

Danilo Dolci, a Poetic Modernizer

Joseph A. Amato

An idealistic reformer in western Sicily, Danilo Dolci, has for two decades employed demonstrations, court cases, petitions, fasts and clandestine radio in an imaginative series of non-violent tactics aimed at feeding and housing the poor. He has also been key to the building of a dam, the opening of a medical clinic and the creation of a new school for Sicilian youth. He has effectively challenged the violence, poverty and fatalism that have ruled western Sicily for three centuries, and has won the reputation of being "the Gandhi of Sicily." Dolci preaches and practices nonviolence in an area that, until most recently, has been the heartland of the Sicilian Mafia. It is a territory that typifies the brutal realities and awesome problems of the entire Italian South, the *Mezzogiorno*. Dolci dares to envision a new Sicily, a Sicily which by its democracy and economic development would be the envy not only of the underdeveloped world but of many in Western Europe and America.

Aside from Dolci's constant writing of poetry and his continuous research and writing on nonviolent, democratic modernizing, there are other reasons he might be called a poetic modernizer. Those who have heard him speak on one of his frequent tours in the United States recognize how his form and delivery resemble a musical composition whose aim is to point toward the invention of new peoples and new worlds. To observe the interior confidence reflected in his words, the vivacity of his bluish grey eyes, the frequency and warmth of his smile, the grace with which he moves his large hands and portly body—to observe all this is to begin to understand why many have abandoned job and homeland to help him build the Sicily of his dreams. Danilo Dolci's person

and ideas radiate a poetry of hope and of action.

How did this young, northern Italian intellectual choose to come to Sicily, and how does a father of ten children continue today, after twenty years of conflict, still to have energy and faith enough to pursue the dream of a new life for the people of Sicily? The questions to be asked about Dolci are those we ask of others, such as Martin Luther King or Cesar Chavez, who have the spiritual, intellectual and personal resources to believe and act as if mankind could be fundamentally different tomorrow from what it has been in the past.

Dolci's life is, in great part, the story of ideals accepted and sacrifices made. Born an only son into a stable middle-class family in the town of Sesna, near Trieste, in 1924, his youth was given over to the study of literature, poetry and music. His interest in athletics, especially swimming and basketball, complemented his constant reading of the great classics of Western and Eastern civilizations. Known by his family as "Let me finish this chapter" and accustomed from youth to rise each morning at five in order to read, Dolci had, by his late teens, acquainted himself with many of the significant writings of Christianity, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, as well as the works of Dante,

The following works of Dolci were used in preparing this study: *The Outlaws* (New York, 1961), *Report from Palermo* (New York, 1959), *Waste* (New York, 1964), *A New World in the Making* (New York, 1965), *The Man Who Plays Alone* (Garden City, N. Y., 1970), *Conversazioni* (Torino, 1962), *Inventare il futuro* (Bari, 1968), *Il limone lunare* (Bari, 1970), *Non sentite l'odore del fumo* (Bari, 1971), and "What I Have Learned," *Saturday Review* (July 29, 1967). In addition to using Jerre Mangione's indispensable *A Passion for Sicilians: The World Around Danilo Dolci* (New York, 1968), various other materials were used, including those distributed by the Friends of Danilo Dolci, 100 Hemlock Road, Short Hills, N. J.

JOSEPH A. AMATO, associate professor of history at Southwest Minnesota State College, is author of a forthcoming book, *Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain: A French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World*.

Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Ibsen and, of special importance, Plato.

At the University of Milan his choice of careers was architecture. Increasingly unable to ignore the horrors of the Second World War and the brutalities of Axis rule, the young Dolci waged a miniature guerrilla war against Nazi and Fascist posters in Milan in 1943. Arrested later that year for unspecified reasons while on a trip to Rome, Dolci guilefully played the role of a disinterested artist to gain his release. He spent the remainder of the war as a fugitive, living with Italian peasants. The war made Dolci an enemy of Facism and Nazism, but unlike his contemporaries in the Resistance, Dolci was strengthened in his belief that all killing was senseless and wrong.

