visiting professor in France (in the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme and at Sciences-Po in Paris), and in England (LSE). He has held lectures and courses in more than forty countries (just in the last two years in China, India, France, Great Britain, the United States, and Austria, just to name a few), and in many countries he has participated in international conferences and published his papers in the conference proceedings. As previously mentioned, these exchange activities and relationships with foreign colleagues has proved to be long lasting. The many international research programs that Maffettone participated in and the PhD in Political Theory at LUISS are a strong evidence of this. The PhD program- which is entirely in English and includes the participation of teaching staff from all over the world- is comprised of almost 70% foreign students and is the only one of its kind the fields of humanities. One could assert that today it represents an avant-garde post-graduate program in Europe, also thanks to the work of young scholars such as Raffaele Marchetti, Gianfranco Pellegrino, Daniele Santoro and other colleagues at LUISS (like De Mucci, Petrucci, Sciso, Villani, etc.).

Since 2000, Maffettone has turned his principles interests- together with many other scholars- on the themes and issues of international political philosophy. Under this subject he has published essays in English, French, German, and Arab. Furthermore, together with Piero Fassino, Giovanni Aldobrandini, Francesca Catello and others, Maffettone founded an NGO called “Humanity”. Humanity was created to deal with these themes in a more applied way. The most importance evidence of his intellectual involvement can be seen in his book *La pensabilità del mondo* (il Saggiatore, 2006), in which he presents an original theory within the field of ethics of international relations. This theory is based on the idea of “pluralistic integration”, which tries to represent an alternative to the cosmopolitan liberal-democratic internationalism. The core of the thesis maintains that liberalism and democracy cannot be imposed from the outside but instead must come from inside a culture or a nation. The same kind of argument was in two articles forthcoming articles in English, one on the European model of “normative regionalism” (in the American journal “The Monist”), the other on global justice (for a collective UNESCO volume, edited by Thomas Pogge for Oxford University Press, 2008). This scientific activity is accompanied by- in addition to the scientific responsibility series in “Atlante LUISS” dedicated to international topics- the recent organization of an impressive network on “Ethics and Global Politics”

(<http://www.luiss.it/ricerca/centri/ethics/>), that followed Maffettone’s appointment as delegated authority for international relations by the chancellor of LUISS University. This project contributes a great deal in the way of intellectual collaboration among Italian colleagues, among which are Daniele Archibugi, Lucio Caracciolo, Francesca Carrao, and Massimo Egidi (Luiss Chancellor), and foreign colleagues such as Daniel Bell, Aakash Singh, and David Ras-

mussen, and includes the participation of over one hundred academic institutions worldwide, with a steering committee of professors from every continent, and the participation of some of the most well-known professors in the world in the field of international political theory. The goal of the project- beyond the prestige of LUISS and the strengthening of the PhD program in Political Theory- is that of creating a truly pluralistic paradigm in the field of international relations, based on the effective participation of experts coming from various cultural and political backgrounds. The project “Ethics and Global Politics” is a frame in which exchange of professors and students, international research projects, collaborative academic programs, multi-lingual publications, and academic seminars will be possible. The project will be officially inaugurated the December 5-6, 2008 with a conference on “The Arab Dilemma”, in which many prestigious Arab scholars will participate, many of which already participated in the conference on “Il problema della democrazia”, organized in 2006 by Humanity and sponsored by the Fondazione Cini in Venice.

In conclusion, Maffettone’s principle areas of interests are political philosophy (with particular reference to theories of justice, international political philosophy, liberalism, and human rights), social philosophy, ethics (meta-ethics, normative and applied ethics), bioethics, business ethics, theories of international relations, environmental ethics and in particular the issues of sustainability; metaphysics and epistemology, history of philosophy, the relationship between analytic and continental philosophy. In the beginning of summer 2008 Maffettone completed a very demanding book on Rawls, which is meant to be a general introduction to the author. The book is forthcoming in England at the beginning of 2009 by Polity Press. He

is also completing a book on the philosophy of international relations that he hopes to publish in English later this year.