

Marcello Pagnini, *Letteratura e ermeneutica*, Firenze: Olschki, 2002.

This volume is a collection of Pagnini's *scritti sparsi*, arranged in four thematic sections: "Il linguaggio della letteratura" (14 chapters), "L'ermeneutica e I suoi problemi" (2 chapters), "Esercizi di lettura" (3 chapters), and "Teatro" (3 chapters).

Themes discussed in the first section, often with reference to English Romanticism, include definitions of poetic language, silence in literature, symbols and symbolism, the poetic image, myth, the relationship between poetic language and music, the stream of consciousness technique, and the opposition between Modernism and linearity.

The second section is especially interesting in view of the title of the collection. Chapter 15, "Le voci dell'ermeneutica e I silenzi dei testi" contains perspicacious remarks on obscurity in the literary text, points out that Derrida's discourse was aimed at philosophy, not literature, and adds that deconstruction is merely one of the readerly codes that could be used "a de-gerarchizzare I piani del testo..." (216). In chapter 16, Pagnini makes the valid point that deconstructionist criticism is a form of tautological interpretation, like Marxist or psychoanalytic criticism, in that it obsessively repeats an attempted demonstration of the validity of Derrida's theories (240). As an alternative to the freewheeling kind of reading proposed by some poststructuralists, Pagnini outlines the "punti d'appoggio" for reading offered by Eco.

The "esercizi di lettura" offers readings of texts by T.S.Eliot, Shelley and Coleridge.

Chapter 20, "Dal copione allo spettacolo" is a brief discussion of the roles of the author, the audience and other collaborators in

producing an interpretation of the dramatic text. The penultimate chapter discusses the semiotics of classical drama with special reference to Shakespeare, while the final chapter discusses the influence of Seneca on Elizabethan drama.

This collection of essays demonstrates the range and extent of Pagnini's contributions to literary criticism. The writing is admirably clear, while Pagnini's views are always balanced and free of excesses, and often incisive.

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