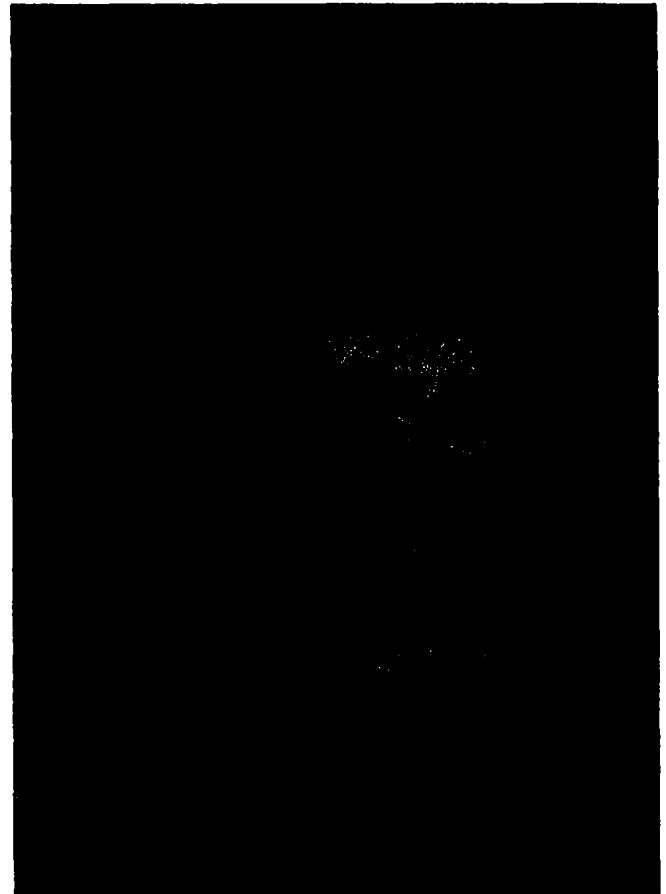
After the war Dolci returned to the University of Milan and the study of architecture. However, his spirit for his studies steadily faltered. He agonized over the prospect of wasting his talents by designing buildings that would house only the rich. He could not reconcile this with playing a part in laying the foundations of social justice. In 1949, on the eve of the completion of his degree, Dolci abandoned architecture and a promising career.

Influenced, as were so many young Catholic intellectuals in the aftermath of the war, by a concept of Christianity directed toward social action, Dolci went to aid Don Zeno, a Catholic priest who had single-handedly established a center for the care of war orphans. During his two-year stay at the orphanage at Nomadelfia, Dolci learned two things essential to his future work. From Don Zeno he learned how much good can be accomplished by the will and work of a single person. From his cooperation with the children he learned how much good can be accomplished through people working together in community.

Thus it can be said that at the age of twenty-seven Dolci's conscience was formed. Committed to non-violence, he had refused to bear arms in the postwar Italian army. Believing that people must serve one another, he placed his life in service to the poor. Yet these beliefs only gained full force in Dolci's life when, in 1952, he made what, at least in retrospect, appears to be his most important decision.

Breaking off an engagement to be married, and much to the bewilderment of his family, Dolci decided to go to Sicily to aid the poor there. Desiring to divorce his social action from the institutional Church, Dolci set out alone. Intent upon working with the poorest of the poor, he returned to the small fishing village of Träppeto in western Sicily, for it was here, near where his father was once station-master, that he had as a youth seen poverty at its worst.

Dolci arrived in Trappeto carrying with him little more than good will and memories of miseries once witnessed. Here his education began again. He dis-



covered houses without beds or water, children without clothes or schools, men without work or means to find it. Here was a land and a sea for the exclusive use of the rich and powerful. Dolci was once forced to stand helplessly by as a child starved to death in her mother's arms. He responded with an absolute fast: either the Italian Government would meet its obligations to the people of this region or he too would starve to death. "Rather than see another child die," Dolci explained, "I would prefer to die myself . . . If I cannot arouse people's love by living, I will arouse their remorse by dying." He ended his fast on the tenth day. Having already suffered a stroke and not far from death, Dolci, after consulting with the people, accepted the government's belated offer to begin a program of public works.

