

assoluta e nella sua stessa biografia. L'ecllettismo non è un interesse dispersivo ma un metodo di conoscenza che adotta sistemi critici di volta in volta differenti in base all'oggetto di studio (è un atteggiamento empirico, si direbbe), che si costruisce nel suo farsi e che si apre consapevolmente e approfonditamente ad altri campi, essendo la letteratura "uno dei modi in cui si organizza e autorappresenta l'immaginario antropologico e culturale, uno degli spazi in cui le culture si formano, si incontrano con le altre culture" (Remo Ceserani, *Raccontare la letteratura*, Bollari Boringhieri, 1990, 112). Ma l'ecllettismo di Ceserani è facilmente riscontrabile anche nella sua biografia, nella sua idea d'insegnamento, concepito come una pratica orizzontale e antigierarchica e basata sullo scambio e la condivisione. Ceserani ha insegnato alle università di Pisa, Genova e Bologna (e anche in numerose università straniere) e si è sempre dedicato alla pratica e alla costruzione di una metodologia d'insegnamento aperta e disponibile: oltre ad aver scritto fondamentali manuali di letteratura, segnando l'inizio di un approccio comparatistico e di un'apertura allo studio dei temi (si pensi a *Il materiale e l'immaginario*, Loescher 1979–1988, o a *Guida allo studio della letteratura*, Laterza 1999), ha co-fondato nel 2000 Synapsis (European School for Comparative Studies), una scuola di letterature comparate con sede nelle Università di Bologna e di Siena, attiva fino al 2014.

L'idea di letteratura di Remo Ceserani parte dal rispetto dell'individualità, dalla propensione alla curiosità e all'umiltà; la letteratura è considerata come una parte di un sistema socio-culturale e storico più ampio, interconnessa con le altre discipline e regolata da un principio antigierarchico e volto allo scambio, alla condivisione: quella di Ceserani è un'idea di letteratura come mezzo, non solo come fine.

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Andrea Mirabile, *Ezra Pound e l'arte italiana. Fra le Avanguardie e D'Annunzio*. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2018, vi+138.

Ezra Pound e l'arte italiana steers clear of recent attempts to recontextualize Pound's oeuvre according to methodological frameworks borrowed from critical theory. Instead, Mirabile's book tackles a very circumscribed field of inquiry: the importance of Italian art in Pound's poetry and in his life, with a focus on how these key elements coalesced in the writing of the *Pisan Cantos*. While Mirabile's approach does not present dramatic new developments or polemic assessments of Pound's work, readers gain insights into the Quattrocento visual sources informing Pound's modernist poetry, and into the role D'Annunzio played in shaping

Pound's literary sensibility. More specifically, and most convincingly, Mirabile analyzes the trope of Venetian art and architecture as it appears — mediated in part by D'Annunzio — in Pound's writings. Mirabile argues that the memory of Venice, which Pound excavates through eminently Modernist techniques, betrays a penchant for timelessness, the only possible antidote to the tragedy of Pound's troubled and controversial life experiences during the years in which he wrote the *Pisan Cantos*.

Divided in three chapters titled *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*, the book moves from the general to the specific in concentric circles. The avoidance of chapter subheadings requires the reader's undivided attention: Mirabile's close mapping of Pound's poetry forces the reader to make frequent jumps in time and space. Describing the key traits of Poundian lyricism, Mirabile aptly muses that "con buona pace di ogni teoria sull'inopportunità di confondere io lirico e soggetto biografico, opera e vita [. . .] ai lettori viene richiesta una consuetudine attenta con entrambe le dimensioni, quella testuale e quella esistenziale" (53). Once the habit of careful reading is established, the attentive reader will be rewarded by a comprehensive exploration of the characters, artworks and readings that informed Pound's early and postwar Venetian years, and of the influence these elements played in Pound's writing process. Mirabile proves to be a competent chaperone, as he manages to tease numerous lines of inquiry out of Pound's dense verses.

In the first chapter, the author illustrates how Pound eschewed the most well-known artists and artworks from the Italian Quattrocento, seeding his poems instead with an unorthodox selection of less-famous pieces. The author explains how Pound preferred the direct observation of art and architecture to the mere study of their photographic reproductions (5), and considered painting and sculpture superior to cinema by virtue of their static nature, which afforded the opportunity of sustained investigation. Thus, lifted from the memory of earlier contemplations, Pound's lyrical recollections of art generate, according to Mirabile, a visceral poetic juxtaposition of images. Still in the first chapter, Mirabile summarizes the historical circumstances that led Pound to his imprisonment in Pisa and the role that physical and visual deprivation played in generating the cryptic montage of artistic images accumulated in the *Pisan Cantos*.

The second chapter delves more specifically in the importance that Venice played in generating the visions at the core of Pound's poetry. Far from Decadent and Futurist narratives that celebrated Venice's slow (or never-too-slow) death, Mirabile illustrates how Pound saw Venice as an invigorating place of vitality and engrossing creative opportunities (56–57). The author recognizes this

understanding of the city in Canto LXXXIII and LXXVI, to which he dedicates extensive close readings. The chapter also details the influence that D'Annunzio had on the American poet: from the latter's early appreciation for *La nave*, to the thematic continuities between the *Pisan Cantos* and D'Annunzio's *Notturmo*, to the many acquaintances and biographic elements that the two poets shared in Venice.

Lastly, the third chapter explains how the a-temporality of Pound's Venice, achieved through the poetic montage of artistic visions, leads to a heavenly textual space, the only such space Pound could aspire to during the writing of the *Pisan Cantos*. Art and literature, according to Mirabile, "si fondono quali meccanismi di uno strumento per fessure e sorreggere le tessere di un amplissimo mosaico, altrimenti in bilico sull'illeggibile" (109).

Given the frequent citations from Pound's poems and the multiplicity of other primary and secondary sources consulted and discussed, it is very appropriate that the book adopts footnotes. Unfortunately, the length of certain annotations slows the pace of reading, while the lack of a final bibliography makes the retrieval of previously cited works difficult. Additionally, considering the amount of less well-known Quattrocento artworks that Pound frequently referenced, a few illustrations — while perhaps contrary to Pound's wishes — would have helped readers familiarize with the poet's artistic predilections.

Regardless of these issues, the scholars who constitute the ideal readership of this book will not be deterred by the additional legwork required: specialists of Pound, D'Annunzio, and interart criticism will find Mirabile's work an interesting read, which opens the path to further investigations into the microcosm of Modernist Venice, a subject of renewed interest in recent years. Mirabile's book has the added merit of shedding light on this particular Modernism's tribulated afterlife in the post-World War 2 era — a subject that has remained, together with many of its protagonists, on the sidelines of scholarly inquiry.

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