

Michael Høxbro Andersen and Anders Toftgaard, eds. *Dialogo & conversazione: I luoghi di una società ideale dal Rinascimento all'Illuminismo*. Biblioteca dell'“Archivum Romanicum” Serie I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia 392. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2012. 264 pp. €29. ISBN: 978-88-222-6121-2.

Setting has traditionally been overlooked as a secondary aspect in the study of literary dialogue and conversation. *Dialogo & conversazione* is a compendium of thirteen papers presented at a 2007 conference held in Copenhagen on the locations where dialogues and conversations took place from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The editors preface the articles with an introductory dialogue divided into two parts. The first, offered by Michael Høxbro Andersen and Anders Toftgaard, provides a context for the research contained in the volume as well as a much more precise alternate title to the compilation: “Dialogue et conversation, rapports entre l'Italie et la France, entre Renaissance et Lumières, caractère transhistorique ou

non des lieux" (8). While a flamboyant designation for a number of valuable and well-written pieces of research, partiality is inevitable in light of the vastitude both of the topic and the timespan.

In the second part of the introductory dialogue, the editors become *principes sermonis* in the interchange of opinions between two well-known authorities in the field: Marc Fumaroli and Amedeo Quondam. Both discuss a number of commonplaces related to the diachronic study of dialogue and conversation. This exchange of views applies some conventions of the literary genre of dialogue, which can be puzzling to the unaware reader. The neophyte will certainly appreciate some of their insights on a complex field of research; the specialist, on the other hand, must remember that Fumaroli and Quondam act as embodiments of their own ideas developed in previous works. Consequently, some statements should be taken with a grain of salt, such as the idea that the culture of conversation migrated from fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France as a *translatio conversationis*, while the rest of Europe looked on. Concepts of nation and nationalism, the vanity of the Middle Ages in the history of conversation, and constructs of Europe and European also come forward in the pages of the introductory dialogue.

As for the individual studies, I can only succinctly mention their topics and distribution. Four essays cover the sixteenth century. Gian Mario Anselmi deals with the relationship among Machiavelli's active role in the Orti Orcellari, his young audience, and their influence on his late work. Giovanni Baffetti reverts to the connection between biography and dialogic writing in Tasso's dialogues — mainly the *Malpiglio secondo* — taking as a point of departure the space of the library as a literary and symbolic location, a topic that Jean Balsamo extends to Montaigne in a stimulating piece of writing. Philippe Guérin tackles the relationship between the dialogue and the constitution of the modern subject throughout Alberti's *Theogenius*, Alamanno Rinuccini's *Dialogus de libertate*, and Gelli's *Capricci del bottaio*.

Emmanuel Bury studies the seventeenth century through his analysis of civility and countryside, while Claire Cazanave offers a complementary paper on gardens. I found it especially apposite to devote three essays to the transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century: Elise Revon-Rivière on the promenade, Carsten Meiner on the carriage, and Stéphane Pujol on the *locus amoenus* in philosophical dialogue, which he is able to expand to a wider theoretical and historical framework. Four papers study the eighteenth century, two of them specifically on Diderot: Anne Elisabeth Sejten's analysis of the role of the island in the Langrois and the comparison of its use in Rousseau and Voltaire, and John Pedersen's contrastive analysis between open and closed spaces in Diderot's dialogues. Another pair of papers tackle two equally paradigmatic places: the boudoir by Pierre Hartmann, and Jørn Boisen's study of Milan Kundera's approach to the eighteenth century in his *La Lenteur*.

In sum, this is a well-balanced collection of papers on a usually neglected or poorly studied topic and hence a welcome interdisciplinary addition to the field

of dialogical and conversational studies. Furthermore, a number of the essays venture beyond their apparently constrained scope to provide refreshing and insightful analyses that stand by themselves.

JORGE LEDO
Universität Basel