This was his first significant victory in Sicily. In some small way he had gained a beachhead against poverty in the region, and in some great way he had given over his life to Sicily. Dolci's own words best reveal the spirit in which he set to work:

If I reflect upon the present program of the *Centro Studi e Iniziative* [the name of Dolci's present social action group] I sometimes think that it is only a beginning. But I also remember the fever that gripped me when I decided not to participate in the trends of the world as I saw them, in order, instead, fundamentally to do only that of which I was convinced. It was a break with that world. I was alone. I did not know how it would come out. If now I look back and see myself taking the first steps, ignorant as I was about social work and knowing nothing about the zone where I felt it

was necessary to start, I believe it was good that I felt the need to be like air in the sun, conquering in myself all those doubts that the environment and my old dreams aroused. By committing myself day by day I began to understand what I did not know and to harden myself to surmount difficulties.

In this spirit Dolci set out to transform western Sicily. Help from northern Italy came in the form of money, advice, publicity and friends, and a small core of Sicilians began to form around him. As he came to understand the nature and sources of the problems facing Sicily's poor, his enemies grew in number and size. There was hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment, erosion, as well as many varieties of Mafia violence, countless forms of political abuse and, perhaps above all else, a culture that taught with the force of centuries the inevitability of misery. Against these enemies Dolci employed varied tactics, all of which were predicated on the principle of nonviolent action. His more dramatic tactics were demonstrations, sit-ins, strikes, fasts and, most famous of all, a strike in reverse. That is, Dolci effected a work-in. He led a group of unemployed workers to repair a road without pay, in direct opposition to police orders. He used their arrests and trial (which they lost) to dramatize the plight of the jobless and to publicize the right to work as assured to all by the Italian Constitution. Less dramatic than these tactics but equally essential to Dolci's goals are his overall strategies, including the effort to educate Sicilians in the principles of democratic practice; long-range scientific studies to find new and more productive forms of livelihood; promotion of cooperative experiments; a constant, probing and obviously dangerous inquiry into the realities of Mafia power, and unceasing efforts to bring international experts in development to join him in his work in Sicily.

In 1955, when Dolci founded his *Centro Studi e Iniziative* at Partinico (a city of some thirty thousand a few miles inland from Trappeto), he already grasped in part that what he was doing was no longer simply trying to combat the problems of a given region. He was, rather, making western Sicily a social laboratory in which the problems of poverty and underdevelopment were discovered, analyzed and, he hoped, cured, at least in microcosm.

Increasingly Dolci's writings came to play an integral part in his inquiries into the problems of underdevelopment. In his first major work, *The Outlaws of Partinico* (1955), Dolci, through a series of interviews with Sicilians, reveals the situation of a starving people daily confronted by an arrogant state which responds to legitimate social protests with prison sentences and a brutalized police whose ferocity and political intrigues make

them more like *mafiosi* than servants of the law. In the *Report from Palermo* (1956) Dolci again lets the impoverished Sicilians speak for themselves. In this terrifying work all that is wrong and ugly is set forth, evoking pity for the victims and anger at the disorder that rules their lives. In *Waste* (1960) Dolci itemizes the human and natural wastes that are both the cause and result of Sicily's poverty. In a *New World in the Making* (1964) he records what he learned from his trips to Russia, Yugoslavia, Senegal and Ghana, and proposes the first principles of his attack on waste in Sicily. In *Chi Gioca Solo* (1967)—the ironic title of which is taken from the first words of a Sicilian proverb, "He who plays alone never loses!"—Dolci directs his interviews primarily at the Mafia-client relationship. Invariably he is led on to examine the cynical individualism of Sicilian culture, which not only nurtures the Mafia but undermines the hope that things could ever be better.

If we had only his writings to go by, one generalization about Dolci would be inescapable. His compassion for the poor is inseparable from his passion for a new world. Because of this Dolci has come to reject the Church, which, in his opinion, is allied to reactionary forces and theologically committed to doctrines that stifle man's desire to build a new world. As the faith of many nineteenth- and twentieth-century radicals, Dolci's religion is a matter of what man is and of what man could be.

