

One, No One and One Hundred Thousand

Images of Pirandello between World War II and the translational turn

After World War II, the understanding of Pirandello's work was a difficult one. On one hand, he was undoubtedly "the modern classic" of Italian literature, a revolutionary of the theatre conception, on the other hand he had died as member of the Fascist party and the "Pirandellism" formula developed by Adriano Tilgher, his relativism and the parallels with the *Lebensphilosophie* school suspected of fascist tendencies made it difficult to read his work without ideological reserves. Therefore, Pirandello critics of the 1960-ies, 70-ies and 80-ies preferred those texts where a critical position towards the bourgeois society could be seen, together with anticlericalism and sometimes openly social criticism (e.g. "Lo scaldino") and discarded most of the works of the last years as "senile" and "proto-fascist". With the "anthropological turn", some critics (as I myself in my book on "Pirandello Mythenstürzer") tried to read Pirandello in the context of cultural theory, focussing on identity-building, cultural memory, myth-building and myth criticism, and so on. Finally, after the changes in our societies following the end of Cold War and the rapid globalization at the beginning of the 21st century, there are new approaches which aim to read Pirandello in a context of post-colonial theory and cultural translation – which seems to be quite up-to-date in hybrid and migration societies. The talk illustrates this development by presenting readings of Pirandello's most famous work, "Six Characters in Search of an Author".

Pirandello and Dante:

The Legacy of *Il fu Mattia Pascal* and *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* in Italian Literature.

By Nicolino Applauso

This paper will examine the important contribution of two of Pirandello's most influential works in connection to Dante's *Comedy*, which has also been recently commemorated in Italy and worldwide. By focusing on Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal* and *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*, as well as his scholarship contributions to Dante studies (i.e., "La commedia dei diavoli e la tragedia di Dante" and "La poesia di Dante."), I will assess the explicit connection between Pirandello's works and Dante in order to illuminate the continuing legacy of the Sicilian writer in the literary canon. Dante's *Comedy* plays an important role in Pirandello's life and works. During his 25-years of tenure as a Professor of Italian and Stylistic in Rome, he taught numerous seminars on Dante's *Comedy* and published prominent studies on the *Inferno* and the poetics of Dante's masterpiece. His concepts of the redeeming and transcendental value of literature as exemplified theoretically in these two essays, find practical expressions in his major fictional works. Here Pirandello explicitly evokes Dante as a literary model both through his fictional characters (e.g., Anselmo Paleari) and in the preface of his plays (e.g., in the preface of *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore*), thus showing the ongoing relevance of Dante's masterpiece in Pirandello's works, ideas, and legacy. Furthermore, both Pirandello and Dante share a similar complex placement within the literary canon, as they often have been approached as two of the most representative authors of Italian literature, but also the most innovative. In other words, even though their importance has been acknowledged in increasingly numerous publications and university courses, the originality of their works and ideas have often led scholars to assess them as avant-gardist beyond their own age, thus as both orthodox and unorthodox authors.

Pirandello's thought and the South

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The paper proposes to read some of the narrative work of Luigi Pirandello considering the present debate on the Global South. In this framework some of his short stories appear to be proof of the existence, inside of the Old Continent, of a form of border thinking. Pirandello refuses a binary logic, based on the structure of Western modern thought. The presence of that kind of thought emerges more clearly when Pirandello shows us the relation between North and South, more as a metaphorical concept than a geographical space. The confrontation between these two cultural constructs shows the other face of Western thought. The West designs a discriminatory map of the world, at first ~~moment~~ through the rhetoric of believing in one God and then through the rhetoric of progress. In both cases there was a firm belief in only one possible truth, proposed as unquestionable.

In Pirandello's work the characters, usually expressions of a faith in logical thought, are often victims of the well known "umorismo pirandelliano." In a nutshell, the ridicule of the characters as symbol of a faith in one truth can be seen as the expression of a fundamental distrust in any kind of thought, which presumes to be the only one that is right.

This distrust provides the presence in Pirandello's narrative of deep respect of any kind of differences and the awareness of the existence of the others.

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