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Roberta Morosini. *Per Difetto Rintegrare: Una Lettura del Filocolo di Giovanni Boccaccio*. Ravenna: Longo Editore, 2004. Pp. 222, appendix, bibl., index. ISBN 88-8063-397-X.

One of the most fascinating and satisfying elements of Boccaccio's art is his ability to tell a delightful story that is also an erudite and deeply human discussion of the value of communication. In this expansive monograph, Roberta Morosini examines Boccaccio's *Filocolo* in a way that rejects the long held critical position, which views the *Filocolo* as a disorganized juvenile work on the road to the masterpiece, and elegantly demonstrates its unity. She extracts the detailed analysis Boccaccio makes of poetics and rhetoric and demonstrates how the *Filocolo* is Boccaccio's re-elaboration of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. *Per Difetto Rintegrare* draws its title from the goal of the "componitore" of the *Filocolo*, which is to rescue the story of Florio and Biancifiore from the "fabulosi parlari degli ignoranti" and restore it to its proper and pleasing form; while using the numerous retellings of the story's protagonists, which have been seen by some critics as nothing but a stage of Boccaccio's apprenticeship, to explore both how a story is told and how to love properly.

Per Difetto Rintegrare is organized into five major sections. The four core chapters divide the plot of the *Filocolo* itself. Chapter One, analyzes Boccaccio's premise, use of key terms and the beginning of the "fase di andata" (i.e. the voyage to recover Biancifiore). Chapter Two, focuses on the *Quistioni d'Amore* (i.e. discussion of love at the court of Naples) and reveals how this much interpreted episode is not an unnecessary pause in the plot/preview to the *Decameron*, but central to Florio's maturation and self-improvement. Chapter Three, continues the discussion of the "fase di andata", looking specifically at the differing qualities of the retellings of the story made by different characters. Chapter Four, accounts for the manner of recounting the story of the two lovers in the "fase di tornata" (i.e. the voyage home). The appendix discusses Boccaccio's depiction of real death and the characters verbally expressed desire to die in the *Filocolo*.

The *Filocolo*, being an Italian prose novel, in its introduction, makes interesting use of the terms "componitore", "poeta" and "versi". The love story of Florio and Biancifiore was not a new one, but in fact an already popular fable of French origin. Morosini illustrates how Boccaccio's use of the term "componitore" is central to understanding the whole of his undertaking, going back to the Latin meaning of "comporre": " 'componitore' risulta essere colui che dà forma, mettendo insieme in modo organico e ordinato le diverse parti. Egli le mette in ordine e le dispone in modo creativo secondo dei criteri estetici e artistici" (37). This term is chosen in opposition to "compilatore", whose feature is to "rinunciare alla ingegnosità" (37). Boccaccio's goal is to save this story from the mouths of the ill informed and to finally tell it in its entirety. The term "poeta" is used in the sense that no one worthy of this title has yet treated this story; and that of "versi" in the sense of Branca's definition of "linee, righe" (34). Morosini makes ample comparison of two older French versions of the story, illustrating Boccaccio's re-adaptations and assumption of the role of *auctor*.

From Morosini's presentation of the *Filocolo* it becomes clear, since the work itself is a reinterpretation of an old story, that the many retellings of the lovers' adventure are more precisely an expansive survey into the construction and interpretation of a story. Each narration is actually a case of "ripetizione con variazione" (49) and Morosini draws remarkable conclusions from her attention to who is narrating, how it is narrated, what is omitted, what is included, and what is new. This study, above all Chapter Three, pays particular attention to the qualities of exemplar narrations, filling in intricacies of the plot as background information to the character a particular retelling takes on. Each repetition contains differing information and the story will continue to be retold until told "interamente" and "debitamente".

Morosini concentrates on the principle notion that the task of the "compositore" is to save this story from the "fabulosi parlari degli ignoranti" (I 1, 25). The type of ignorance at issue here, however, is not that of the uncultured, but simply of those who do not know the facts. Intrinsic part of the *Filocolo* is therefore the passage from not knowing to true knowledge. At a primary level, Morosini's astute examination of the repetitions reveals that, as in the case of the Amiraglio, characters that hear the story for the first time then become "narrator[i] di turno" (111), thus passing from not knowing or being ignorant of some facts, to being those who now know and who have the ability to inform others in turn. The pivotal verb here, as will be the case in the *Decameron*, is *ragionare*. On a more profound level—the level that truly distinguishes Boccaccio's genius—Morosini sees how telling a story properly can be truly edifying and how proper reception gives us all the opportunity to *correggere ragionando* (74). Morosini deftly highlights the *Quistioni d'Amore* and the discussion of love at Naples as the cause of Florio's maturation.

The *Filocolo* also functions as a re-elaboration of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*. Before arriving at Naples, Florio was plagued by fears, doubts, and jealousy—all products of passionate love. Listening to the varying *ragionamenti* and responses Fiammetta makes to the questions asked of her, Florio learns to love rationally. Boccaccio's addition to this *ars* is compassion—the lover must learn to not despair at his imaginings, but rationally control his emotions while learning compassion and trust. The *Filocolo* does tell a tale of *metanoia*, however it is not simply a religious conversion that occurs in Florio, but also a passage from the irrational to the rational that is provoked precisely by reflecting on the questions and answers discussed in the garden; thus one of the elements at the core of Boccaccio's efforts, that is "rimuovere la malinconia [ragionando]" (58).

Past scholarship has often judged the *Filocolo* to be a disorganized, juvenile work. Morosini makes a fundamental contribution to Boccaccio studies in recognizing its organic unity. The *Quistioni d'Amore* were seen as an unnecessary pause in the main action that foreshadowed the "lieta brigata" of the *Decameron*. However, Morosini proves how this pause in Naples is the very thing that brings about Florio's maturity. Without the rational conversion provoked by the discussion of these questions, Florio would have remained a lethargic, jealous lover. The *Quistioni d'Amore* is therefore not a separate, useless episode, but the very event that allows the story to proceed along its rightful path towards "conoscimento" (35). The storyline is

therefore in a form of a parabola—*andata* and *tornata*. The return retraces the legs of the departure, this time however, Filocolo is now able to give advice and correct his prior mistakes, for instance, his act of jealousy that had forced Fileno to flee, abandoning his family and home. Filocolo is now the one who knows how to love and act rationally; he is mature and the trip down to the cave with the statues of the four proud women serves to reinforce the lessons taught and learned.

Morosini's meticulous scholarship and intimate knowledge of the texts analyzed throughout *Per Difetto Rintegrare* combine in the form of a necessary contribution to Boccaccio studies. Boccaccio's stated intention with the *Filocolo* was to tell the story of Florio and Biancifiore correctly and completely, pushing beyond ignorance. Morosini has effectively produced the same results with her re-reading and examination of the work. The *Filocolo* may be among Boccaccio's first literary endeavors, but the unity and "l'aspetto profondamente metaletterario e metatestuale dell'opera" are irrefutable (164).

Bryan Leferman

University of Windsor