It would be misleading, however, to limit ourselves to Dolci's profession of faith. No matter how admirable it may seem, Dolci is not just another idealist. Nor is he yet another well-meaning radical ideologue. The uniqueness of Dolci is that here is a man who has dedicated his single life to the practical relief of a single people, the poor of Sicily.

Dolci is inextricably tied to his twenty-year mission in Sicily. He cannot be understood independently from such accomplishments as his publication of Doctor Pappamiglionone's classic medical "Inquiry into the Sanitary and Hygienic Conditions in Palma di Montechiaro," and, more significantly, his long, successful struggle against government apathy and Mafia interest for the completion of the Iato Dam. Or, to choose three more examples, he cannot be understood fully apart from his efforts to institute democratic control of Sicily's water facilities, to rid the Gulf of Castellamare of illegal fishing, and his more recent efforts to force a revision of building standards and practices so that the inevitability of earthquakes does not mean, as it did in 1968, the inevitability of immense destruction of property and life. If further proof be needed that Dolci is inseparably part of the Sicilian landscape, he married a Sicilian widow with five children, making his struggle for a better Sicily part of his personal hope to improve the world for his now ten children.

Dolci's first and last meaning for us is spiritual.

He challenges all people to ask who they are and who they might be. He forces upon us an inventory of the worlds within and around us, and at each point in the inventory he denies the old wisdom which teaches acceptance and resignation, replacing it with a new wisdom which proclaims regeneration and transformation. So that a new world can be born—so that the spirit and its freedom, not power and its necessity, can prevail—Dolci asks us to rethink and remake ourselves.

Dolci is emphatically a modernizer. He is a poet, a humanist and a revolutionist, always confronting the realities of power, violence and poverty. But Dolci's biography is best understood with reference to the stages that led him to become a nonviolent modernizer. His decision to go to Nomadelpia was a first step in a spiritual evolution that led from a life committed to reflection and middle-class careerism to a life committed to the values of brotherhood and action. His decision to go to Sicily and his first encounters with the peasants and fishermen there furthered his development away from a preoccupation with self and toward action in community. His first actions (legal and illegal, heroic and nonheroic) clearly strengthened his conviction that men together not only cause but can solve each other's problems.

With the founding of the *Centro di Studii e Iniziative* in 1956, four years after his arrival at Trappeto, Dolci's work entered yet another stage. From that point on he dedicated himself and his group fully to transforming life in western Sicily. All his actions—his sociological studies, his trips abroad, his call for the help of international experts, as well as his fasts, writings and marches—came to have the singular goal of defining the causes of, and finding the strategic solutions for, underdevelopment. If a last stage of Dolci's development were to be introduced, it would begin at the point when Dolci began to believe that his efforts to remake western Sicily are inseparable from the task of realizing a new world for all mankind.

Dolci's writings also reveal his acceptance of the role of modernizer. What is needed today, he recently wrote, is *una pianificazione aperta veramente rivoluzionaria*; the survival of mankind itself is contingent upon realizing this "open and truly revolutionary planning." "Our real task," Dolci writes, "is to discover who we are, how we want to be, what we want to do, and how we want to do it"; we need nothing other than a "blueprint of the new world as we see it." For Dolci, only an open, free and humanistic planning can fulfill the universal need to visualize humanity as a unity and thus fulfill the existential duties of ending poverty, humanizing technology and annulling the threat of nuclear death.

Given the existential and universal dimensions of

Dolci's concept of a new world, he does not conform to one of several images commonly held of the modernizer. Without overlooking the scientific planning that supported, for instance, his work on the Iato Dam and his activities in behalf of the earthquake victims of the Bellice Valley, Dolci cannot be classified with those objective theorists of modernization who deal analytically and technically, if not fragmentarily and amorally, with the diverse economic, social and political coordinates of development. Dolci, unlike most social scientists in the field of development, is too morally committed to divorce his concept of modernization from the realm of values and the immediate necessities of revolutionary change.

Dolci's concept of modernization is fundamentally antistatist. He rejects the primacy of state initiative and the national good in determining the means and ends of social change. He insists upon the efforts of particular peoples to solve their own problems as the first step toward worthwhile change. Modernization, in this sense, is first and foremost regional; it is the process in which specific peoples of specific regions become conscious of their specific problems and find specific solutions to them. Modernization moves on to the national and global planes of action only as regional peoples democratically interact with one another in terms of needs, problems and possibilities.

It is this commitment to "democratic federalism"—a term Dolci borrows from the Italian, Aldo Capiti— which separates his vision of modernization from the theory and practice of both Western capitalism and of Eastern communism. Undoubtedly, it is Dolci's democratic federalism that accounts for his present political posture of identifying with neither the European Right nor Left and makes him a modernizer who most resembles those thinkers of the developed and underdeveloped countries who seek alternatives to the American and Soviet models of development.

The comparison with Mahatma Gandhi comes naturally to mind. Not only has Dolci experienced Gandhi's influence, but he embraces the essential tenets of Gandhi's teachings. For Dolci, as for Gandhi, a purity must exist between ends and means in all action; all social action must have its beginning and end in a positive estimate of the human heart; and, accordingly, truth and sacrifice, rather than force and violence, must be accepted as the true sources of action. This adherence to the Gandhian principles of nonviolent action explains why Dolci resists such concepts as class warfare and popular dictatorship and shapes his strategies and tactics to create a new consciousness on the part of the participants as well as those who oppose them.

The similarities between Gandhi and Dolci, however, should not obscure basic differences between

them. Whereas Gandhi's concern was in great part the independence of India, Dolci's aspirations are entirely devoid of both Sicilian patriotism and Italian nationalism. Again, whereas Gandhi did not develop his vision of society and man in reference to the inevitabilities and the possibilities of contemporary technology, Dolci judges man's technological achievements and potential as good in themselves. A last and essential difference is that whereas for Gandhi there was a permanent substratum to Indian culture and the Indian village, Dolci believes that all peoples, even those of the most remote parts of the earth, must begin in all ways to prepare themselves for an entirely new future. The whole of mankind, Dolci believes, has no choice but to build a new world if it chooses to exist at all.

This apocalyptic view not only separates Dolci from Gandhi but makes him the revolutionary modernizer he is. Dolci is driven by an intense desire "to break the closed circle of poverty," to transcend this world in which "we have condemned one another to death." It is this apocalyptic sense of the urgent need to change the world radically that leads Dolci at times to recite the hard lines from Gandhi, "Better to shoot than flee," and at other times to question pacifism itself. He has written: "The life of one Indian child outweighs all the exalted temples of India. Insofar as Indian pacifism fails to become organically revolutionary, I believe it to be not only a useless, but a dangerous and confused alibi, which in our part of the world a great part of Christianity, Catholic and Protestant alike, has become."

Nevertheless, at the very edge of a position which would support any and all violence necessary rather than tolerate the multitude of injustices in the present disordered order, Dolci draws short. "Rather than shoot," Dolci again cites Gandhi, "it is better to find forms of battle, of pressure, which are more perfect and efficacious than shooting." Ultimately, Dolci cannot accept violence. In his view, what is born of violence begets violence; the violent revolution is doomed to duplicate the very evils it sets out to overcome. The revolution to which Dolci aspires can mean nothing other than a new man and a new world.

To achieve such a revolution, according to Dolci, people must do more than struggle nonviolently against unwanted circumstances, more than boldly redistribute wealth, more than guarantee freedoms and rights. Rather, they must renew their spirits, refound their institutions, remake themselves, or, to use one of Dolci's favorite phrases, do nothing less than "invent the future." At the outset of this revolutionary process, Dolci argues, men must learn "to create new facts, at all levels, so that they can see through their own experience that things can be changed and how this can

be done." And in time Dolci believes people will discover in this dialectic of thought and action, individual and group, the rudiments of a new sociology and the possibility of a new society.

Once while returning home after a day's work a peasant stopped Dolci to tell him what the Iato Dam had come to mean to him and others. "Even the ducks know!" the peasant said. Dolci believes that that peasant rendered his own philosophy perfectly: When people work together to make a better world, even nature responds to their successes.

On other occasions Dolci tries to explain his conception of social change in more academic terms. Through a series of sociological charts and explanations he shows, for instance, how the Mafia in Sicily has introduced into the groups of a region the destructive elements of corruption, graft, secrecy, distrust and violence, and how these groups must be eliminated by the creation of new groups which are conscious of the worth of freedom, proud of their democratically achieved accomplishments and no longer willing to tolerate the oppression and parasitism of the groups of the older order.

This broad approach to the development of new group consciousness guides all of Dolci's thought. It manifests itself in his theory of education as much as in his proposed steps toward a just world order. Human development, so understood, is a continuous and open experiment through which people discover themselves, each other and the world. It is a dialogue without boundaries. Man's most minute observations as well as his most universal aspirations are integral parts of the process by which we discover and create ourselves. Thus for Dolci the act of inventing the future itself is the essence of a new democracy and the source of a new culture.

The value of this philosophy is that it aims at preserving man's historicity without denying all values, promoting revolution without surrendering man to the state, affirming the concepts of democracy, revolution and progress without condoning the destructive accretions of statism and totalitarianism which have come to corrupt these concepts during the past two centuries.

If, for some, Dolci's philosophy speaks authentically to the future, for others it only echoes the past. Dolci's belief in the material and spiritual progress of mankind seems to them no more than a restatement of nineteenth-century radical utopianism, a revival of the aspirations of romantic democrats and pre-1848 socialists and anarchists such as Michelet, Proudhon and Mazzini. Dolci too believes that (1) authority and power should arise out of the consent of the governed; (2) democracy and freedom need not be antithetical; (3) economic and social individualism, as well as class and national antagonisms, can be overcome. Were this all there is to it Dolci would indeed be more a

*Passa la gente, passano a milioni
sempre più fitti, sempre più i medesimi,
a miliardi nel mondo, e se ne vanno
lasciandosi rubare
tutta la vita della propria vita,
e non sanno a chi urlare e come urlare
"esisto anch'io."*

People pass by, they pass by the millions
Ever dense, ever more the same,
By millions, across the world, they pass by
Allowing themselves to be robbed
Of their very own lives,
Not knowing who to cry to, and how to cry out
"I too exist."

spokesman of the past than a prophet of the future.

But such reasoning is dangerously incomplete. It overlooks the degree to which all positive contemporary visions of society have their genesis in the utopian hopes of 1776 to 1848, and the extent to which all such credos are forced to seek that equation which beneficially integrates the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. There are, however, yet other reasons why it is unacceptable simply to classify Dolci as a utopian. Foremost is that Dolci shows himself acutely aware of contemporary man's situation. He realizes that human history cannot be reduced to a single design or uniform set of dynamics, that no conceptual schema can fully systematize the historical, spiritual and material diversities that exist, for example, between the villages of India and the cities of the United States.

Coupled to this is Dolci's profound sense of tragedy. His consciousness has been shaped by the staggering contradictions, awesome dilemmas and unmitigated disasters that have overwhelmed twentieth-century man. To use part of the title of one of his collections of poetry, Dolci has "smelled the smoke"—of Auschwitz, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As is shown, for instance, by his recent extensive campaigns throughout Italy against Neo-Fascism, Dolci remains preoccupied with the tragic dimensions of twentieth-century experience. He is never far from the spirit of those awesome words of Paul Valery: "We later civilizations . . . we too now know that we are mortal." If, then, Dolci does share part of the nineteenth century's optimism, he does so in the only way a twentieth-century man can—as "a tragic optimist."

Clearly Dolci's Catholic background accounts for much of his vision of mankind. Even though he has turned steadily away from Catholic orthodoxy, a Catholic inspiration is still active in his thought. Man, Dolci continues to teach in accord with Church doctrine, is a free spiritual being, embodied in flesh to live among other people and within circumstances. The human task is to create, serve and love; man's inherent goodness, as that of creation itself, partakes in a redemptive process in which everyone and everything can ultimately be transfigured. In a word, the Christian teachings of creation, incarnation, charity and hope are alive even at the most secular points of Dolci's thought.

Other sources of Dolci's utopianism are also readily identifiable. His attachment to the great books and the world of ideas, his love of architecture and music—each expresses his desire for clarity, symmetry and order. His wish to have a world in balance, diversities made unities and unities made harmonies, reveals the temperament of an artistic intellectual who seeks the beautiful and the intelligible, and insists that the world be transformed in their image. These factors, as well as the religious, probably find their fullest expression in one essential fact about Dolci: he is a poet.

In almost every sense of the word Dolci is a poet. When Dolci speaks, writes and acts, there is a presence of poetry. It is there in his conversations with peasants, in his nonviolent actions, in his most technical discussions of regional development. Poetry, in this sense, seems fused with what is most alive in his spirit.

Poetry itself, according to Dolci, is the point from which education should begin. "To become an educator," Dolci asserts, "don't begin with grammar, nor the alphabet; rather begin with poetry—that is the revolution—for poetry starts with a search born out of real interest." Poetry teaches the eye to see, the skin to feel, the imagination to conceive, the spirit to live.

Poetry, Dolci suggests again and again, is born out of a spirit that joins love and life. "If one loves life," Dolci declares, "he loves his work, his wife, his land, his family, his friends; but take away love, and life is voided." "I have learned," Dolci says, "that everything—even bread—if made with love, is a work of art."

As a writer of poetry Dolci seeks to awaken us to ourselves and the world. He seeks to lead us to acknowledge those experiences which, while so strong and certain, defy our intellectual domination, and are, because of this, denied and forgotten.

To awaken the reader—those who have only "seen the sea on television" and the "sky in reproduction"—poetry must put before them forgotten truths such as:

A day:
A day can be a grain
Of sand on the beach, or on the desert.
It can be Hiroshima,
Or it can be the day you were born.

At other times poetry, in contrast to the science of

today, must put forward those mysterious unities which teach:

The most distant star
Influences
The smallest life.
The smallest life
Influences
The most distant star.
Every life is related to every other
Every impulse from a single point puts in motion
Impulses elsewhere.
Every action has its weight,
A thought
A silence.

Dolci's poetry does not lead in the direction of symbolic lyricism. The things of the world for him are not to be vaporized into ethereal symbols; rather it is the poet's task to make them stand forth in their materiality, simplicity, in their everydayness. Dolci explains this aspect of his poetry:

In my need for poetry, men,
Water, bread, earth,
Become my words:
I have grown creating them.

In Dolci's poetry all his experience has its place—the city, the Mafia, the dam, the earthquake, the words of a peasant worker.

We workers don't hold our heads up.
We have them in a sack.
We don't think anything.
We think only of work, work, work.
A day laborer, what can he think?

There is, as would be expected, a strong grain of moralism in Dolci's poetry. The poet not only makes the world alive to man's consciousness, but also to man's conscience. If the poet is to speak of how

things are with man and his world, he must speak of what is right and what is wrong, what is elevating and what is degrading. To assent to the beautiful, Dolci concurs with Plato, is to reject the ugly. "To denounce is a work of health. The people," he continues, "want to know and talk. An honest man [*un uomo vero*] knows that to denounce is to announce. To denounce is to spread truth."

Dolci has dedicated an entire collection of poetry, *Non sentite l'odore del fumo*, to Auschwitz—to the meaning of "eleven thousand five hundred Nazi concentration camps"; to the horrid fantasies of them, such as "special camps for recovering of children who were particularly blond, with blue eyes, for the sake of the superfatherland"; to the demonic experience which a quarter century later is still registered in the hearts of men by "that furtive glance occasioned by the word Gestapo."

The moral dimensions of Dolci's poetry are complemented by one additional element. For Dolci poetry is not only in the service of evoking what is, in all its human, natural, mysterious and moral dimensions, but it is created out of a vision of what men might be. In this sense Dolci's poetry is, as his whole modernization theory, a vision of the possible. It is a poetry of revolution, and of resurrection.

We have come full circle. At the heart of Dolci the modernizer we discover a poet, and at the heart of Dolci the poet we discover a modernizer. We cannot afford today to be indifferent to any man whose life teaches us to accept the conditions of a finite battle without relinquishing our infinite aspirations. It matters in some very important way that there is today a man who "knows that to accept being lost in the complexity of this world . . . means to die a little," and who "knows how reluctant is this world to emerge from the preatomic into that postatomic age in which your life will be my life, and my life cannot but also be yours."